Hertfordshire’s Local Transport Plan

- Driving Prosperity
- Enhancing Places
- Supporting People

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May 2018

Hertfordshire
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Local Transport Plan 2018 - 2031


There is also an easy read version of the executive summary available.

@ LTP@Hertfordshire.gov.uk

Transport Policy & Growth Team, Environment & Infrastructure Dept, Postal Point CHN216, Hertfordshire County Council, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DN

If you require any of the materials in an alternative format or language, please contact the Strategic Transport and Rail Team Email: LTP@hertfordshire.gov.uk Tel: 0300 123 4040

Foreword

By 2031 there will be 175,000 more people living in Hertfordshire using the transport system, not to mention the growing populations outside the county travelling to and through the county.

We must plan positively for this, to support our vision to be a county of opportunity and ensure everyone has a good quality of life. Planning positively means addressing the challenges of today and foreseeing and adapting to the challenges and change ahead. It also means shaping growth in the county to 2031 and beyond.

As a car driver I recognise it is the mode of choice for many and is the only realistic mode of travel for many journeys in the county. However, I also recognise that if we continue to depend on it as much as we do currently as our population grows, there will be serious consequences. Our response to growth cannot be to just build more roads and encourage more and more car use. Technology may well help avoid some of the problems with excessive car use but it isn’t a panacea. Our health, local environments and urban centres will be vastly improved if we can get more people to walk, cycle and use passenger transport.

We need to achieve a change in travel behaviour in Hertfordshire so people choose to travel by other modes for journeys that don’t need to be made by car. There is huge potential for this within towns and between adjacent towns. A combination of policies and improvements will be required to tip the balance in favour of non-car modes, and it will be to everyone’s benefit that by 2031 we have evolved our transport system to be less dependent on the car.

Technology will shape transport hugely in the coming years. This plan will help us embrace the opportunities it presents in a way that supports our vision for the county. We should not be passive recipients of the changes that arise, and must ensure technology supports delivery of our objectives and benefits everybody.

I believe this plan strongly supports the county council’s vision for the county in a way that is pragmatic but also sufficiently ambitious to respond to the challenges faced. As residents and/or users of the transport system in the county everyone has a stake in this plan.

Derrick Ashley
Hertfordshire County Councillor
Executive Member for Growth, Infrastructure, Planning and the Economy
Executive Summary

What is this plan for?
This plan sets out how transport can help deliver a positive future vision of Hertfordshire. As well as providing for safe and efficient travel, transport has a major input into wider policies such as economic growth, meeting housing needs, improving public health and reducing environmental damage.

The plan covers the period up to 2031, which is the timescale for most of the housing proposals being set out in the ten district Local Plans. However, it also considers how future planning decisions and emerging technology might affect the way that transport needs to be provided in the longer term.

The overall approach to transport
This plan accelerates the transition from a previous transport strategy that was largely car based to a more balanced approach which caters for all forms of transport and seeks to encourage a switch from the private car to sustainable transport (e.g. walking, cycling and passenger transport) wherever possible.

The Local Transport Plan sets out the objectives, policies, and key schemes that will achieve this switch. The packages of smaller schemes and activities that are essential to successful outcomes will be considered through a series of “Supporting documents” covering particular topic areas, and include Growth and Transport Plans for specific geographic areas.

Current challenges
Significant housing growth is planned in future years, much greater in scale than in recent times. The county’s population is forecast to grow by 21% by 2039, from 1.18million people in 2016 to 1.43million. This will fuel an increase in travel demand. Economic growth is a national priority and will be needed to provide employment for the growing population in the region. Transport has a key role to play in facilitating economic growth and delivering sustainable housing development.

Hertfordshire has high levels of car ownership, good north-south links but relatively poor east-west connections, high levels of cross-boundary commuting and complicated movement patterns due to the high number of medium-sized towns.

This results in congestion between and within towns, rail overcrowding, and air quality problems. Those who live in rural areas, people who have a disability or other mobility impairment, or people who do not have access to a car often struggle to access key services, because alternatives to the private car are currently not realistic, affordable or convenient. High levels of car use is a factor in low levels of physical activity contributing to obesity and poor health.

Future challenges
With travel demand increasing in future years, continued reliance on high levels of car use will lead to worsening congestion and journey time reliability, both of which are constraints on economic growth. Further traffic growth and congestion will have a negative impact on public health and the quality of the urban, rural and natural environment.

