

Essential Reference Paper B
Issues arising from the 2010 East Herts “Link” Survey

1. Bishop’s Stortford Question 10 – Ease of Parking

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|---|---|
| Insufficient parking – especially at peak times inc. Saturdays. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Parking is in a state of flux. Possible addition of spaces as part of Causeway development? ii) Should we be encouraging vehicles into the town centre? iii) Possible creation of park and ride within ten years? iv) Short term, second deck on Northgate End and linking of Northgate End to Link Road to create more spaces? |
| Car park spaces too narrow for larger cars. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Could look to widen spaces in some car parks, but with resulting loss of space, which conflicts with comment above. |
| Parking too expensive | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Council policy is that the user pays for the service where possible and appropriate. (Supported by 80% of respondents in survey). ii) P&D surplus supports other aspects of the service (e.g. enforcement service) but also contributes to general fund expenditure. |
| Not enough blue badge bays | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Only J Square MSCP meets DfT guideline of 6% blue badge spaces. ii) On-street blue badge bays are not time limited. Should we impose a 3hr time limit to encourage turnover? iii) We have an ageing population. Should we create more blue badge bays? (Conflicts with comment concerning insufficient parking?) |
| Change car park management system (e.g. pay on exit). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Existing P&D machines have around six years of remaining life. ii) Until recently technology would not have supported pay on exit in most car parks. Recent advances may make this possible in some form. |

2. Bishop's Stortford Question 12 – Condition of Car Parks

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|--|---|
| Car park spaces too narrow for larger cars. | i) Could look to widen spaces in some car parks, but with resulting loss of space, which conflicts with comment above. |
| Anti-social behaviour, especially in J Square MSCP | i) How to manage? Close earlier? Staff the car park, negotiate increased police presence? |
| Surface of some car parks poor – especially Apton Road | i) Apton Road has been purchased by EHC and is scheduled for refurbishment. |
| Litter, broken glass and other detritus. | i) Cleansing of car parks exists as part of Waste Management contract. Does specification need to be enforced and/or beefed up? Should we create a bespoke cleansing operation for car parks? |

3. Bishop's Stortford Question 20 – Encouraging Modal Shift

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|--|---|
| Public transport inadequate, unreliable and expensive. | i) Viability of services? ii) Reduced ability to subsidise? iii) Need to create new model of bus service – community buses (e.g. Sawbobus?) |
| Need better dedicated cycle lanes and cycle storage provision. | 1. Negotiate through UTP process? 2. Consider provision of cycle storage facilities in car parks? |

4. Bishop's Stortford – General Comments

There is less demand than in Hertford for a changed method of car park management (i.e. pay on exit/foot), but it is still present.

Most car parks in B Stortford are open and small to medium, where until recently the installation and maintenance of a barrier control system would have been expensive in capital and revenue terms. Recent advances in technology (e.g. ANPR) may create options for the future, perhaps linked to the required replacement of the existing pay and display machines in around six years' time and the re-tendering of the parking enforcement contract.

There is more of a claim than in Hertford that there is insufficient car parking in Bishop's Stortford, especially on Saturdays and at peak times.

Bishop's Stortford certainly operates at higher occupancy than Hertford (approx. 80% against approx. 60%). This creates less spare capacity at peak times. The question is, to what extent should we be building car parks in our town centres and encouraging people to drive into them?

Short term we could look at opportunities to use the existing capacity better through re-designation and create a small amount of extra capacity, perhaps linked to the Henderson development.

A longer term vision must prevail here and the "carrot and stick" approach is valid. A park and ride system feeding in from the ring road and more extensive public transport serving the rural community would enable car park capacity in the town centre to be reduced and charged differently, reducing congestion at the same time.

There seems to be a perception among residents that their on-street parking is "abused" by town centre workers, commuters and airport parkers. This leads to calls for the continuation of the resident permit parking scheme (as borne out in the general question 17, where 73% overall believe that parking in residential streets should be prioritised for residents).

Balancing residential and "outsider" parking is the issue here. The counter-argument put by the business community is that if off-

street car parking was not so expensive, they might not have to park on-street to avoid paying them.

The “Link” Survey was a parking survey and did not tap into views on transport issues, except in the area of public transport where, as can be seen above, the perception is that it is inadequate, unreliable and costly. That said there is ample evidence that Bishop’s Stortford town centre can become congested, especially at peak times.

