

ERP B

Feedback from members of the public

@EastHerts wouldn't it be great to be able to cycle to the airport as tracks run short due to no clear directions

**Twitter**

## FIRST THOUGHTS ON SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL – HERTFORD

- An initial suggestion would be to look at addressing the number of cars undertaking local journeys and parking especially during the early day (8-10am) and afternoon (3-6pm). In this case 'local' is considered as travel to the town centre from the areas within a boundary of Gt Amwell, Horns Mill, Cole Green, Waterford, Bengo and Pinehurst.
- Barriers/possible solutions within this group are:
  - Too much on- site parking being made available by some employers. This parking should be restricted to those travelling from outside the boundary and encouraged to be using car-share; with a long term aim of restricting it to car-share only. The parking policy would need to be fair and apply to ALL staff including management.
  - Cost and frequency of local transport. Boundary points would need to be serviced by frequent (10min) mini-bus services during the peak hours and the cost of travel would need to be comparable to the cost of running/parking a car. If the LA does not have control of these services the contract would need to include a clause that would not allow the contractor to cancel/reduce the service until the scheme had been running for a set-time (possibly 2/3 years) and only then by agreement and with the caveat that all contracts held by the contractor could then be cancelled and awarded to another company.
  - On-street car parking availability. If pressure is brought on companies to reduce car use then HCC/EHDC would also need to encourage the same and make it more difficult for commuters and those travelling from within the boundary to park on streets within said boundary (but outside the main shopping area), by not allowing parking on any street between the key hours of 8am-3pm unless resident, delivery point etc. This might seem draconian but you will never remove the car without firm policies. Street parking schemes could be self-managed by each street having a 'registered resident' who is authorised by EHDC to maintain a computer register of residents vehicles and empowered to contact wardens when offences occur.
  - Public car park availability. Remove all long-term spaces and restrict parking to a maximum of 3 hours. In the core shopping area EHDC could run a computer register of authorised users who are permitted to park for longer than 3 hours e.g. shop employees, office workers travelling from outside the boundary.
  - School travel. Extend the yellow lines outside schools and encourage schools, PTAs and parents to care-share, walk or use public transport.

Corin

### Current pollution/traffic levels

- It was with concern that I read of the high pollution in Bishop's Stortford and then saw a councillor saying there was nothing that could be done because of buildings etc. If that understanding is correct then there is something that can be done e.g. demolish some of the buildings, move junctions, enforce parking restrictions, by-passes, change one-way systems.
- The cheapest of these would be to enforce parking restrictions - especially outside schools currently on Windhill and nearby streets it is almost impossible to get through during school run times St Joseph's & St Mary's the queuing/parked vehicles with their engines running both delays & pollutes the area.
- Introduce a one-way system on Bells Hill - currently traffic queues quite a distance to get through there.
- Rethink the timings on traffic lights in the area.
- Put in a new road to replace the A120 from Bishop's Stortford to Puckeridge - this would have a significant reduction in pollution from waiting cars.
- Better traffic management through Sawbridgeworth - currently vehicles can wait 20mins to get through the town along the 1184, the time has come to realise that enlarging some of the back roads is a cheap & simple solution to removing traffic from the old A11 route, this should help to reduce pollution levels/traffic hold-ups in Sawbridgeworth & Bishop's Stortford One last thing that would be a help, please enforce the law regarding using mobile phones whilst driving, I frequently see people driving around the small roundabout on Windhill in Bishop's Stortford twice because they have lost control on their vehicles - probably due to chatting on the phone which is in their hand. This also causes delays in traffic flows. Wouldn't take much of a survey to confirm this, on one occasion I counted 16 drivers with a phone to ear out of 20 vehicles during school run period with children trying to cross the busy road. I admit this may not be normal as I was walking past and noticed one example and counted the remainder as I walked on.

### Trams

- I have a concern with the suggestion of a tram system being introduced into the area, apparently at a cost of £10m, I have objections to this & would like to have them recorded.
  - A. Disruption - both installation & when running to existing traffic flows and properties along side.
  - B. The original quote did not include new housing/industrial areas.
  - C. The cost of running a fleet of green minibuses would be far cheaper to purchase, service, have a second hand value, no infrastructure to disrupt traffic, clean to the environment in the area and be flexible - as requirements change so can the routes.
  - D. A fleet of green (electric/gas) minibuses may also get offers from the constructors for discounts etc if it can be shown off as an example of their products and success (hopefully) of the public transport system in the area.

### Cycles

- Please can we have marked cycle ways. During the last consultation I was told by a member of the council staff there was no intention of putting in a cyclepath there as the cyclists would slow the traffic down - well, how wrong was that expert. The cyclists think it so dangerous they are willing to incur a fine of up to £1000 and cycle on the pavement.

### **Bill**

- St Michael's Mead and the nearest regular bus is in Thorley. There is one bus into the estate at school time each day during term time and (I think) a couple of times each week throughout the year.
- People use cars because we do not know if a bus is really going to arrive and how long it really is going to be. Whilst cancellations are few, the fear and consequence is large.
- I believe an investment should be made in displays at each bus stop which say when the next bus is actually due - this is common in many towns but unknown in Stortford.
- Whilst timetables are on the web, accessing them is not simple. Think about how to make this much easier.
- Every family who move into a house (you know when this happens because a new council tax bill is sent out) should be sent a set of public transport timetables.
- The first suggestion will cost the most, the second the least.

**Paul, St Michael's Mead**

- My main suggestion would be the provision of charging points for electric cars in all car parks.
- One thing holding back the purchase and use of electric cars is their limited range and the difficulty of charging them away from home. Providing charging facilities could increase the use of this green form of transport
- Another suggestion would be to enhance the development of fuel cell vehicles by using these for busses etc.
- Final suggestion is to ensure that busses run regularly not only during the day but during evenings as well

**David**

I have 2 suggestions for sustainable transport going forward.

Firstly, introducing cycle lanes around that link the towns/villages together. At the moment in Bishop's Stortford we have nearly zero cycle lanes bar 50m in the middle of town that goes nowhere. Local people are keen to cycle but there is no safe provision to do so. Why is this the case when so many areas have a proper policies to introduce these?

Secondly, the buses in East Herts in particular are awful, is anyone really encouraged to travel by buses that are old, rattle, have no air con and no wifi? You only have to go to the bus station and look at the state of the buses to give you no confidence in bus travel. There are a variety of shapes, colours, and condition of buses run by quite separate companies.

In Oxfordshire they seem to have a thriving bus travelling community (Stagecoach operated) which keeps many people out of their cars. Why can't we do that here, instead of treating people like second class citizens by traveling by bus. My wife works in Hertford but she would never take the bus from Stortford as it is a poor service which takes ages, is very uncomfortable and noisy!

**Keith, Bishop Stortford**

A few thoughts on your sustainable transport consultation study that I received an email about.

Cycling:

- Better and clearer cycle routes between major centres. For example, Bishops Stortford to Sawbridgeworth should be cycleable.
- Ensure bike parking facilities are available in major centres. Simple Sheffield stands usually suffice. Could put a few in the multi-storey at BS to keep dry and secure, for example.

Walking:

- More enforcement of motor regulations to reduce hostility when walking.  
e.g. pavement parking on London Road, Sawbridgeworth  
e.g. speed of traffic on Station Road, Sawbridgeworth: particularly key given route to railway station
- Offer priorities to pedestrians  
e.g. the lights on Bishops Stortford inner one-way system seem to favour motor vehicles

Bus services:

Rarely need to use but seems to be effective and efficient in the Stansted-BS-Sawbo-Harlow corridor. Maybe investigate possibilities for connections for central and west Herts, particularly where could connect to East Coast line stations such as Stevenage.

Rail services:

- Generally good.
- Need to ensure continued lobbying of Network Rail for investment in infrastructure as signal problems etc do seem to cause 'minor' delays fairly frequently
- Need to ensure continued lobbying of Greater Anglia for investment in rolling stock: I think new units are coming, but many of the units service BS and Sawbo are pretty antiquated
- Invest in passenger comfort at stations. e.g. better waiting facilities at Sawbo: currently there isn't even a toilet.
- Walking and cycling routes to the stations to be improved. Mentioned Station Road, Sawbo above. The approach to Bishops Stortford station is unattractive and have to be mindful of cars in the car park and on the approach road.

**James**

- I'm interested to know what plans there are to support and develop public transport in Buntingford.
- At the moment services are being cut when potential demand is increasing.

**Mark, Buntingford**

1. Local bus services to persuade people to commute to stations etc.
2. Frequency of services making public transport an attractive alternative.
3. Changing the image...away from expensive polluting cars to communal services.
4. Linking villages and making it a way of life.
5. Education as to what good public transport can do.
6. Reliability is essential because people are on such tight schedules.

**Phillip, Walkern**

In view of the traffic congestion in and around Hertford due to continued house/factory building, without adequate infrastructure being put in in the first place to accommodate this expansion. We appear to have only one short term solution which is the introduction of "park and ride". This is not a total solution but would, I feel, help to reduce the volume of traffic entering the town in the short term. Having used park and ride in 7 other places, it definitely reduces the number of vehicles within the confines of the town centre and I think, provides more usage of the bus service than at present. If the planning is correct, buses could operate on loop systems to cover greater residential areas of the town. Say starting in the Rush Green area into town then on up to Bengeo then in reverse. Other similar loop systems could be incorporated.

Cycle routes are another option, but due to the lack of space on the roads, would be difficult to plan into the present system. It is fine to introduce cycle routes but, they must be safe to use for the cyclist, but I fear that most of them are not. I am now not a cyclist because of the safety factor. We would need to give cyclist preferential right of way over cars within a radius of the town centre, and we would need to educate the motorist to this effect. In Holland, this system of cars making way for cyclists seems to operate very well. However, the Dutch have been using cycles as a main mode of town transport for years.

We certainly never seem to get forward planning right with things being done in the correct order at the right time. We now have a defunct town centre by-pass, which was built in the wrong place and is totally inadequate for today's traffic needs.

Some radical thinking is required now and action in the immediate time scale, rather than the suggested 20/30 years hence. All I can see happening, is some cheap tinkering round the edges, which will do nothing to improve the quality of life in and around Hertford.

**Stan, Hertford**

Please can you consider a light rail link from Buntingford to the surrounding areas?

There has been large scale development agreed in Buntingford and it didn't even get a mention in the Transport Vision 2050 which shows a real inconsistency between planning and infrastructure.

I understand the town has one of the largest car ownership per household and this is clearly due to lack of sustainable, reliable transport linking Buntingford to the surrounding areas. My family and I would much prefer not to drive everywhere but we have no option.

