Public Transport Schemes

Public Transport schemes included in the UTP;

Scheme Reference	Scheme Name	Timescale	Page Number
PTM3	Provide a designated shared taxi area outside of the railway station and investigate the demand for a shared taxi system to the town centre and employment area	Short	86
PTM10	Introduce demand responsive transport across Hitchin (*addressed through PTM3*)	Short	88
PTM4	Improve bus stop facilities/waiting areas	Medium	95
PTM16	Introduce real time information across the network	Medium	96
PTM19	Revise the boarding and alighting points of buses within the town centre (*this is now progressed through HM37*)	Medium	98
PTM20	Improve the availability of public transport information across Hitchin	Medium	102

Public Transport schemes not included in the UTP;

Scheme Reference	Scheme Name	Timescale	Page Number
PTM6	Improve the accessibility of Lister Hospital by public transport	Short	90
PTM14	Introduce a shuttle bus between the station and employment areas	Short	93
PTM11	Improve pedestrian access within the rail station and from the east of Hitchin	Medium	104
PTM11.1	Improve eastern access to the railway station	Medium	105
PTM11.2	Introduce platform lifts at the railway station.	Medium	106
PTM15	Increase the frequency of the bus services	Medium	107
PTM17	Introduce bus priority at selected locations within Hitchin	Medium	108

Scheme Name	Provide a designated shared taxi area outside of the railway station and investigate the demand for a shared taxi system to the town centre and employment area	
Scheme Reference:	PTM3	
Problem References:	PT13	Lack of demand responsive transport
Scheme Status:	This scheme is included in the UTP.	

Description of Proposal

At Hitchin railway station there is a rank providing taxi provision for those who wish to use it. However, respondents at consultation indicated that a number of taxi users all travelled to the same destination. Some stakeholders at the consultation event suggested that a shared taxi scheme could be implemented for those wishing to travel to the town centre and Cadwell Lane industrial area (to which a less frequent bus service is provided).

Location Plan/outline Scheme Plan

Hitchin railway station has a designated area from which people can get a taxi. There is currently a 'bus stop' style covered shelter at the waiting point from which the taxis depart. It is proposed that a second area is designated for those wishing to share a taxi to the town centre and Cadwell Lane.

However, further analysis should be undertaken before this scheme is implemented. Analysis should be carried out to assess the numbers of people taking a taxi from the station; the destinations of these persons; and whether these taxi users would be willing to share their cab with another person.

If this evaluation provides a sound basis for the scheme, then consideration should be given as to whether the taxi drivers, who serve the station, would be in support of the scheme. Without the support of the taxi drivers serving the station, it is unlikely that this scheme could be a success. It is hoped that through the consultation process of the UTP, levels of support for this scheme from taxi drivers could be gauged. North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) hosts a monthly taxi forum with representatives from local taxi companies including private hire and hackney carriage drivers. An agenda item should be tabled at this meeting to discuss levels of support for the scheme. A decision as to whether this scheme is included in the final UTP could then be taken. Following this decision, the possibility of expanding this scheme to include minibuses could then be explored.

Supporting Photograph(s)

The current taxi facilities at Hitchin Railway Station

Design Considerations	Proposed Solutions	Are solutions sufficient to overcome issues? (Y/N)
There is not enough demand for a shared taxi scheme to justify the level of cost associated with delivery	Ensure surveys are undertaken to understand anticipated levels of demand	Y
Taxi drivers do not wish to serve passengers sharing a taxi to the town centre	Liaise with taxi drivers from the outset, to ensure their buy-in to the scheme	Y

Links to other UTP schemes:	PTM10 - Introduce demand responsive transport across Hitchin PTM14 - Introduce a shuttle bus between the station and employment areas

Contribution to Objectives / Indicators:	UTP Objectives	4) Enhance the attractiveness of public transport by better integrating services and increasing the quality of information available to users 5) Address peak hour congestion on the highway network both for the present and in the future

Outline Cost Analysis		
Works Element	**Est. Cost**	**Notes**
Feasibility assessments (included surveys) to determine the demand for taxi services. This would include construction of a 'bus stop' style shelter	£15,000	A separate area would need to be designated at the rail station for those wanting to share a taxi. It is anticipated that a separate bus shelter would need to be constructed.
TOTAL COST FOR DELIVERY	**£15,000**	