The above could further legitimise the creation of park and ride facilities, working from the ring road. In addition, HCC should be encouraged to upgrade the traffic light system in the town to better manage the flow of traffic into and through the town.

Recommendations

Short Term – 1 to 3 years

1. Look at potential, perhaps linked to the Henderson development, to augment parking capacity in the town centre.
2. Look at how we designate car parks to keep longer term parking on the periphery and reduce congestion in the town centre.
3. Encourage HCC to upgrade traffic light network in town centre to improve traffic flow.
4. Explore options to improve public transport options – especially between the town and the surrounding villages.
5. Explore options for improved cycle provision (UTP issue?) plus cycle storage in car parks.
6. Review on-street and off-street provision for blue badge parking in the town.

Medium Term – 4 to 7 years

1. Use opportunity created by need to replace existing P&D machines to review existing car park payment/management system.
2. Work with HCC and others to better control vehicle access to the historic centre of the town.

Longer Term – 8 to 10 years

1. Pursue park and ride option, perhaps linked to development of ASRs and other growth in the town.

1. Herford Question 10 – Ease of Parking

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|---|--|
| Lack of parking spaces | i) These comments were made when G Way MSCP was closed for refurbishment. Car park is now open. Hertford has sufficient capacity in most circumstances. |
| Car park spaces too narrow for larger cars. | i) Could look to widen spaces in some car parks, but with resulting loss of space, which conflicts with comment above. |
| Parking too expensive | i) Council policy is that the user pays for the service where possible and appropriate. (Supported by 80% of respondents in survey). ii) P&D surplus supports other aspects of the service (e.g. enforcement service) but also contributes to general fund expenditure. |
| Change car park management system (e.g. pay on exit). | i) Existing P&D machines have around six years of remaining life. ii) Until recently technology would not have supported pay on exit in most car parks. Recent advances may make this possible. |
| Lack of short term on-street parking. | i) Do we want to encourage cars into the historic town centre? ii) Should such “premium parking” be charged at a premium? |

2. Hertford Question 12 – Condition of Car Parks

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|--|--|
| Condition of some car parks poor – especially Bircherley Green | i) Bircherley Green is scheduled for refurbishment in 2011/12 and options for its longer term future are being considered. |
| Change car park management system (e.g. pay on exit). | i) Existing P&D machines have around six years of remaining life. ii) Until recently technology would not have supported pay on exit in most car parks. Recent advances may make this possible. |
| St Andrew Street always full and want to see it allow all day parking. | i) Was abnormally full due to G Way temporary closure. ii) All day parking will make it difficult for the shoppers on whom the St Andrew Street trading community depends. |

3. Hertford Question 20 – Encouraging Modal Shift

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|--|---|
| Public transport inadequate, unreliable and expensive. | i) Viability of services? ii) Reduced ability to subsidise? iii) Need to create new model of bus service – community buses (e.g. Sawbobus?) |
| Need better dedicated cycle lanes and cycle storage provision. | i) Negotiate with HCC? ii) Consider provision of cycle storage facilities in car parks? |

4. Hertford – General Comments

There is a stronger call for a changed mechanism for car park management in Hertford such as pay on foot/exit.

Most car parks in Hertford are open and small to medium, where until recently the installation and maintenance of a barrier control system would have been expensive in capital and revenue terms. Recent advances in technology (e.g. ANPR) may create options for the future, perhaps linked to the required replacement of the existing pay and display machines in around six years' time and the re-tendering of the parking enforcement contract.

There is a suggestion that there is inadequate parking provision in Hertford.

This survey was undertaken at a time when Gascoyne Way MSCP was closed for refurbishment. There is no evidence that under normal conditions there is an insufficient supply of car parking in Hertford and it will be augmented by 232 spaces when the new Sainsbury is built.

The "Link" Survey was a parking survey and did not tap into views on transport issues, except in the area of public transport where, as can be seen above, the perception is that it is inadequate, unreliable and costly. That said, there is evidence that Hertford town centre can easily become congested.

The Hertford and Ware UPT discusses the creation of park and ride facilities serving Hertford and Ware, perhaps working from the A10.

We should work with the County Council to explore ways in which vehicular access to the historic town centre can be better managed.