**George, Buntingford**

I would find the implementation of cycle lanes a great addition. I currently cycle a lot with my two young children but would feel much safer with cycle lanes. This would also encourage many others

**Gabrielle**

I moved to this area from Manchester in 2007. I live in Stansted Mountfitchet but work (and have done since moving South) in Bishop's Stortford. I travel to work (6 days a week) by bike. [REDACTED]

During the last 10 years there has been a significant increase in the amount of traffic on the roads. Bishop's Stortford can be very congested particularly during term times – most notably at school run hours. Additionally traffic on Saturday mornings is at a high level, particularly on Dunmow Road, Stansted Road and Hockerill Street heading towards the Hockerill lights.

I am very concerned about the continuing increase in population size of the town and the lack of infrastructure to support this. During the next few years another 2500? houses & at least two schools will be built in 'Stortford North'. The impact on the traffic / pollution etc will be significant.

I recently visited the Netherlands on holiday. The difference between home and the Netherlands was frightening. The investment over the years in cycling is hugely impressive and the infrastructure ensures that cyclists are safe, encouraged and everywhere. Cyclists are given priority both at junctions and through the law – a motorist hitting a cyclist is automatically at fault. Cyclists do not jump lights / ride on pavements etc because they have safe, dedicated space.

In the last ten years I have been hit by cars on two occasions. On a daily basis I feel at risk from motorists who often drive impatiently near me.

My view is that the current / projected population increases in East Herts are such that major investment needs to take place in improving cycling infrastructure including dedicated cycle lanes which are separated from roads.

There is space to build such a route from Stansted to Bishop's Stortford providing safe (and healthy) alternatives to car use.

At [REDACTED] only 3 students (out of C850) cycle to College each day. 4 members of staff regularly cycle.

East Herts has a responsibility to invest in cycling for many reasons and it is my hope that this investment takes place quickly to improve our environment for all residents and visitors.

**Alasdair, Stansted Mountfitchet**

As per the request in the Mercury this week I would like to add my thoughts.

I own an all electric Nissan Van ev200 that I've had for 4 months.

I live in Ware, Herts.

I find it extremely versatile as you can stop and start for deliveries door to door along a street without worrying about ruining the engine or catalytic converter.

I can deliver very early in the morning in complete silence.

There are no emissions so environmentally friendly.

It can do 50 miles on one charge which at present costs nothing if I charge at a charging point e.g. At Asda in Watton Road. 40 miles if I have the heater on permanently or air conditioning.

No road tax. No oil to put in the engine.

Usually free parking if charging.

So, as you can see there are many benefits, saving a fortune as well as helping with particulate and noise pollution.

As at present I only know of two places with charging points, Asda and Hertford East station.

Unfortunately Hertford East station allows coaches to park in the charging spaces and apparently you have to pay the car parking charge whilst charging which is not charged elsewhere, even in London.

Using the van all day it would be extremely beneficial to be able to charge whilst away throughout the day instead of returning to top up the charge.

As electric vehicles are definitely getting more popular as the public realise the benefits and manufacturers are now tooling up for electric in the next few years, I believe it would be extremely beneficial for the Council to plan Charging points as a priority, obviously where people park for shopping or dining e.g. The Beefeater in Ware, in certain parking places along the roads in Hertford Town, The Madford Retail Park, Tesco to name but a few.

I'm sure once the public can see the availability of Charging Points, that they cost nothing to charge from, plus get free parking, people will trade their vehicles in for electric at the earliest opportunity as also electric vehicles are now reducing in price to purchase dramatically.

Hoping this helps contribute to the Councils thinking for future planning.

**Darrell, Ware**

I attach my submission to the Herts CC consultation on its Transport Vision 2050. I also attach two documents referred to in my submission: a journal article setting out my proposed Herts Orbital Transit [sent to the District Council last September]; and a report of 2004 on the proposed Lea Valley Green Route [a copy was supplied to the District Council at the time].

I hope these are of use. I would be happy to discuss any aspect further with East Herts members and officers if that were of use.

*Please find documents in appendix 1.*

**Reg**

I would like to suggest a simple action, at zero cost, which will improve air quality plus have productivity improvements for businesses and local people.

The action requires banning of rubbish/ recycling collections, on main routes before say 9.30am. Every week on my journey to work (A1184), I am stuck in traffic congestion caused by bin collectors aiming to finish their work early. This is not limited to my area but all across Herts and the country.

Despite many, many complaints to the local council (East Herts) they have done nothing to tackle this issue. Surely when awarding contract to waste management firms, a clause can be included forbidding collection during rush hour times on main routes (which can be specified). Furthermore, contractual fines can be used as a deterrent and publicity used to encourage people to report violations.

This issue costs the country vast amounts in unnecessary traffic jams and increases pollution significantly.

**Marcel**

Please find attached the views of the East Herts Green Party on this matter which were posted before Christmas. We would like you to take these views into account in the work of the Task and Finish Group on Sustainable Transport.

We look forward to hearing more about how the District Council plans to tackle the very serious issue of poor air quality in this area.

*Please find documents in appendix 2.*

**Alex [REDACTED] on behalf of the East Herts Green Party**



Living near the Hockerill traffic lights has brought home very clearly the problems we have in the town leading to poisonous gases accumulating in areas posing a very serious health problem. I wheel my grandchild through the traffic near the lights and smell and breathe in the NOx fumes which are indeed lethal.

So ideas:

- Park & Ride at the Football Club area and another near the bypass roundabout on the Stansted Road and on the Hatfield Heath Road - 7 days a week.
- Make the Ride a fleet of small electric buses shuttling down the Dunmow Road, Parsonage Lane, Stansted Road, Hatfield Heath ways into the town centre and to the Hospital and up through the town to Thorley & Bishops Park and back again almost on a continual loop, similar to a tram service. Tickets priced at £2 for a journey with season tickets at discount.
- The incentive to use this service would be that all diesel vehicles are banned in Bishops Stortford town centre and at the Hospital.
- With luck the shuttle service will be so clean, efficient and cost effective that the slightly less polluting petrol vehicles would use it too.
- Visitors will flock to Bishops Stortford just to try out the transport.

**Pauline, Bishop Stortford**

For the attention of the Sustainable Transport Consultation.

The schools in Sawbridgeworth had a very successful Travel Challenge week last Autumn and which will be replicated, hopefully soon in Hertford. Evidence from the event demonstrated a significant reduction in motorised transport. The Sawbridgeworth Schools continue to meet regularly along with local councillors and officers from County and the Town to discuss ways of encouraging more sustainable journeys. Further events are being planned and the schools are keen to introduce pupil Travel Ambassadors in order to keep up the momentum. The schools will engage with parents to discuss and understand the obstacles to walking or undertaking more sustainable forms of travel. The schools will then jointly work with families to uncover strategies to overcome these obstacles.

They wanted to respond formally to the consultation but given the time-scales they request that the council and members of the task and finish group remain willing to receive the findings from this collaborative work in Sawbridgeworth as examples of good practice as it emerges.

**Richard Bowran, Sawbridgeworth Town Clerk**

I regularly cycle in Bishop's Stortford as part of my daily commute and find it a frustrating experience - I can see why many people are put off.

- There is no cycle network to speak of in the town centre, and there is no concession to cycling in the town's one way system. This means bikes have to either use the same long, circuitous - and dangerous - route as cars, or have to dismount and use narrow footpaths to reach popular destinations such as the train station. This is a particular problem over the Station Road bridge, so much so that I usually take an extremely long detour via Havers Lane and the Southmill bridge to avoid it.

- There is not enough cycle parking in enough town centre locations - and those that are available are open-air and of poor design/construction (often meaning a safe D-lock can't be used securely).

- The cycle storage at Bishop's Stortford station is a great facility but is very poorly managed. There are always spaces available, but Greater Anglia refuse to issue entry fobs to any more users - there is a long waiting list, even though there are many free spaces. This is due to the one-time fee nature of the scheme, so people keep hold of their fobs whether they use them or not. There is no incentive for people to return their fob to free it up for another user.

- Certain footpaths that connect different parts of the town (otherwise cut off by road) are essential for cyclists and should be made officially dual-use for cyclists and pedestrians. A few examples: adjacent to Thorley bus road, The Firs, Ward Crescent to Woodhall Grove.

- I would also like to see information (i.e. website, leaflet) showing popular cycle routes in the area, centred on each town going to various countryside destinations/attractions or circular routes.

If I did not or could not cycle (e.g. due to mobility issues, bad weather or simple laziness) I would use a frequent, competitively priced bus service. Unfortunately coverage of bus services in Bishop's Stortford has reduced in the last few years (both geographically and in evening hours), meaning that from many parts of the town it is not even possible to get to and from the town centre at times suitable for commuting using the train station.

This seems counter-intuitive as it forces so many people to use their cars - you only need to see the stream of cars into and out the car parks, or the queues of 'kiss and ride' cars waiting during the evening peak times as evidence of this. By this time the 308 bus service (now curtailed to no longer serve Bishop's Gate) has already stopped for the evening and there are no other suitable services. This means people won't use it in the morning either, so it's no wonder the bus company sees low usage.

I would like to take my family into town on the bus at the weekend, but there are no services near my house on Bishop's Gate (despite there being bus stops on the estate roads) and even if there were the cost is astronomical compared to driving and parking. I have not considered the 'Stortford Shuttle' as its services end too early in the day.

Finally, it is unbelievable that so many parts of the town are in complete darkness after midnight due to timed streetlighting. This even affects dangerous narrow streets in the town centre - e.g. Newtown Road and makes walking or cycling home late at night unnecessarily dangerous. There is no excuse for this now that LED streetlights are being fitted, as these reduce the electricity costs massively. The whole point of streetlights is to light streets when it is dark and people need to use them. Not everyone is in bed at midnight - think of shift workers, the 'evening economy' etc etc.

**Rob**

Poor management of parking contributes significantly to making transport unsustainable.

Over the years, as a resident of Hertford, I have seen frequent tinkering with parking arrangements and rules, typically without satisfactory results being achieved. Damaging measures, such as residents-only parking, and forbidding developers to provide parking, have been introduced. Others, such as levies on workplace parking, have been considered, but fortunately not enforced so far.

The present initiative provides an opportunity to remedy this situation.

I have attached a modification of a paper I produced recently for another purpose, which proposes a revised approach to parking management. Could you accept it as my response to the current consultation? Could you also please acknowledge your receipt of this email?

I would be pleased to discuss this with you, if that would help.

*Attached document can be found in appendix 3.*

**Adrian, Hertford**

My principle concern is that this exercise should result in EHDC having an active plan for reducing road traffic, in order to reduce CO2 emissions & congestion, and improve air quality.

I find it odd that the Council has sought fit to task its Scrutiny Committee with developing a vision and recommended actions for the Council. It is essential that the Council should own and action its sustainable transport vision, rather than for this exercise to result in an output of the Task and Finish Group within the Scrutiny system. The Council needs to have a plan, which has been developed with community involvement/consultation, with clear commitments, accountability for their delivery and regular updating of the plans. It should complement an EHDC Air Quality plan, which the Council needs still to develop, also in consultation with the community, for improving air quality in the district and resolving the District's AQMAs. An EHDC sustainable transport plan is particularly important as the County's draft Strategic Vision for transport is overly geared towards the west of the County. The plan needs to take account of the major impact that local development will have on local traffic volumes.