A transport strategy that seeks to cater for future increases in travel demand with significant increases in highway capacity will at best be very expensive, difficult to deliver, environmentally damaging and result in congestion being displaced elsewhere on the network. At worst such an approach could be largely ineffective as the capacity created would soon be filled by more traffic travelling at the busiest times of day, and so eventually reducing any of the benefits from the scheme.
Addressing the challenge of increased future travel demand will require significantly stronger support for walking, cycling, passenger transport, and traffic demand management measures where appropriate. However, such solutions must be delivered against a background of public spending pressures. The Local Transport Plan will therefore seek to maximise the opportunities for alternative sources of funding.

**An uncertain future**

Major changes to transport provision take many years to deliver. However, this plan has been written at a time of rapid change in technology in areas such as fuels, autonomous vehicles and data sharing. The outcome of these changes is difficult to predict but they will affect the volume and form of future transport demand and the type of infrastructure required. Housing developments are only mapped out to 2031, beyond this the locations are unknown.

We cannot delay tackling the existing problems, but we will need to be alert to a changing future by ensuring the strategy is adaptable to alternative scenarios. The key to success will be awareness of change and flexibility in our approach.

**Themes, Objectives and Principles**

The foundation for this strategy is a set of nine objectives to deliver the positive future vision framed by the three themes of Prosperity, Place and People in recognition of transport’s contribution to most aspects of life. The strategy to deliver these objectives is guided by four principles (application of technology, cost effectiveness, integrating land use and transport planning, encouraging modal shift and active travel) which should be common to all areas of local transport policy and activity.

LTP4 policies, schemes and supporting documents will deliver the objectives and be guided by the principles.
Policies

A core feature of our plan is to do more to improve conditions for sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and passenger transport. This is in recognition of their role in reducing traffic growth, reducing environmental impact, increasing physical activity and improving health. It will include a more prominent consideration of their needs in all transport schemes, strategies and new developments as well as improvements to cycling infrastructure, walking environments and multi-modal interchanges. It will also include work to enhance the attractiveness of bus travel in the county and the application of more bus priority measures.

Rail travel, particularly into London, will continue to grow in the future so sufficient capacity and service levels are essential, but the plan also seeks to increase service levels and connectivity to other destinations, as well as enabling rail to serve local interurban travel needs better.

Travel behaviour change will be encouraged through various initiatives but crucially this will need to be supported where appropriate by a greater emphasis on demand management, such as with the development of plans to constrain car use through parking charges and supply.

The plan seeks to update understanding of accessibility issues where some people find it difficult to access key services and participate fully in society. With an updated understanding of accessibility need, resources supporting transport services and initiatives can be better targeted.

Road safety remains a high priority and the plan seeks continued improvements. Transport security is also a priority particularly where it could deter use of sustainable modes, and to ensure the network is resilient to major alerts and incidents.

Transport and growth presents a threat to the local environment and it is important that the full range of impacts are understood and minimised. The impact of vehicle emissions on people’s health from poor air quality has become a more prominent issue in recent years. This plan outlines the current approach to this, but recognises it should be kept under review in light of changes in government policy.

With the potential for significant traffic growth the focus of the plan is to make optimum use of existing capacity supported by technology, but also by achieving modal shift away from cars. Some new highway capacity is likely to be required in future years because of population growth and existing levels of car ownership and use, but this will be carefully planned so as not to encourage even greater levels of car dependence.

Key scheme proposals

The Local Transport Plan transport proposals are a blended approach of improvements in highways, passenger transport, walking and cycling (see Transport Proposals Map), focussed on key movement corridors in the county. They build on schemes which are already committed and those being promoted by other agencies in and around the county.
Transport Proposals Map

The map illustrates a number of LTP4 transport improvements proposed by Hertfordshire County Council. The map also includes a number of other improvements likely to come forward which are being promoted by other parties.
Notable proposals include:

• Sustainable Travel Towns will comprise comprehensive packages of improvements for walking, cycling and passenger transport, combined with activity to encourage more sustainable travel behaviour.

• An east west bus rapid transit scheme between Hemel Hempstead and Welwyn Garden City, with potential future extensions of this to Hertford and Harlow.

• A programme of A414 highway improvements including a Hertford Bypass

These schemes and accompanying corridor narratives set the overall strategic approach, but the detailed programme for particular areas will be developed through the Local Transport Plan supporting documents and further studies.

Implementation, Funding and Monitoring

An online Local Transport Plan implementation plan will be published that will give updated information on the delivery timescales for planned improvements. An annual monitoring report will also be produced to provide an update on the delivery of schemes and objectives. Realising new sources of funding to provide greater levels of investment in sustainable travel initiatives, and greater certainty over funding and delivery will be essential in future years. Exploring the potential of new innovative funding sources will be a key area of council activity to enable delivery of this plan.