Recommendations

Short Term – 1 to 3 years

1. Look at how we designate car parks to keep longer term parking on the periphery and reduce congestion in the town centre.

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2. Explore options to improve public transport options – especially between the town and the surrounding villages.
3. Explore options for improved cycle provision plus cycle storage in car parks.
4. Review on-street, short stay parking provision in the town.

Medium Term – 4 to 7 years

5. Use opportunity created by need to replace existing P&D machines to review existing car park payment/management system.
6. Work with HCC and others to better control vehicle access to the historic centre of the town.

Longer Term – 8 to 10 years

7. Explore Hertford and Ware park and ride option with HCC.

1. Ware Question 10 – Ease of Parking

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Want one hour free parking. | i) There is one hour free parking on-street in Ware town centre. ii) Most short stay parking in Ware is for two hours or less, so a free first hour in the car parks will reduce considerably car park income. |

2. Ware Question 12 – Condition of Car Parks

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| None | N/A |

3. Ware Question 20 – Encouraging Modal Shift

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|--|---|
| Public transport inadequate, unreliable and expensive. | i) Viability of services? ii) Reduced ability to subsidise? iii) Need to create new model of bus service – community buses (e.g. Sawbobus?) |
| Need better dedicated cycle lanes and cycle storage provision. | i) Negotiate with HCC? ii) Consider provision of cycle storage facilities in car parks? |

4. Ware – General Comments

There were very few Ware – specific comments or suggestions in the survey.

The general comments made in respect of the inadequacy of public transport alternatives to the use of the private motor vehicle can be regarded as applying just as much to Ware as they do to other towns and villages.

There is no evidence of insufficient off-street parking capacity in Ware.

The general comments concerning pay and display vs. pay on foot/exit can be regarded as applying just as much to Ware as they do to Bishop's Stortford and Hertford.

Recommendations

Short Term – 1 to 3 years

1. Explore options to improve public transport options – especially between the town and the surrounding villages.
2. Explore options for improved cycle provision plus cycle storage in car parks.
3. Review on-street, short stay parking provision in the town.

Medium Term – 4 to 7 years

4. Use opportunity created by need to replace existing P&D machines to review existing car park payment/management system.

Longer Term – 8 to 10 years

5. Explore the Hertford/Ware park and ride option with HCC.

1. Sawbridgeworth Question 10 – Ease of Parking

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|--|--|
| Bell Street car park should be free with limited parking restrictions to stop abuse. | i) Conflicts with EHC policy that the user pays. |

2. Sawbridgeworth Question 12 – Condition of Car Parks

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| None | N/A |

3. Sawbridgeworth Question 20 – Encouraging Modal Shift

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| None | N/A |

4. Sawbridgeworth – General Comments

There were very few comments that could be related specifically to Sawbridgeworth.

One comment (which is borne out by other sources) concerns the parking provision on Bell Street – one of the key shopping streets in the town. There is a call from traders and others for some short stay permitted parking to be permitted on Bell Street.

This has been explored on more than one occasion and each time the County Council has advised that Bell Street is unsuited to permitted parking due to its width. East Herts Council is not in a position to go against the Highway Authority’s decision. It must also be recognised that Bell Street car park is a few yards walk away and there are some limited waiting (free) bays in this car park.

Although it was not evidenced in the “Link” survey, there is evidence from other sources that people do not like having to pay for the use of the Bell Street car park and that the terms of operation of the car park should be changed to facilitate more free, short stay parking (e.g. first hour free).

As the majority of parking in Bell Street car park is for two hours or less, making it free for the first hour would reduce significantly car park income.

Recommendations

Short Term – 1 to 3 years

1. Look at potential for the extension of the “Sawbobus” model to develop a community transport network in other towns and villages.
2. Continue to participate in the B Stortford and Sawbridgeworth UTP.

Medium Term – 4 to 7 years

3. Use opportunity created by need to replace existing P&D machines to review existing car park payment/management system.
4. Work with HCC and others to better control vehicle access to the historic centre of the town.