For the Community to have confidence that the Action Plan properly engages with local issues, EHDC need to:

- make their traffic planning models readily available to the public
- present the assumptions used, for household & business numbers & associated travel patterns, for traffic originating in the District and outside of it & the evidence upon which the assumptions are based

Community confidence also needs to be built through providing regular feedback on implementation and providing the community with regular opportunities to input views and ideas for future initiatives.

There are so many actions that EHDC could lead to reduce traffic that it is important that it should get started on less resource intensive/quick wins, while properly researching, planning, engaging and resourcing initiatives that will need to be developed and implemented over a more extended period.

**Jill**

Dear East Herts Task and Finish Group

An overall active plan needs to be created for sustainable transport and integrated with the plans for Air Quality management. There are appears to be large number of associated activities (Initial review of Sustainable Transport by Lucy Gallard • Herts County Council Local Transport Vision 2050 (technical documents) • LSCC's Growth Commission Report • East Herts District Plan • Hertford Urban Design Study • Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework (emerging work) which need drawing together. The following should be considered in an overall plan

1. Encouragement of cycling and walking.

Development of an overall cycling and walking plan.

Designing this into new developments – setting requirements at early stages

Preferably cycle routes which are separate from other traffic

Development of safe walking and cycling routes to and from the station

Working with schools to encourage walking and use of safe cycle routes

Working with local businesses to encourage walking and use of safe cycle routes

Use of experts to do this.

2. Increasing the bus network. I see that bus provision has been decreasing in East Herts over recent years

3. Encouraging use of electric vehicles by provision of charging points

4. Including provision of neighbourhoods shops and services (doctors etc) in new housing development plans

I hope very much that sustainable transport will be prioritised and a plan developed.

**Margaret**

My views on Sustainable Transport are attached to the current email. Should you wish to discuss any of these in person, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Chiara, Bishop Stortford.** *See appendix 4*

In response to your request for views regarding sustainable transport, I would like to see more dedicated cycle lanes between towns and local villages.

I live in Watton at Stone and I'd like to be able to safely cycle to Hertford, Ware, Stevenage and Datchworth in particular. I have young children and I would not want to cycle with them on the local roads. I used to cycle a great deal to get around as I lived in Cambridge for 10 years.

As we have a train station I think that if people could get here on bikes from other local villages that would really help develop sustainable transport as people can then use the train service at WAS.

I don't think cycle lanes on the local roads would be safe. I think cycle lanes should be new features, a modern equivalent to bridleways - dedicated, maintained cycle ways linking the local settlements

**Emma, Watton at Stone**

- There are three fundamental issues for you to address meaningfully:-
  1. Provide one way traffic flows in towns to reduce delays and thereby additional air pollution.
  2. Close sections of town centre roads to through traffic with the exception of some selected bus movements.
  3. Provide cycle and footpath routes extensively, so as to reduce commuter traffic, to give a connecting network priority over major road projects.
- Instead of spending tens of thousands of pounds on often abortive surveys, reports and trials so much of which has been wasted and /or ignored, proceed with those obvious vital small projects that could begin to alleviate the current plethora of local traffic issues ignored for decades.

**Peter, Bishop Stortford**

Attached is a copy of the submission sent to the County Council by Hertford Civic Society in response to the Consultation on the Transport Vision 2050 report.

In particular attention is drawn to paragraphs particularly to paragraphs 12 to 18 and 21 to 23 especially -

"The Civic Society is mainly concerned with Hertford, where the two large local authorities , which account for so much rush-hour traffic, are uniquely well placed, jointly, to lead the way in promoting alternatives to individual car use, and ultimately to bring about environmental benefits on a large scale."

"There has arguably not been any significant effort so far by East Herts Council or by Hertfordshire County Council, least of all on any joined-up basis, to promote alternatives to individual car use. Certainly there have not been any major campaigns to woo the public to resort less to personal car use. A few modest efforts have been made to encourage the two workforces to adopt alternatives to personal car use, but these have not been backed up by anything much in the way of prompts or incentives, and accordingly staff continue overwhelmingly to travel to work in their own individual vehicles."

"In these ... paragraphs we have sketched in outline how Hertford could become a much more sustainable town, and how this could be done without expenditure on a bypass, which would generate its own problems for the future. We have highlighted the scope for the two local authorities to lead from the front and, over a period of time, to involve other people and organisations, while also gradually improving the alternatives to car use."

"We think that, at least where Hertford is concerned, we have sketched out a practical sequence whereby, starting with car sharing on the part of the EHC and HCC workforces, a great deal could be done."

"Even if the County presses ahead with plans for a bypass, we still think that the pollution-reducing ideas sketched out would be well worth implementing, starting as soon as possible. We would not want to suffer for a decade (or anything like that) until a bypass and any linked enhancements are put in place. We would all benefit from making a transition to a more sustainable Hertford much sooner than that."

We note that the Task and Finish Group will be inviting a number of speakers to their meetings to provide evidence. If considered appropriate the Hertford Civic Society would welcome an invitation to give a presentation to the Panel expanding on the ideas contained in our response to the County Council consultation.

*Document attached at Appendix 6*

**Terry Betts, Chairman, Hertford Civic Society**

These are my personal views but also inevitably based on working with schools on sustainable journeys.

It seems to me that this is missing from the terms of reference (and cooperation with HCC road safety campaigns), i.e. how do we promote changes of behaviour in school journeys, a significant source of air pollution and parking issues if we don't provide safe and greener alternatives? For example, there is still no school crossing in Spellbrook although the school has done its best to minimise car journeys and uses walking buses from Sawbridgeworth and the Three Horseshoes pub. But in the latter case children, parents and staff are at still at risk crossing the road. The 30mph speed limit sign is adjacent to the school, giving motorists less time to slow down before they reach the school. County seem unwilling/unable to provide a safe crossing despite extensive work to improve the pavement and drop down kerb. How can we promote safer, greener and sustainable journeys if we don't provide support for our schools as a priority?

Sawbridgeworth's District Plan chapter provides for green routes from the proposed West Road development to the schools on one side of town and to the station but this leaves the other side of the town. It's a lopsided approach. You need to look at the two as a whole, given that it is divided by the A1184.

Another source of parking issues and additional air quality and traffic issues is the lack of (affordable or what is perceived to be affordable) station parking, especially as new houses will mean more commuters.

Additional issues are the increasing use of large commercial vehicles on roads too narrow for them, damage to barriers and pavements by the same lorries, pedestrian accidents and how to promote safer use of roads which are now too narrow for the size of vehicles using them (larger numbers of 4x4s plus vans and lorries, increased online delivery vans etc.). Is it possible to liaise with suppliers, use more district hubs and smaller local delivery vehicles, as used to be the case?

I urge the Group to be as transparent as possible and to share its findings, allow the public to attend key meetings, involve and consult with local groups and schools and school councils, get the views of students as current and future road users.

**David Royle, Sawbirdgeworth Town Mayor**

Further to the recent article in the "Hertfordshire Mercury" on the above subject, I agree entirely with what is being written.

I think that the previous rail link should be re- opened, and in addition that the Light railway systems should be investigate as to the viability and suitability for the area, in preference to further road construction.

I do not think that further roads should be created to cope with the projected increase in road use due to the expected influx of new residents, as I believe that they become self fulfilling e.g. The M25 is a classic example.

If the schemes go ahead, I also believe that U.K. suppliers and manufacturers only should be used used in its construction.

**Alan**

I live in Braughing. I'm not dependent on public transport yet, but I believe in the 'use it or lose it' view, and it's greener, so I have a bus pass, and yet I probably use the bus only once or twice a year. It would be used more often if there weren't occasional two hour gaps between buses and the service operated on Sundays. For reasons below travel is limited to mid-week trips to Hertford, Ware or Buntingford, when times both ways are convenient for U3A meetings, dental appointments, etc., which is rare.

Occasional trips to London require travelling either on a Sunday, or a midweek return after 7pm, so inevitably it means a car journey to Hertford or Ware. We used to go from Hertford North, but there'll be no room in the car park now that the adjoining pub car parking facility is withdrawn. When using the Hertford East line, we have to go to Ware as there's no car park to speak of at Hertford East; and it's a great shame that no-one had the foresight to require a proportion of the Hertford East station yard to be retained for a car park instead of the whole area being allocated for housing. So, along with a slower journey (more stations to stop at) on the Hertford East line, the lack of parking at Hertford East compared with Ware may explain why there's a far greater number of passengers using Ware and particularly Hertford North. Some of my commuting neighbours just trek down to Broxbourne to benefit from better car parking and increased train frequency. Ironically, if the stations had more parking and more passengers, the operating companies would be obliged to consider more frequent trains with some stopping at fewer stations en-route.

Crossrail 2 will not extend to East Herts for the same reasons. Stanstead Airport, being able to pay for 4 trains an hour in new carriages (which must be mainly empty since they ceased to stop at both Broxbourne and Bishops Stortford intermediate stations) will no doubt ensure they benefit most from Crossrail 2. Cambridge will also exert pressure, and the Hertford branch will be further disadvantaged by all concerned. Stanstead Express has been very clever, securing new carriages, and then removing the stops that enable the service to be used by commuters. This should be censured, but I doubt if anyone is brave enough. How East Herts and the County Councils can think it can berate the train operating companies whilst allowing this to happen, and for it to become more difficult for commuters to get to and park at stations amazes me. For a decade now, successive train operating companies for the Hertford branch and Hertford loop have been promising new trains, longer trains, quicker trains, more frequent services, and all they have delivered is refurbished interiors and new paint jobs on the outside. I'm glad I don't have to commute!

Back to the bus; the 331 doesn't seem to have any consistently timed connection to other services. A journey to the proposed "hub" at Stevenage will require 3 buses and take from 2 hours to 3 hours 30 minutes, depending on the wait at Hertford bus station which for most return journeys would be 1 hour. According to the Arriva journey planner, a journey to Bishops Stortford, 7 miles away, requires at least three buses, and travel via Harlow. There is also the 386 bus on Tuesdays and Thursdays to Bishops Stortford. This route goes to Stevenage in the opposite direction, but doesn't pass through Braughing and we'd have to change at Buntingford or walk to Puckeridge. There has been talk of a new Buntingford to Stevenage rail link which would make perfect sense. The 331 and 396 services should be combined. It doesn't make sense that the 331 goes from Ware College to Hertford at either around 20 or 45 minutes past the hour (though not every hour) and the 396 does the same journey at 11 and 45 minutes past the hour.