Deliverability Assessment		
Can the scheme be delivered within the highway boundary?	Y	~~N~~
Can the scheme be delivered without third party involvement?	Y	~~N~~
Do all elements of the scheme involve standard work processes?	Y	~~N~~
Can the scheme be delivered in the short term?	Y	~~N~~

Scheme Name	Introduce demand responsive transport across Hitchin	
Scheme Reference:	PTM10	
Problem References:	PT1	Bus frequency and service provision are perceived to be poor
	PT5	Cross-town bus services are perceived to be poor
	PT13	Lack of demand responsive transport
	PT14	Lack of attractiveness of public transport for peak time commuters
Scheme Status:	This scheme is included in the UTP but is addressed through scheme PTM3	

Description of Proposals

Some respondents at consultation stated that accessing certain areas in the town area by public transport was difficult. In addition, some respondents also felt that the public transport system was too inflexible to deal with their day to day requirements. A possible solution to solving these problems is to provide Demand Responsive Transport. Demand Responsive Transport is an advanced user orientated form of public transport, characterised by flexible routeing and scheduling of small to medium sized vehicle operating in a shared ride mode between pick up and drop off locations according to passenger needs.

The consultation highlighted a desire for public transport improvements between the train station and the town centre and employment area. A demand responsive transport service across Hitchin is addressed through other UTP schemes, namely:

- PTM3 – Provide a designated shared taxi area outside of the railway station and investigate the demand for a shared taxi system to the town centre and employment area

Design Considerations	Proposed Solutions	Are solutions sufficient to overcome issues? (Y/N)

Links to other UTP schemes:	PTM3 - Provide a designated shared taxi area outside of the railway station and investigate the demand for a shared taxi system to the town centre and employment area

Contribution to Objectives / Indicators:	4) Enhance the attractiveness of public transport by better integrating services and increasing the quality of information available to users 5) Address peak hour congestion on the highway network both for the present and in the future

Outline Cost Analysis		
Works Element	**Est. Cost**	**Notes**
TOTAL COST FOR DELIVERY		

Deliverability Assessment		
Can the scheme be delivered within the highway boundary?	Y	N
Can the scheme be delivered without third party involvement?	Y	N
Do all elements of the scheme involve standard work processes?	Y	N
Can the scheme be delivered in the short term?	Y	N

Scheme Name	Improve the accessibility of Lister Hospital by public transport	
Scheme Reference:	PTM6	
Problem References:	PT5	Cross-town bus services are perceived to be poor
Scheme Status:	This scheme is not included in the UTP	

Description of Proposals

Some consultation respondents noted that they found Lister hospital difficult to access when travelling by public transport. As such, it has been proposed that a scheme is developed to decrease the amount of time it takes to travel to the hospital by public transport.

Location Plan:

The Department for Transport (DfT) sets core indicator targets for local authorities outlining times which residents, when travelling by public transport, should be able to access local amenities in. The core indicators include:

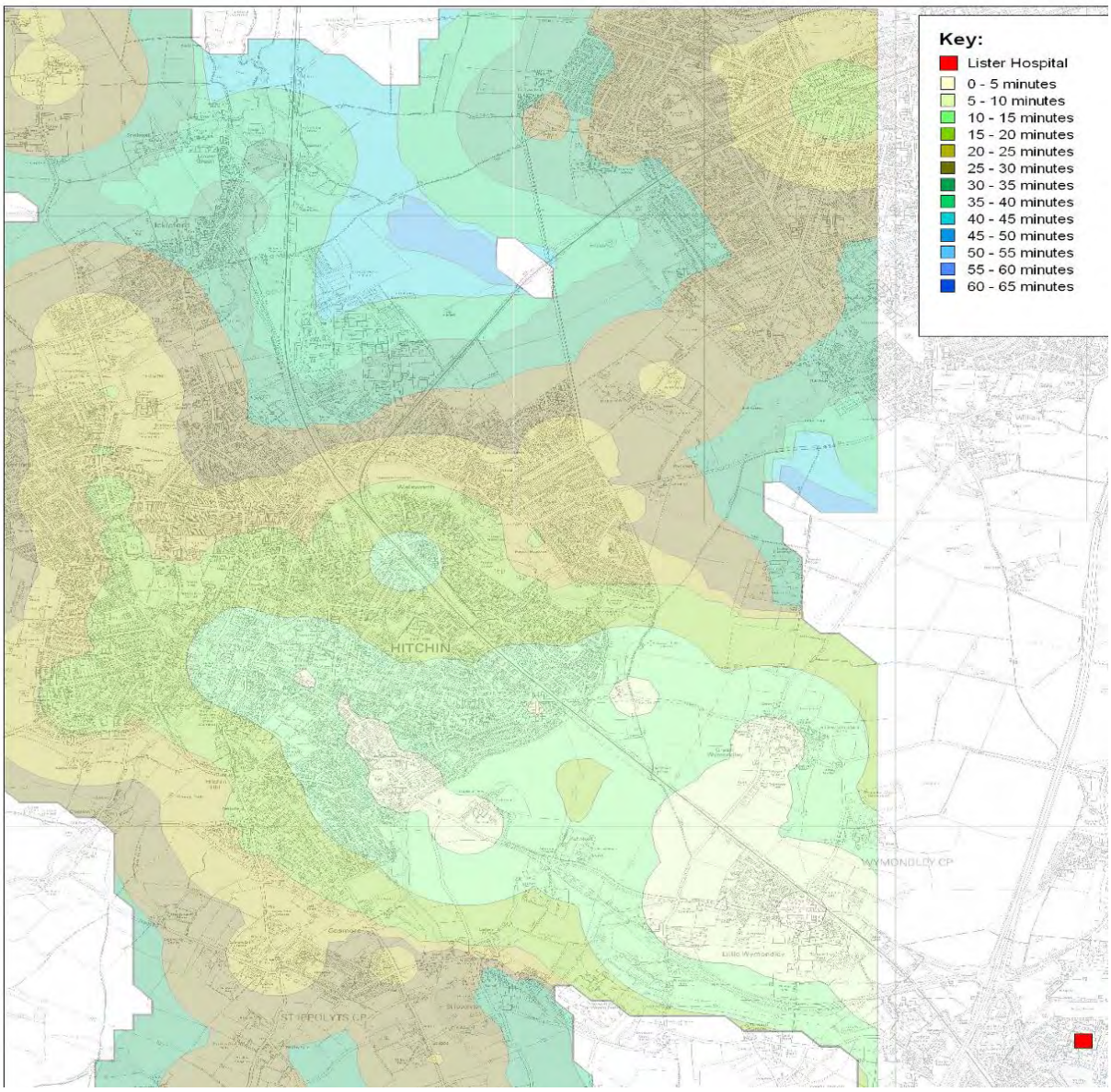
- Households within 30 and 60 minutes of a hospital by public transport;
- Households without a car within 30 and 60 minutes of a hospital by public transport.

These accessibility targets form core indicators for all Local Transport Plan (LTP) areas. These indicators are measured centrally by DfT based on common methodology and consistent, centrally available, data sets. The results of these calculations are published annually by the DfT in the Core Accessibility Indicators for Local Authorities. The 2009 Core Accessibility Indicators published by the DfT indicate all Hitchin census wards fully achieve the targets (100%).

This data is supported by accessibility analysis carried out analysing the anticipated average travel time for residents of Hitchin to travel to the Lister hospital by public transport. This analysis was carried out using an accessibility software tool called Accession. The results show that all residents within the study area should be able to travel to the hospital within the national indicator targets set by the DfT. However, that is not to say that there is not scope for decreasing the time that it takes to travel to the hospital for residents when travelling by public transport.

It is anticipated that the highway schemes outlined in this UTP, namely HM31 - Implement junction improvements along the A505 / A602 corridor to maximise the existing capacity, will help improve highway conditions within the study area, and as such, improve the level of bus reliability and decrease journey times. However, to increase the accessibility of the hospital by public transport it would require further bus services to be offered (either through new routes or frequency improvements). HCC have indicated that budgetary pressures mean that there is little scope for further bus subsidies, and as hospital accessibility targets are already being met, this scheme will not be included in the UTP.