Longer Term – 8 to 10 years

None perceived (could change if “North of Harlow” receives go ahead)

1. Buntingford Question 10 – Ease of Parking

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Difficult to find on-street free bays | i) There are a large number of 1hr free bays around Buntingford which are rarely all full at the same time. |
| Object to paying in car park | i) The Council has a policy that the user pays. |

2. Buntingford Question 12 – Condition of Car Parks

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| None | N/A |

3. Buntingford Question 20 – Encouraging Modal Shift

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| None | N/A |

4. Buntingford – General Comments

There were no comments that could relate specifically to Buntingford.

Recommendations

Short Term – 1 to 3 years

1. Look at potential for the extension of the “Sawbobus” model to develop a community transport network in other towns and villages.

Medium Term – 4 to 7 years

2. Use opportunity created by need to replace existing P&D machines to review existing car park payment/management system.

Longer Term – 8 to 10 years

None perceived.

1. Stanstead Abbots Question 10 – Ease of Parking

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|---|---|
| On-street parking for some residents difficult. | i) A resident permit parking scheme for Stanstead Abbots is unlikely. ii) HCC has already advised it has done as much as it can to ameliorate. |

2. Stanstead Abbots Qn 12 – Condition of Car Parks

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| None | N/A |

3. Stanstead Abbots Qn 20 – Encouraging Modal Shift

| Public Comments | Considerations |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| None | N/A |

4. Stanstead Abbots – General Comments

There were no comments that could relate specifically to Stanstead Abbots.

Recommendations

Short Term – 1 to 3 years

1. Look at potential for the extension of the “Sawbobus” model to develop a community transport network in other towns and villages.

Medium Term – 4 to 7 years

2. Use opportunity created by need to replace existing P&D machines to review existing car park payment/management system.

Longer Term – 8 to 10 years

None perceived.

1. Rural Communities

It is difficult to isolate the views of residents in our rural communities within the survey. 97% of respondents advise they own or have access to a car, although more authoritative statistics suggest that this figure is around 86% of East Herts residents.

It is suggested that access to services is likely to be the biggest parking and transport challenge facing our rural communities – particularly those residents who do not have access to private transport.

Non Town Specific Issues

The “Link” survey, to which some 700 residents responded, gives us an excellent snapshot of the views of our residents about parking in East Herts. Many will also be workers and shoppers in East Herts; thus these views have validity from a number of perspectives.

Where comments and suggestions relate clearly to one town, they have been ascribed to that town and some of the related policy and practical considerations have been attached.

A large number of general, non town-specific comments were received as follows:

| Issue | Comments |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Footway and grassed verge parking. | Strong public support for a targeted ban. |
| Blue badge parking | Public support for greater provision. Little public support for charging blue badge holders in car parks. |
| Sunday parking charges in car parks | Little public support. This was tested through consultation in 2010 and is not current East Herts policy. |
| On-street pay and display | Little public support. This was tested through consultation in 2010 and is not current East Herts policy. |
| Residential parking | Strong public support for prioritising residents’ parking in residential streets. Chimes with current policy on offering resident permit parking schemes where |

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| | appropriate. |
| Town centre environment | Public support for making our historic town centres largely traffic free zones. |

| Issue | Comments |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Hierarchy of parking priorities. | The majority of the public appear to regard convenience as more important than even price when seeking to park. |
| Role of parking management | The strong public view is that parking management should be geared towards promoting healthy and vibrant towns and villages. |
| Allocation of surpluses | The majority of the public want to see any car park surplus invested in public transport improvements. |
| Paying for parking | The strong view is that the user pays – congruent with current East Herts policy in this area. |

Recommendations

In parallel with the town-specific recommendations listed earlier, the Council should consider introducing the following changes on a more general basis.

1. Promote a targeted footway and grassed verge parking ban across East Herts. (It will be understood that surveying the district and implementing the ban will require significant resourcing).
2. Continue to develop its parking enforcement regime both on street and in the back office to ensure maximum congruence with Traffic Management Act 2004 objectives and also the objectives of our residents, which is to promote the safe and efficient movement of traffic and pedestrians.
3. Formulate a clear policy statement on how the Council perceives the role of the motor vehicle in East Herts and how it proposes in general terms to balance the needs/demands of

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key stakeholder groups such as residents, traders, shoppers when demand is likely to exceed supply.

4. More closely and overtly link its parking strategy and policies to environmental and planning considerations and the development of policies in these areas.
5. Pursue all opportunities to work with and lobby organisations such as HCC to pursue the Council's parking and transport objectives.