Buses into Hertford ought to stop at both Hertford rail stations as well as the bus station.

Cycling is out, even for pleasure, because of the speeds that cars travel at along rural roads, and safety is worse because of the hills and bends inhibiting visibility. It's a shame no-one had the energy to turn the Buntingford branch line into a cycle path. Is something along these lines possible?

All trunk roads should have track laid alongside, with points at which road vehicles can drive on to railway vehicles, just like the Channel Tunnel provision.

**Tim, Braughing**



# I N T E R F A C E S

## Hertfordshire CC consultative LTP4 – brief critique and response

### Purpose

This paper offers a brief critique of Hertfordshire County Council’s draft LTP4 document Transport Vision 2050, based on the writer’s long experience with transport development, especially in Hertfordshire. It offers some comments on the principles and problems set out in the draft LTP4, and sets out proposals to manage and invest in the movement of people and goods in Hertfordshire

### Summary of main issues

The writer generally welcomes the objectives and priorities set out by HCC in its draft LTP4. This particularly applies to the hierarchy of transport users (policy PO1) and the main objectives and principles (Figures 5 and 6). However, the main contents, especially in terms of the recommended major schemes, are far from welcome if HCC really intends to achieve quality transport and living as set out in the Foreword.

The major weaknesses are considered to be:

- The County structure is based on a significant number of medium to small towns, each of which has its own transport patterns and problems, but the major focus of the document is on interurban movement.
- Despite the priorities stated for sustainable lifestyles and travel, much of the focus is on car travel and on very high investment on key key junctions.
- While a lot of work has clearly been done to analyse traffic flows and congestion at key points, there is no analysis public transport problems, while proposals for its improvement are concepts only at this stage.

Four other key issues arise:

- The time frame adopted for the plan period is 35 years, with no indication of phases in development, perhaps encouraging more focus on large scale problems, rather than the myriad of local problems, and on major schemes.
- The importance of land use development planning is mentioned but no analyses or recommendations are provided.
- Achieving greater effectiveness through changed transport patterns involves other agencies, especially the district councils, who are responsible for land use planning and some local environmental and maintenance functions.
- The focus is almost entirely on passenger travel with little or no mention of the movement and delivery of goods.

The writer suggests that the draft LTP4 might better focus on

- analyses and proposals for walking, cycling, local public transport and local highway movement
- establishing a sound framework for a high quality movement system within each urban area
- specifically, the potential for a cross County rail transit system



- identifying the potential for this to achieve the draft LTP4 stated goals without major road projects.

## **Weaknesses in the draft LTP4**

### Urban and interurban movement

The main focus of the draft LTP4 is on large scale problems, especially traffic congestion at principal road junctions, in particular on the east-west (A414) corridor. This reflects a concentration on interurban movement, especially travel by car. In consequence the main proposals, supported in some cases by detail analyses, focus on schemes to reduce severe problems at these junctions (Major Schemes 2, 3 and 4). Some of these are provisionally costed at around £200/300 million each, even though their main impact appears to be on congestion occurring on weekday peak periods only rather than enhancing access and activity levels overall.

Hertfordshire is often defined in terms of its large numbers of medium to small towns. In all these amount to about three dozen significant settlements, each with its own pattern of residential and other development. Each forms an important centre of activity, certainly for local populations and in some cases for wider populations too. For example, Watford, St Albans and Stevenage each include a major retail centre, while Hatfield is a main centre for high tech employment and research; other towns each have their particular roles. A high proportion of total travel within the County takes place within these towns, and each one has its own transport patterns and problems.

However, the document makes very little attempt to consider the patterns and problems of local movement, even in broad principles, let alone in more detail related to the various towns. Policy PO6 does indicate a more local focus but it appears to concentrate on problems within areas rather than understanding what is happening overall. So the draft LTP4 fails to address a large proportion of the total movement within the County and in consequence it does not develop proposals for improving local networks and changing travel behaviour significantly at these levels.

This has two very serious implications. Firstly, weaknesses in accessibility locally mean that centres in each town are probably not performing as well as they might do, in terms of the local economy and also in relation to quality of life in the towns. Secondly, improving the ease and attractiveness of local movement must be an important part of achieving modal shift and in reducing overall travel distances, thus constraining longer car journeys and hence traffic congestion on principal roads. This would enable such congestion to be constrained or even reduced, removing any need to prioritise spending on major road junctions. Thus addressing these two factors could play a crucial role in achieving the draft LTP4 objectives and principles (as defined in Figures 5 and 6).

### The potential of sustainable transport

References to sustainable transport occur regularly in the draft LTP4. Modal shift is generally identified to include walking, cycling and (local) public transport. However, in practice the draft LTP4 sees it primarily as an option for development only where there are suitable

conditions and funding, and considering it primarily as an attractive alternative to (growing) car use. Major Scheme 1 would provide investment as 'sustainable travel towns' for four larger towns, primarily after removal of through traffic by heavy road investment.

Yet a very great deal of existing travel is already sustainable in all of Hertfordshire's towns. Almost certainly a high proportion of movement within every town is on foot and a moderate amount on local public transport, with some on taxis. There is some limited use of bicycles. Much of this is because many people lack a car anyway, although some will be because the option of using a car for local journeys is simply unattractive. Local access on foot and bus almost certainly play a significant role in the health of most retail centres. They have an even more important role in enabling many less advantaged citizens to access goods, facilities and community activities, as well as maintain social contacts (friends and family). Thus they underpin the quality of life, seen as important in the draft LTP4; Figure 5 highlights the objectives in terms of people and places.

But currently provision for walking ranges from poor to appalling. Pavements and footpaths are in many places overgrown, cluttered with litter or leaves, poorly maintained, in places cluttered with temporary obstructions (parked cars or advertising boards) and with permanent obstructions such as lampposts, traffic signs and bollards. Pedestrians can experience problems or at least discomfort where they encounter cyclists on footways or have to cross roads. However, the draft LTP4 does not even offer a framework for strategies to improve local walking conditions. In this way it omits a major part of existing and potential travel in the County. Thus it fails to address a major potential component for changing travel patterns away from car use.

Walking is also fundamental to the effectiveness of local public transport. If it is uncomfortable or difficult to walk to the bus (or tram) stop, then the total journey by public transport becomes less attractive.

The same situation applies to cycling. This currently plays a very limited role in the County but nonetheless has considerable potential to provide for far more short to medium length journeys. Policy PO2 does aim for a 'step change in cycling' but only in a limited number of larger towns. This ignores the potential across all of the County's medium and smaller towns.

#### Developing effective public transport

Local public transport primarily involves bus services, whose market and operations focus on bringing people in and out of town centres and a few key points outside (large employment areas, colleges). Some operations are of good quality and offer high frequencies, and most services are run soundly. But the overall product is utilitarian in nature, many buses being basic in equipment and running irregularly and sometime unreliably in roads cluttered by high numbers of moving and parked cars on often poor road surfaces. Services and their promotion are fragmented because of the commercially driven regulatory regime. In particular tickets are mostly for individual journeys rather than available on a local network and checking each ticket's validity by the driver takes time. With reduced public support from the County Council and the general decline in operating conditions, services are slowly declining in coverage, with virtually no bus routes being operated evenings and Sundays.

Even stabilising these trends must involve significant coordinating management from a level outside existing bus companies. Bus operators control their drivers and vehicles but have little influence on the road system and its use, which constitute the track system for buses. Improving the operation of buses therefore requires understanding of how and where problems on the road affect them and developing means to remove barriers at congestion points. This will involve changing priorities on highways. The draft LTP4 is looking to develop a core network of interurban routes (Policy PO4). In practice the main problems found on such routes are still within towns and it is here that providing priorities for reliable running are most difficult to secure. (See the writer's 2004 report on the Lea Valley Green Route, which analyses the situation in some depth.<sup>1</sup>) Securing sufficient bus priorities on streets within towns would also underpin more attractive and efficient urban bus travel, which would benefit urban activity levels and quality of life.

The draft LTP4 concentrates on the transport problems across the County and, as part of this, suggests that a cross-County transit system has a role to play. While the County is served by several major railway lines oriented north – south, there is no east – west line. Yet the major problem points in interurban travel lie across the east – west alignment (broadly the A4141 corridor) and so the draft LTP4 is a valid one. However, its project (MS5) is for a busway, identified as only a concept at this stage, with no indication of the basis on which this mode has been selected.

Busways to date have not so far proved to be very attractive in the UK: the best known ones have been built to use former inter urban railway alignments but without significant priority for operation within towns.<sup>2</sup> Provision of an effective cross County bus transit system would require addressing the barriers to effective operation of other bus services set out above. The writer suggests that his published proposal for a cross County tramway (light rail) line would achieve considerable gains in both interurban travel and local access.<sup>3</sup>

## **Other key issues**

### The timescale of the draft LTP4

The draft LTP4 adopts a long time frame, about 35 years. So it focuses on a target year a generation beyond the present. Furthermore it does not break the intervening years into any phases within which particular steps might be taken. By thus looking more to major schemes achievable only over longer time periods, it reduces any apparent need to understand the 'here and now' which underpins current travel patterns and provision.

As discussed above, total travel within the County involves a myriad of local problems and opportunities which together constitute a large number of small problems and potential solutions. Over a long period much can be achieved by addressing these on a gradual basis, perhaps much more than by building the occasional 'mega' road junction, and with better

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<sup>1</sup> Reg Harman, *Review of the Lea Valley Green Route*, July 2004

<sup>2</sup> Reg Harman, *Busways: do they work in practice?*, TAUT, September 2014

<sup>3</sup> Reg Harman, *Transit through the Metropolitan Green Belt*, TAUT, September 2016

return on the funds invested. To do this, the plan period would need to be divided into periods (phases), with the contents and timing of programmes and projects set within these.

### The significance of land use planning

The draft LTP4 identifies to the principle of integrated land use planning as key factor in transport planning and thus in transport provision (Figure 6). This link is essential, as it is widely accepted that the form of development strongly affects travel patterns. However, it does not provide any analyses of the key aspects in this nor offer any structure or proposals on what principals might be followed. Land use planning in Hertfordshire over recent decades has involved continual spreading out of settlements plus large commercial, industrial and public sites outside urban centres. This in turn has encouraged more individual travel over distances and reduces the opportunities for local travel. Achieving the objectives and principles set out in the draft LTP4 requires such continuing dispersal to be urgently addressed.

### District councils and other agencies

Responsibility for land use planning which, as indicated, has a very substantial influence on transport, lies in the hands of the district councils. In this they have to relate to the developers who own and manage land and buildings. Furthermore they exercise direct control over some aspects of highway use, notably through management of some local functions such as highway clearing and parking control. Thus district councils play a major role in transport in Hertfordshire.

The main transport agencies also play a significant role in travel patterns in transport provision. These include Highways England (trunk roads), Network Rail and the train services franchisees (railways), bus operators, and road freight operators. In addition the police manage highway use through responsibilities for traffic law.

