**Stevenage - Executive Summary**

**Introduction**

A series of town based evidence packs have been developed to support the emerging Growth and Transport plans. These include analysis of a range of socioeconomic, land use, demographic factors, and consideration of current transport provision and usage to identify issues and constraints in relation to travel to / from and within the towns. An assessment is also included of likely future transport pressures taking into account proposed growth and predictions from modelling work using the countywide transport model COMET. The key findings from the Stevenage evidence pack are outlined below.

**Background**

Stevenage is situated in the north of the Hertfordshire County.

The study area is located over 30 miles north of Central London and sits within the A1(M) growth Corridor. Stevenage is the 3rd largest built up area within Hertfordshire with a population of 86,000.

**Community Characteristics**

The study area of Stevenage has a number of identified employment centres; Symonds Green, Town Centre and Gunnels Wood. Gunnels Wood is significantly more industrialised than the other two identified employment centres. Stevenage is serviced by nine state secondary schools and two North Hertfordshire College sites.

The study area includes the Lister Hospital which is one of two key hospitals serving the county.

The average age in the east and west of the study area is similar to the England Average (39-42 years), whereas in the central and northern areas the median age is generally lower (32-37 years old). Unemployment rates are relatively high for Hertfordshire. The highest unemployment is in the centre and the north-east of the town. The areas of higher unemployment also suffer from deprivation particularly in the town centre. Levels of healthy eating are lower than the rest of Hertfordshire and levels of obesity are relatively high.

Stevenage does not have any designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA).

**Economic Portrait**

The district of Stevenage has approximately 86,930 inhabitants and around 51,230 jobs. The key employment sectors identified in the region are Professional and Scientific, and Public Admin and Education; with Public Admin and Education being the largest employer. The three main employment areas, Town Centre, Gunnels Wood and Symonds Green; account for over half of all the jobs in Stevenage.

**Transport Network**

The study area is served by Trunk, Primary, Main and a small number of Secondary Distributor roads. The A1(M) motorway runs through the study area to the west and is the only motorway in the local area. Stevenage has one Primary A road; the A602 and a number of other A Roads, such as the A1072 and the A1155. There are also a number of B Roads in the study area including the B197 and the B1037. North-south routes are provided by the A1(M) and the A602 and the major east-west routes are the A1072 and the A1155.

There is one train station within the study area. Stevenage station sits on the Great Northern Route which connects London King’s Cross to Peterborough and Cambridge. The East Coast Mainline converges with the Great Northern Route within the study area and provides services to London and Leeds.

Bus services are available to major destinations including Letchworth Garden City, Hitchin, Luton, Welwyn Garden City, Hatfield and St Albans. There is also a comprehensive bus network within Stevenage.

Stevenage benefits from a comprehensive cycle route network with a mixture of segregated and grade separated pedestrian and cycle routes. The National Cycle Network route Number 12 passes through the area connecting Enfield lock in the north of London with Spalding via Stevenage, St Neots and Peterborough.

**Network Analysis**

Key origins of inbound trips to the study area include Letchworth Garden City, Knebworth, Hitchin and rural areas around the eastern side of the study area. There are also a significant number of trips from Central Bedfordshire. The vast majority of inbound trips are made via Private Car (81%) with 13% of trips made using sustainable modes of transport (bus, walk, train and cycle).

Key destinations of outbound commuting trips are Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Welwyn Garden City and Central London. Outbound trips are dominated by private car (74%), whilst 20% of outbound trips are made by sustainable modes.

Over half of all internal trips are made using a private vehicle (55%), with trips made on foot accounting for 19% of the share. Bus (11%) and cycle trips (5%) are low considering large areas of the study area can be reached by both cyclists and bus users in less than 30 minutes.

Within the study area traffic volumes and congestion occurs along the A1(M) and the A602 corridor with high volumes also experienced across the town centre.

**Future Transport**

Stevenage is set to experience a 12% growth in population over the next 15 years and a 5% growth in employment with the main growth predicted in the Transport and Communication, Professional and Scientific and Arts and Entertainment sectors.

A number of large residential developments are planned in the study area including redevelopment of the town centre. By the year 2031 average journey times from the study area to key destinations are expected to increase in both the morning and evening peaks.