Other agencies can also affect transport through their approach to client access. This may be chosen by the agency or required by national policy. Education forms an important example, as the freedom of choice in schools at all levels generates substantially more complex travel, and probably more use of cars, than might be the case if all publicly controlled schools at least served strictly their local catchments.

Achieving greater effectiveness through changed transport patterns therefore has to involve these various bodies fully, in terms of both political and professional relationships. At the heart of this relationship there must be clear and agreed assessment of the transport implications of changes, whether in transport itself or in other areas such as land use planning. There is little evidence of addressing this within the draft LTP4. Large vehicles are also seen as a serious concern on smaller and local roads.

### The significance of goods transport

The draft LTP4 focuses almost entirely on passenger travel. However, the movement and delivery of goods forms a significant element in overall transport levels. It can also have a substantial effect on local movement. Older centres especially often lack sufficient provision for goods access to meet all demands comfortably, especially as the nature of goods

movement (logistics) has been changing substantially in recent decades. This can result in large goods vehicles unloading at narrow points, causing obstruction to both pedestrian and car movement.

### **Proposals for focus and action**

Following on from the various issues considered above, the writer proposes the following steps should be included in development of LTP4 policies and projects.

- Set out a cohesive analysis of transport patterns. This should cover all travel modes, with at least some broad indicators of trends by mode and of the patterns of urban and interurban movement. It should also identify broad patterns of goods vehicles' roles and patterns. Achieving modal shift is only possible if the current patterns and purposes of this are properly known.
- Establish a set of principles for local transport management and planning, especially identifying how the prioritisation of the modes of transport (policy PO1) might be achieved in practice.
- Establish a set of clear targets for provision of effective pedestrian networks in urban areas. This could act as the basis of local studies, joint between HCC, district councils and other interests, to develop networks specific for each urban area. The role of pedestrian links to local bus stops should be considered in this.
- Establish a set of principles and practices for developing cycling, on similar lines to walking.
- Establish an effective strategic network for bus services, covering urban networks and interurban routes. Identify needs for bus priorities to ensure reliable and comfortable operation. Set out principles for effective bus stop location, especially taking into account local footway networks. Set up practices for ensuring that buses can pick up and set down comfortably. Consider application to community and similar minibus services and to taxis.
- Establish principles and practices for local management highway space and traffic flow, particularly based on the priorities set out in policy PO1. Use this as a basis for reviewing priorities for highway use and local projects in the County's urban areas.
- Develop the case for a cross-County transit line, using the writer's proposal for a tramway line as the basis. Assess the full costs, benefits and implications. Identify clearly the role this would play within local and interurban public transport, especially in complementing bus services.

### **Conclusions**

The writer welcomes the objectives and principles set out in LTP4, including the Foreword, and concurs with the statement that "... we cannot simply build our way out of trouble and we must consider ways of reducing the ever increasing demand for road space." However, it is disappointing that much of the contents focus precisely on interurban movement and hence on projects reflecting this, in particular to increase road capacity. The writer considers that study and investment should instead be focused on the myriad of local movements within each urban area, aiming to raise the quality of access and activity on a sustainable basis, so as to underpin the County's further development as an attractive area in which to live. Particular emphasis should be placed on local walking networks, priority for local bus routes and creation of a cross County light rail transit line.

28<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Cllr John Wyllie  
East Herts District Council  
Wallfields  
Pegs Lane  
Hertford, SG13 8EQ



Dear Cllr John Wyllie

**East Herts Green Party Response on Sustainable Transport**

We are glad of the opportunity to give our views on Sustainable Transport in East Herts. Our views are shared by the Business Committee of East Herts Green Party and members of Hertford Transition. I know that Hertford Civic Society has similar opinions too. Some of our members attended the Transport Workshop held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016. We are all concerned about the dangerous levels of air pollution in East Herts (next worst performing area outside London) and it is reported in the media that the UK has the highest number of deaths related to air pollution in Europe.

We have a major concern that whilst you are consulting on “Sustainable Transport”, services that currently underpin sustainable transport may be chipped away at through cuts due to reduction in funding, e.g. Shuttle bus services to hospitals, country bus services. Secondly there are proposals to redevelop certain areas such as Bircherley Green but we have not seen evidence of measures to improve sustainable transport, e.g. electric car charging points in Bircherley Green multi-storey car park or re-routing buses so that people can step off the bus and do a food shops at Sainsbury’s or Tesco’s as they currently do at Waitrose.

We understand that there is a lot of support in certain circles for a Hertford by-pass. We have major concerns that this will just increase the levels of pollution and the associated health problems and encourage car use. It is most important that the Council prioritises reduction in the use of diesel vehicles. How will new roads or by-passes lead to the reduction of use of diesel vehicles and carbon emissions in East Herts?

We would like the term “sustainable transport” to include reference to other sustainable modes of transport, including mobility vehicles, scooters (excluding carbon-powered), and other human-powered vehicles as well as cycles.

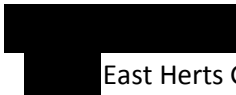
We believe that you need to think outside of the box and use the money earmarked for a by-pass/roads in more imaginative ways to increase use of public transport:

- electric-powered taxis and buses
- electric-powered vehicles used by the public sector, e.g. community buses
- cross-route trams

- improved train services
- free bus travel for all???
- enforce supermarkets to provide fast and frequent bus hoppers
- park and ride
- more safe cycle routes, e.g. lease land beside roads or compulsory purchase
- increase school bus services and school walking buses
- large employers discouraging car use amongst their workforce through increasing the cost of parking and driving to work
- use funds to create local community green power to run cheaper, greener public transport, e.g. solar panels on public buildings.
- Implement the practices of cities with high standards such as Bristol

We hope that our views will be carefully considered and taken into account when implementing this vision. We look forward to hearing how Sustainable Transport will link into Vision 2050, Task and Finish groups, Hertford and Stortford consultations etc. and feed into the District Plan.

Yours sincerely



East Herts Green Party

2017 January 18

## SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT

### BETTER MANAGEMENT OF PARKING

#### SUMMARY

The present parking situation is thus demonstrably not sustainable.

It is unsatisfactory in several significant ways. It involves too few vacancies, arbitrary maximum lengths of stay, and discrimination concerning who may park.

This state of affairs is caused by the current management approach, which gives top priority to keeping parking charges low in the widespread but mistaken belief that this maximises benefit for the community and its businesses.

This sub-market pricing encourages additional use of cars, not only for the primary purpose of journeys but also through driving around near the destination seeking a vacant parking space (which will often be inconveniently distant from the destination), a phenomenon known as "mobile parking". Both aspects increase congestion, pollution, and overall inefficiency of the transport system.

These problems are likely to diminish in the medium term. The self-driving taxi, which needs no parking at the trip origin or destination, is expected substantially to replace the private car, as it will cost less per kilometre to use than one's own vehicle. Nevertheless, for the decade or two until this occurs, it is worthwhile remedying them.

The root of the present situation is that parking is not being managed as the market commodity it is. Yet by reflecting this, in particular by introducing market-clearing pricing, vacancies could immediately be created everywhere, parking space would become optimally used, and all the present counter-productive length-of-stay and "residents only" rules could be abandoned. The added convenience would enhance business in towns (the absence of vacancies is far more detrimental to business than an increase in parking charges). Market pricing would also allow an appropriate return on the significant investment in parking. Moreover, it would result in a substantial environmental improvement through increased road efficiency and through reducing the number of trips or transferring them from the private car to other modes.

One argument against greater use of pricing has been that it involves high administration costs. This argument is false. Technology is now available to allow the driver to be charged for exactly the time his vehicle is parked, automatic monthly billing covering all parking used for a vehicle during the month, and automatic enforcement. This will result in much improved efficiency and lower administration costs than now experienced. Such technology is increasingly being used in other countries, but is not yet common in UK.



## Sustainable Transport: Thoughts on the town of Bishop's Stortford.

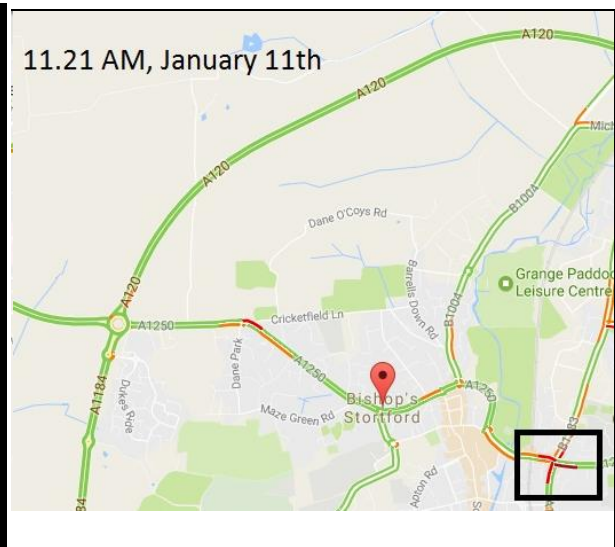
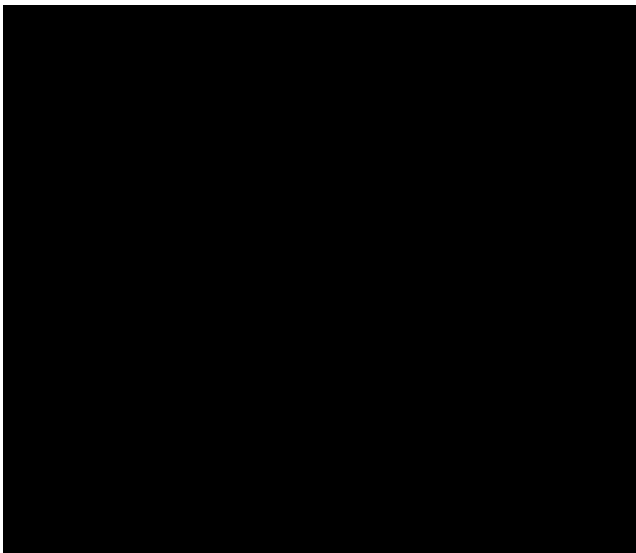
### Introduction

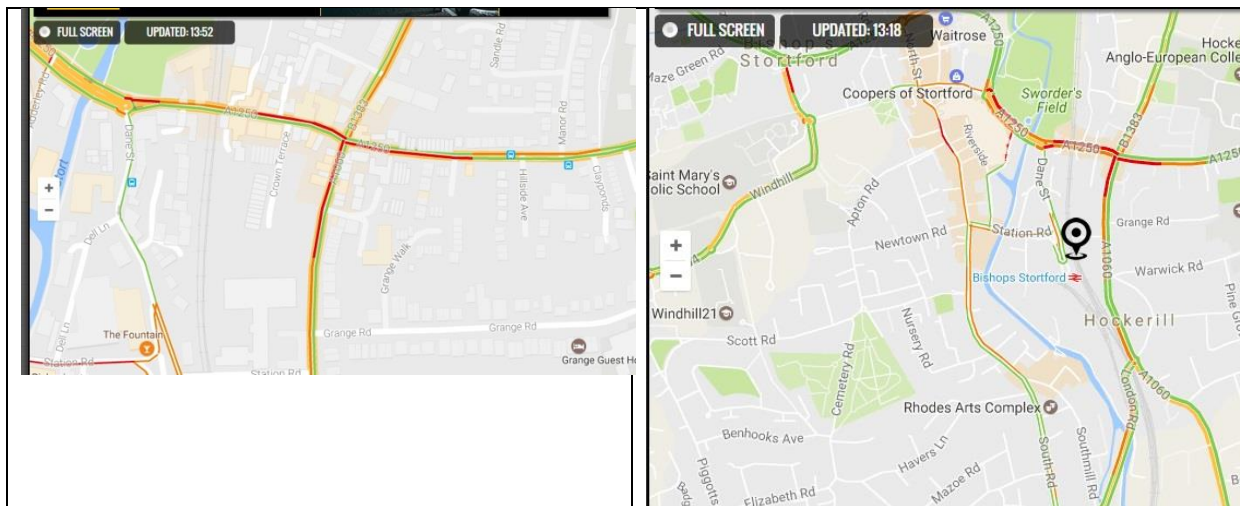
Today, an interesting article appeared on the Telegraph (Holdsworth, 2017). Here is a picture from the article, with the caption: "The Great Smog of 1952. Sorry, 2017".



CREDIT: TOBY MELVILLE/REUTERS

Its title, "The very air we breathe is poisoning us. This is what politicians must do to fix it" applies to Bishop's Stortford. Below is the road [REDACTED] [REDACTED] over the course of 24 hours. [REDACTED] just off the lights, I had not realised quite how bad the traffic was, thinking it was mainly during rush hour. I was obviously mistaken:





The Hockerill lights, where as you well know levels of NO<sub>2</sub> are almost double the legal limit on a regular basis, are a place where it is dangerous to breathe. This situation has not changed for ten years. These are ten years of bad health for the public. Moreover, they put students and parents off when it comes to walking to school, 'you just cannot breathe' and 'I'd take the train from Stansted Mountfitchet if I didn't need a gas mask to go through the Hockerill lights'. On March 10, 2016, lorry drivers were stopped by the police on their way into the town prompted by a report the previous week showing that Stortford has the second-highest level of damaging nitrogen dioxide in the East of England – with concentration of the pollutant almost double the legal limit (Herts and Essex Observer, March 03, 2016)

Even though the checks make some sense, as Dunmow Road has a 7.5 tonne weight limit, trucks are not to the main culprits in the story on nitrogen dioxide levels. According to the Norwegian Institute of Transport Economics, "Euro 6 type approved private cars with diesel engines have 4-20 times higher emission of NO<sub>x</sub> in city traffic and during cold weather than the type approval limit value (0,08 g/km). The average emission of NO<sub>x</sub> from the tested Euro 6 private cars with diesel engines was also about four times higher than the average emission from the tested city buses and heavy vehicles with Euro VI engines (NITE, date unclear, see website under References).

The Telegraph also explains that "Diesel produces less carbon dioxide than petrol but is far worse in terms of nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter – tiny particles that embed themselves deep in our lungs. Air pollution exacerbates asthma, bronchitis and heart problems, as well as stunting children's lung growth. It's also responsible for shortening the lives of 9,500 people in London each year. This isn't a problem that only shows up once or twice a year. Pollution monitoring stations in London regularly reach their annual limits within a couple of weeks; roads are filthy year round because of all that diesel. Oxford Street and Brixton Road are some of the worst streets in the world for nitrogen dioxide."

It is as clear as daylight that, unless diesel vehicles are pushed away from our roads, no issue can be solved. During recent bad air pollution spells, major cities abroad, like Paris, Madrid and Oslo, banned some or all cars from their centres. The UK, the country where public transport in the form of trains was invented, is sadly lagging behind: the World Health Organisation has clearly stated that the UK should do more to tackle air pollution (The Telegraph, 12 May 2016), as 80 per cent of UK towns and cities on its new global pollution database exceed health guidelines.

### **Solutions rather than Complaints**

The answer to the question on how Sustainable Transport can be implemented is clear: by ensuring that citizens favour walking and cycling to using the car.

Any discussion on Sustainable Transport that fails to understand that the 'average' car used for short distance travel for the purposes of shopping, collecting and taking children and young adults to school, as well as simply providing cover to one's head is to be seen as detrimental to our environment will automatically fail to act upon our current knowledge of the scientifically-proven damage to citizens' lungs.

**Sustainable transport in Bishop's Stortford should thus not be about redirecting traffic, but informing diesel car users that their vehicles are harming children and damaging health.** How can this be done? (Short term ideas are shown in points 1-5, whereas points 4-onwards relate to medium term solutions).

- 1. By asking every single person living in Bishop's Stortford to leave their car at home.** This is something that can be done in posters over town, by social media, by writing a letter to all members of the constituency. This is something the MP could do, or each councillor could do. This is something easy. This is something that should be done right now. To make users aware that they have legs and can walk, the town could be closed to traffic once a month. Schools can be asked to write to parents to walk their children to school. We should not be seeing hundreds of cars inhabited with one driver only on our streets. We should not be seeing cars running while not moving.
- 2. By promoting shared transport** at the workplace and in the house of each member of the constituency. Trusted carpooling Apps (<https://www.blablacar.co.uk/>) exist. Bla Bla car is a very successful scheme that can be used to organise lifts (The Telegraph, 2015).
- 3. By making driving less appealing and lower status than walking.**



World War Funny History Iia Guerr >

US propaganda poster stressing the importance of car pooling to saving fuel and, by extension, helping the war effort.

[See More](#)

Diesel drivers could have a cap to the times they can enter town (as has been done in Milan, Italy) every month, or be charged when they enter town. This would make them think twice before entering Bishop's Stortford. Drivers should be informed that a car is a rather large item for one person to move. More fashionable alternatives to walking (scooters, skate-boarding, parcourre) could also be promoted by the council. Free bicycles or free helmets would also help. Here are some examples of propaganda produced in the US during the war to promote car sharing.



**4. By providing**

empty, dirty, do

**appealing transport.** Stortford buses are Why is it so? Perhaps because they look not appear to arrive on time, and every time I have taken them the driver has been rude. They seem to be considered as 'low status' forms of transport. This has to change. Why not provide Stortford with small, comfortable, friendly and free-of-charge shuttle buses, financed by charges to diesel cars? This is what is being done in Westminster Council, where diesel cars are charged extra for parking:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jan/27/westminster-council-first-charge-extra-park-diesel-cars-air-pollution-emissions>. **An**

**improved Bus (or light-rail) service would be: free for residents and workers; clean (no diesel buses); funded by a congestion charge; a relief for parents from having to drive their children to school; safe and friendly.**

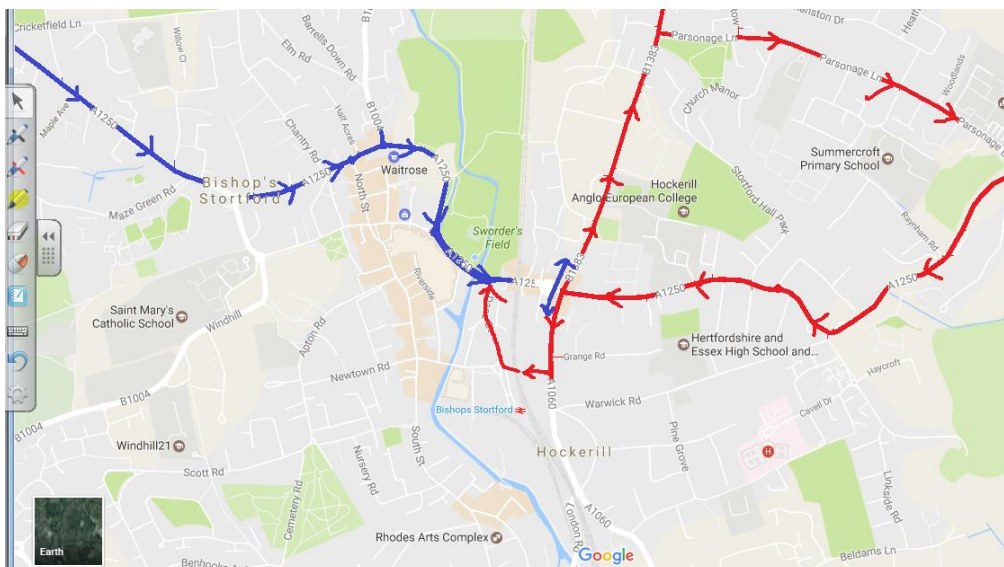
- 5. By having 'no-car' awareness days when citizens become aware that they have legs.** During recent bad air pollution spells, major cities (Paris, Madrid and Oslo) banned some or all cars from their centres. This may seem like a drastic measure, but is very effective in opening the eyes of the public to a problem that can easily be ignored.



6. **By helping schools to fund and organise buses for their students and ensuring that road signs divert the traffic from town.**
7. **By limiting the in-flow of traffic, particularly diesel, into town.** This connects with the previous point. In London, Khan plans to buy no new diesel-only buses from 2018 and to have a Ultra Low Emission Zone. This doesn't come into force until 2020 and only covers the central and relatively small Congestion Charge Zone. The same could be done here by charging non-residents who enter town with polluting vehicles.



8. **By providing cycle lanes – see only rough idea below:** (roads showed in red and blue would be one-way and would all be provided with cycle lanes.)



**By organising discount on trains for those who currently work in Bishop's Stortford but drive rather than use trains.** This applies to workers from Stansted Mountfitchet, Cambridge, Newport et cetera.

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4<sup>th</sup> December 2016

**Transition Hertford Response to HCC Transport Vision 2050**

Having attended the Transport Workshop on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2016 and read the Transport Vision document, we would like to add our views to the detailed comments already given by Hertford Civic Society, which we fully support.

As is well documented, Hertfordshire has one of the highest CO2 and Nitrogen levels in the country and possibly the most tarmac.

If we are to address this problem, a great deal more work has to be done to provide an alternative to car use.

We would like to see far more consideration given to alternative forms of transport, and are concerned that the subject of 'Sustainable Transport' is not given a serious mention or consideration until very late in your report.

Since the report came out we note that the train service from Hertford to Stevenage is about to be cut with disastrous consequences for school children among many others.

We would like to see HCC working with train and bus operators to ensure a reliable and expanded service, which will help to encourage car users off the road.

It is noticeable that during school holidays the traffic congestion is markedly reduced, so providing some incentive to schools and parents to find alternative ways for children to reach their schools will not only help reduce the congestion but also reduce air pollution, particularly around schools.

The £175m cost of building a new bypass to Hertford, with the almost inevitable infill of house building and huge loss of valuable land, we believe is unsustainable and probably unnecessary by the time the road is built, given the fast moving world of technology that we are living in.

It has been shown many times that building more roads increases the number of vehicles.

The traffic engineers are trained to use traffic engineering to solve problems, but, given climate change we must think outside the box. We have a duty of care towards the planet's life-support systems, and towards future generations and their quality of life.

It is selfish and short-sighted to enjoy our car-centred life today at the expense of our grandchildren's health.

We need some joined-up thinking at county council level.

Things to consider would include:

1. **Facilitating cycle use.** All county institutions including schools could offer **incentives**.
2. County and District councils should organise **car-sharing schemes** with their employees, as several large private companies do.

3. They should consider **gradually replacing their fleet vehicles with electric ones**. For instance the meals-on-wheels vehicles stand most of the time, and could be **EVs which use slow chargers**. (The cost of their installation is minimal).

4. **Installing of EV chargers in local authority car parks** (for use of employees and customers) has started, and should be expanded.

5. If local authorities really want to lead the way by good example, they could start a new ball rolling by **offering incentives to staff to replace their private vehicle with an EV**.

6. Given that the document identifies lack of east-west public transport links, the possibilities of a **tramway** from Harlow to St. Albans should be thoroughly investigated.

7. It is hoped that all local authorities are always investigating ways of **increasing** the role of **working from home**.

We would like to encourage HCC to lead the way in working towards a properly sustainable and healthy future for the county, by encouraging alternatives to car use and not building more roads.



## HCC TRANSPORT VISION 2050: AN ALTERNATIVE VISION FOCUSING PARTICULARLY ON HERTFORD

These comments, amounting to an alternative vision, have been assembled following a meeting and much follow-up work on the part of a working group of volunteers recruited from the membership (some 300 households) of Hertford Civic Society; the working group included one or two people with specific transport policy expertise. All members accessible by email have had the opportunity to comment on a draft circulated to them; a good many have done so and their responses were very useful in finalising this response. While these comments do have a Hertford focus, they could also have useful implications for other towns (such as Bishops Stortford – see paras 11 and 13). We recognise that it is important to take a broader, county-based perspective.

2. In terms of Hertfordshire County Council's *Transport Vision 2050* document and its format, we are responding particularly to the question posed at the end (page 35): "Limiting future levels of traffic growth and improving walking, cycling and public transport provision will be very hard to achieve without policies which encourage less car use and help to enhance provision of and investment in more sustainable modes. What policies should Hertfordshire consider adopting to achieve this?"

3. We salute the presentation of the *Transport Vision* document and, at times, recognise readily that sensible ideas are being floated but, ultimately, we feel that too many important threats and opportunities have been missed or downplayed.

### **Summary: the underplayed threat and the missing opportunities**

4. If there is a single glaring omission in this report, it is that:

- Pollution associated with traffic congestion, and the need to tackle this more fully and speedily, if lives are to be saved (this is not mentioned in the foreword or the vision chart/Fig 1, though it is introduced alongside much other detail on page 10);
- Symptomatic of this lack of emphasis, there is no substantive mention of the importance of reducing the need to travel. For instance, it is not directly mentioned in the foreword or in Fig 1, though there are some allusions later in the report.
- With recent improvements in technology, it is no longer as necessary for office-based staff to commute to their workplaces. (For example, in London, in the HQ of the Ministry of Justice, a huge building housing several thousand people, all staff are expected to work from home two days a week.)

5. Linked closely to this, opportunities are missed or downplayed, to articulate the full range of ways of enticing people out of their cars. We present a case study of how rush-hour congestion in Hertford could be eased without road building, as mentioned in the first bullet point below and later in more detail:

- In the context of congestion in Hertford, no mention is made of the possibility of HCC ‘leading from the front’ in terms of setting a good example of how staff in a large organisation (HCC HQ) can reduce their travel-to-work car usage. There are other large organisations that have been doing substantially better in terms of facing this kind of challenge, even if there has recently been some fresh interest on the part of HCC.
- The suggested option of an extremely expensive bypass in Hertford indicates that, even on its own ‘home ground’, HCC has not managed to think through the process – which would need to be gradual – whereby key groups of people could be persuaded to do less in the way of single-person commuter car journeys.
- There is, in the *Vision* document as a whole, an over-emphasis on road building which, if implemented, would merely increase traffic volumes and worsen pollution. While a pair of bus rapid transport systems is suggested, trams remain a more promising option for enticing larger numbers of people from their cars, on the all-important east-west route.

6. An important underlying weakness in the *Vision* document is that it makes little attempt to consider patterns and problems of local movement, within particular urban settlements. Which urban areas are, relatively speaking, best or worst in terms of traffic and pollution, and why? Which fare best in terms of levels of rush-hour walking, cycling, car sharing and public transport usage? How do local patterns of movement in individual urban areas contribute ultimately to the total pattern across the county? Does the County Council know the answers to these questions? If it does not know the answers, might it need to do some more research before unleashing new proposals?

### **Pollution and air quality issues**

7. Hertfordshire (and of course Hertford itself) suffers from serious air quality issues. One set of key junctions in Hertford is already the focus for an **Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)**. It is however important to recognise that pollution is a general problem across the County as a whole: thus Hertford is for instance downwind of St Albans, Hatfield, Welwyn and parts of the M25, all of which are apt to disseminate particulate pollution in the direction of Hertford. And lives are certainly being shortened across the County, as the next two paragraphs show. Ultimately, all of this reflects the lack of good-quality east-west public transport. All the current commuter routes are north-south.

8. Recent statistics published by Public Health England (part of the Department of Health) show that ‘the fraction of mortality attributable to particulate air pollution’ (which at least in South East England is largely due to motor traffic, especially diesel vehicles) is higher in Hertfordshire than in any other area outside London. (Source: ‘Public Health Outcomes Framework’, November 2013.) In London, just over 7% of deaths are attributable to particulate air pollution; next comes Hertfordshire at 6%, whereas equivalent figures for England as a whole, or for the East of England, are about 5%. What the *Vision* document does note (page 10) is that Hertfordshire has 30 Air Quality Management Areas, and that ‘approx. 514 deaths per year in the County are thought to be attributable to fine particulate air pollution.’ This represents over 10 times as many deaths as those resulting from traffic accidents. The *Vision* document also notes (again on the page 10) that, ‘on average, road

use by each resident produces 2.3kt (kilotonnes) of carbon dioxide, which is higher than the East of England average.’ No mention is made of Nitrogen Dioxide as generated by diesel vehicles in particular, although only recently (November 2016) the Government has acknowledged that pollution from diesel engines will need to be tackled more vigorously, particularly in urban areas.

9. To reinforce this point, when the County Council consulted the Environment Agency earlier this year (2016) in connection with a planning application for phased extraction of sand and gravel at Wadesmill Road to the North of Hertford (for the proposed Bengoe Quarry) the Environment Agency stated **“the site is located in an area that has been the subject of significant concern to us with regards to air quality. In particular, there already are high levels of airborne particulate pollution and Nitrogen Dioxide...”**. If the Environment Agency has these concerns, for a site not close to any formal Air Quality Management Area or to the A414, should not the County Council be putting a much stronger emphasis on the need to foster alternatives to car use, than it actually does in its *Vision* document? And, in the light of that November 2016 court case, is not the time now right to ensure that people in Hertfordshire who want to travel, as many do, on an East-West basis between different towns, can actually have a realistic opportunity to do this on reasonably rapid public transport, as opposed to the meandering bus journeys currently on offer? (This is a point that we will return to later in this response, in the next section.)

## **HERTFORD AS A CASE STUDY**

10. The first point about a proposed bypass for Hertford is that it would take too long, perhaps around a decade, to implement. That implies a decade of not tackling pollution in Hertford, which is surely not acceptable.

11. The other reason why we doubt that any bypass would ultimately reduce pollution is that, once constructed, the tract of land that would then be enclosed would almost immediately start to be filled in with new housing, which would generate further traffic and more pollution (also strongly affecting the character of this market town). This is precisely what has happened at Buntingford and Bishops Stortford. Bishops Stortford, as the other large town in East Herts alongside Hertford, is a particularly relevant example. Construction of a bypass there has done nothing to relieve traffic congestion in the town, or to ameliorate its Air Quality Management Area.

12. A more timely strategy would develop Hertford as a sustainable town, on a rapid though still phased basis. Hertford offers exceptional opportunities to do this. Local government is by far the largest employer. The car parks at Wallfields and County Hall are substantially larger than all the public car parks in the centre of the town: together these two local government car parks account for some 1300 spaces, as opposed to around 900 public spaces in the town centre car parks. And, unsurprisingly, much of the rush-hour traffic turning off the A414 at the Richard Hale roundabout is heading for either Wallfields or County Hall (as was mentioned in the HCC presentation on the bypass on 30 September 2016).

13. There are some major employers both in the public and private sectors which do a great deal more to ensure that car use by their staff is well managed, utilising both positive and negative incentives. Some of these organisations are supported by Liftshare, which exists to promote car sharing. Its website carries case studies of well-known companies which have found it worthwhile to foster car sharing for their employees, as this is good for morale and productivity, besides offering substantial, measurable reductions in car use in the vicinity of their main workplaces ([business.liftshare.com/business-case-studies](http://business.liftshare.com/business-case-studies)). Occasionally this website is a little coy about exactly what (dis)incentives have been used to promote car sharing, though there is no doubt that both the ethos of the participating company and the offering of seemingly modest incentives (such as the most highly desirable parking spaces being reserved for car-sharers) can do quite a lot. For instance, at Jaguar Land Rover, some seven thousand staff have registered for at least occasional car sharing, while almost three thousand do so on a daily basis. (Another large organisation which has a well-established commitment to car sharing by staff is Heathrow Airport, an example which could perhaps be relevant to the other large town in East Herts, Bishops Stortford, where Stansted Airport surely generates much road traffic by staff, who work for a large number of different companies.)

14. Here, we are mainly concerned with Hertford, where the two large local authorities , which account for so much rush-hour traffic, are uniquely well placed, jointly, to lead the way in promoting alternatives to individual car use, and ultimately to bring about environmental benefits on a large scale.

15. Before introducing the following case study, from Southampton, it is vital to emphasise that Southampton is not Hertford. First, Southampton is a single conurbation. Secondly, it has been implementing some fairly vigorous measures against pollution for over two decades, so it is now able to be much more decisive than it would previously have been. In introducing car sharing on any large scale, it is important to do this on a staged basis, and fully in consultation with staff (as too with any non-staff agencies also operating from the same location). It is also crucial that the process is done as fairly as possible, and not bearing onerously on those for whom sharing is genuinely difficult or impossible. And, finally, it is necessary that staff are fully supported not only by a team of coordinators but also through such policies as a right for staff to be reimbursed for any taxi fare they might need to get home if, at the end of their working day, their car share is unexpectedly not available. Staff morale is crucial to car sharing, while successful car sharing can actually enhance overall staff morale. And, of course, those participating regularly in car sharing should feel financially better off.

16. The best and longest-running example from local government that we have been able to find comes from Southampton and its City Council. There, over a couple of decades, starting with the Council's own staff, and following this up with all the other key players such as schools and other large local organisations, real reductions in car use and pollution have been achieved. Southampton City Council introduced parking charges for its staff: they now have to pay over a thousand pounds for an annual permit (unless deemed essential car users). This is the kind of charge which concentrates the minds of car drivers, persuading some of them to car share, or use public transport, or cycle, instead. It also generates

revenue which can be used to support staff in other ways, for instance by funding co-ordinators who can advise on other options or facilitate car sharing, or by providing discounted tickets on public transport. Over the last fifteen years, Southampton City Council has not only done a lot to encourage its own staff to refrain from driving to work individually, but has also worked hard to enhance all the relevant alternative options for everyone living or working in Southampton. This even includes the journey to school, for which levels of car use are regularly monitored (a reduction in the proportion of pupils travelling by car has been achieved). Last but not least, efforts have been made to ensure that other large employers in the Southampton area also introduce their own travel to work plans – so much easier to do with the local authority leading from the front. Changing levels of pollution are routinely monitored, in large numbers of locations, with follow-up action as necessary.

17. There has arguably not been any significant effort so far by East Herts Council or by Hertfordshire County Council, least of all on any joined-up basis, to promote alternatives to individual car use. Certainly there have not been any major campaigns to woo the public to resort less to personal car use. A few modest efforts have been made to encourage the two workforces to adopt alternatives to personal car use, but these have not been backed up by anything much in the way of prompts or incentives, and accordingly staff continue overwhelmingly to travel to work in their own individual vehicles. Perhaps the most dramatic example in Hertford of a positive change that is relevant is at the North station. There, as at various other stations in the wider area, the introduction of large new sets of cycle racks has been all that is needed to encourage appreciable numbers of commuters to travel to their train station by bicycle. These cycle racks are better than those offered to visitors at County Hall or, certainly, Wallfields.

18. In these few paragraphs we have sketched in outline how Hertford could become a much more sustainable town, and how this could be done without expenditure on a bypass, which would generate its own problems for the future. We have highlighted the scope for the two local authorities to lead from the front and, over a period of time, to involve other people and organisations, while also gradually improving the alternatives to car use. The single most important alternative that needs to be developed is a better east-west public transport route, which takes us well outside Hertford, while still being highly relevant to Hertford, and thus constituting another important part of this case study.

19. Many of the major settlements in Hertfordshire are strung in an east-west line from Hertford through to Hatfield and St Albans, and then on to Hemel Hempstead. Currently the public transport on offer is too infrequent and localised to attract large numbers of users. The County's *Vision* document suggests a pair of guided bus routes by way of a major improvement. However, it is still worth asking whether a tram route would be even better. This is the option suggested in the recent Gascoyne Cecil Estates publication "Transport for Hatfield and beyond in Central Hertfordshire". A tram route would offer faster and more comfortable travel, and could move more people more readily than a busway. It is possible that in the first instance a shorter but high quality tram route should be developed between St Albans and Hertford (not initially including Hemel Hempstead). It would still join up major but congested centres of population and economic activity, and could indeed be used by those members of the EHC and HCC workforces who live to the west of Hertford, and

currently have little option but to travel to work by car. It would be very helpful if the route could pass close to or even conceivably terminate in the vicinity of their workplaces.

## CONCLUSIONS

20. As mentioned at the beginning of this response, the County's *Vision* document culminates with the crucial question: "Limiting future levels of traffic growth and improving walking, cycling and public transport provision will be very hard to achieve without policies which encourage less car use and help to enhance provision and investment in more sustainable modes. What policies should Hertfordshire adopt to achieve this?"

21. We think that, at least where Hertford is concerned, we have sketched out a practical sequence whereby, starting with car sharing on the part of the EHC and HCC workforces, a great deal could be done. We note that the County has not immediately had a positive response to its proposal for a Hertford bypass, either at the consultative seminar on 30 September (Mark Prisk MP as the neutral chairman noted at the end that the event had increasingly raised questions), or in the letters page of the 'Mercury'. People locally obviously dislike the rush-hour congestion, but are still cautious about ravaging some beautiful and well-used countryside.

22. Even if the County presses ahead with plans for a bypass, we still think that the pollution-reducing ideas sketched out above would be well worth implementing, starting as soon as possible. We would not want to suffer for a decade (or anything like that) until a bypass and any linked enhancements are put in place. We would all benefit from making a transition to a more sustainable Hertford much sooner than that.

23. While the County Council may be keen to press ahead with a bypass on the basis of a single option (the southern route, as mentioned in November's *Axis* magazine), we believe that alternatives should be evaluated as well. We can only begin to outline these here. A northern route probably makes even less sense than a southern one, though even this might allow the existing A414 south of Panshanger to be reclaimed, perhaps partly for a guided busway or tram route. To avoid the kind of southern option last floated in the 1990s, which would soon be followed by infilling with housing, it could be worth considering a longer route altogether, that might start at the Harlow turn-off on the A10 and conceivably run through to the existing A414 at Holwell. This would be more difficult to designate for infilling. Yet another option would be to consider some cut-and-cover tunnelling, which could enable a much shorter route to be developed, 'underneath' Hertford (there is a detailed letter in the 'Mercury', 3.11.16, though technical questions have also been raised about this since then). Ultimately, the County Council is vulnerable to the charge of acting with undue haste, or of a lack of open-mindedness, if it only assesses the costs and benefits of a single route: especially if that one route happens to cost somewhere in the range of £155-175 million pounds of public money.

## **Bishop's Stortford Climate Group submission to the Sustainable Transport Task & Finish Group**

### **1. EHDC should have an active plan for reducing road traffic, in order to reduce CO2 emissions & congestion, and improve air quality.**

An EHDC sustainable transport plan is particularly important as the County's draft Strategic Vision for transport is overly geared towards the west of the County. The plan needs to take account of the major impact that local development will have on local traffic volumes. The Action Plan should be owned by and actioned by EHDC, rather than appear as an output of the Task and Finish Group within the Scrutiny system. It needs to be developed with community involvement/consultation, with clear commitments, accountability for their delivery and regular updating of the plans. It should complement an EHDC Air Quality plan, for improving air quality in the district and resolving the District's AQMAs.

For the Community to have confidence that the Action Plan properly engages with local issues, EHDC need to:

- make their traffic planning models readily available to the public
- present the assumptions used, for household & business numbers & associated travel patterns, for traffic originating in the District and outside of it & the evidence upon which the assumptions are based

Confidence also needs to be built through providing regular feedback on implementation and providing the community with regular opportunities to input views and ideas for future initiatives.

### **2. An active plan is required to identify scope for and drive improvements, rather than relying upon building improvements into development schemes opportunistically.**

Key areas for review and action plans are:

- Green travel planning, which should not be restricted to short-term initiatives associated with new developments, or car club provision. We support securing developers' involvement in green travel planning for new developments, but to achieve long-term behavioural change will also require sustained commitment from EHDC. We agree shared mobility, as proposed in HCC's Vision 2050, can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and congestion, benefit the environment and make services more accessible and that the County should develop a mobility sharing strategy to understand its potential locally and do more to support its realisation. There is also scope for EHDC to go beyond this, working with the community and with local employers to secure green travel arrangements for their employees.
- Cycle routes, to secure good provision for leisure use and short distance commuting within and between settlements within the District and neighbouring settlements. We support a focus on improving routes for cyclists, as this can help considerably in reducing the need for vehicles and so reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. We recognise that this policy will involve a significant increase in current local funding levels for cycling, supportive car parking policies and cycling promotion and marketing activity. In particular funding will be required to achieve safe cycle routes over major roads which currently act as barriers to cycling eg routes across Motorways and large roundabouts. We recognise that it may require a shift in highway space away from general traffic to cyclists. Where possible, cyclists should

be segregated from faster moving traffic, but we note too that in some places a slowing of the traffic may help, together with improved lighting and road surfacing and education of drivers to understand the law on giving cyclists road space.

- Bus services, aiming to work with providers to achieve better coordination of bus services and pricing, to improve services and attract better use of services. There appears to have been a downward spiral, of few passengers resulting in cutting of services, resulting in fewer passengers. To break away from this there needs to be more positive management of the bus network, to improve its attractiveness and to engage with residents to encourage transfer onto buses and away from private cars. We agree with HCC's proposed focus on making travel by public transport more attractive with shorter journey times and improved services and that it would be helpful to define a priority bus network to focus these improvements and the County and Districts' engagement with bus service providers.
- School traffic, aiming to work with schools to encourage walking, cycling and bus use with car journeys limited to park and stride. This requires a very active engagement with the schools, parents and pupils, tackling the barriers such as poor walkways to schools and providing positive incentives, for example through bus pricing & service frequency.
- New technology, to assist take-up of public transport/cycling and walking & associated with green travel and public transport use. This should be developed carefully to make sure it does not discriminate against those who are digitally excluded.
- Electric vehicles, with a view to identifying how much and in what ways EHDC can encourage their use, proactively, rather than solely in response to planning developments. As well as the siting of charging points, EHDC should consider the scope for securing electric taxis, buses and other commercial vehicles.
- Homeworking, aiming to reduce the need for as much regular travel, working with transport providers to deliver pricing regimes that support home working
- Commercial traffic, aiming to reduce the number of large vehicles coming into/driving through the District's towns. Signage and securing appropriate routing through SatNav technology are important. EHDC are also in a position to engage with users of commercial traffic, the retail sector, hospitals and commercial sites. Through planning requirements/engagement EHDC can also address builders' use of the road network and alternatives.

### **3. EHDC should engage with HCC to ensure that County schemes bring full benefit to East Herts.**

- We support general improvement in the bus network. We note that Rapid Buses might be a helpful improvement, but as they stand, HCC's proposed routes for these do not help address East Herts traffic issues.
- We consider EHDC should press HCC to recognise that their principle of implementing the sustainable transport hierarchy in urban areas, through supporting Sustainable Travel Towns, should not be solely in relation to the Primary Urban Centres but should also include smaller towns, and in particular Bishop's Stortford. The Bishop's Stortford Town Centre Planning Framework should provide a really good starting point for EHDC to work with HCC, the Town Council and the community to make the town a Sustainable Travel Town.

*On behalf of Bishop's Stortford Climate Group*