Accessibility analysis of Lister hospital for residents of Hitchin, measured in time bands, using public transport.



Design Considerations	Proposed Solutions	Are solutions sufficient to overcome issues? (Y/N)

Links to other UTP schemes:	

Contribution to Objectives / Indicators:	3) Improve the accessibility of key destinations for all users

Outline Cost Analysis		
Works Element	**Est. Cost**	**Notes**
TOTAL COST FOR DELIVERY		

Deliverability Assessment		
Can the scheme be delivered within the highway boundary?	Y	N
Can the scheme be delivered without third party involvement?	Y	N
Do all elements of the scheme involve standard work processes?	Y	N
Can the scheme be delivered in the short term?	Y	N

Scheme Name	PTM14	
Scheme Reference:	Introduce a shuttle bus between the station and employment areas	
Problem References:	PT1	Bus frequency and service provision are perceived to be poor
	PT5	Cross-town bus services are perceived to be poor
	PT13	Lack of demand responsive transport
	PT14	Lack of attractiveness of public transport for peak time commuters
Scheme Status:	This scheme will not be included in the UTP.	

Description of Proposals

Consultation revealed that some respondents did not believe that there was a sufficient public transport link between the railway station and the main employment areas in Hitchin. As such, it was proposed that a shuttle bus is introduced to take employees from the station to their employment areas within Hitchin.

Location Plan/outline Scheme Plan

Respondents from consultation indicated that there is a need for increased public transport linkages between the railway station and the main employment areas in Hitchin. The two main employment areas within Hitchin are the town centre, and the industrial estate at Cadwell Lane and Wilbury Way.

Current walking accessibility levels to these areas from the station are:

- Hitchin railway station to the town centre – 0.7 miles, 14 minutes
- Hitchin railway station to Cadwell Lane – 1.1 miles, 22 minutes.

On investigation, there are regular bus services to Hitchin town centre from and to the railway station.

- Hitchin railway station to the town centre – 17 bus services between 07:30 and 09:30
- Town centre to Hitchin railway station – 19 bus services between 16:30 and 18:30.

In the morning and evening peak periods, which are the likely periods in which the majority of employees would be travelling to and from work, there is a service every 5 to 10 minutes. The travel time of this service is approximately 5 minutes and terminates at either Hermitage Road or Bancroft in the morning and departs from Hermitage in the evening. This offers a satisfactory alternative if employees of town centre businesses do not wish to walk to their workplace from the railway station. As such, a demand responsive shuttle bus to transport employees of businesses in the town centre to and from the railway station will not be pursued as part of this UTP.

There is a less frequent direct service to the industrial estate in the peak periods, when compared to services travelling to the town centre. During the peak periods there are 6 bus services (either direct or within a ten minute walk) that provide a link between the industrial estate and railway station. There is a direct service during the morning and evening peak hour which takes 5 minutes, as well as services from stops within a ten minute walk of the station or industrial estate, which take a similar time. At the railway station there is a high level of taxi provision available which employees of the industrial estate could use should they not wish to walk. As such, a shuttle bus serving the industrial estate will not be pursued as part of this UTP. However, should local employers feel that shuttle buses would be of benefit to their employees; this could be facilitated through the UTP. It should also be noted that a shared taxi scheme, to assist transporting employees to their workplace, is being pursued as part of PTM3.

Design Considerations	Proposed Solutions	Are solutions sufficient to overcome issues? (Y/N)

Links to other UTP schemes:	PTM3 - Provide a shared taxi system from the station to the town centre and Cadwell Lane

Contribution to Objectives / Indicators:	4) Enhance the attractiveness of public transport by better integrating services and increasing the quality of information available to users 5) Address peak hour congestion on the highway network both for the present and in the future

Outline Cost Analysis		
Works Element	**Est. Cost**	**Notes**
TOTAL COST FOR DELIVERY		

Deliverability Assessment		
Can the scheme be delivered within the highway boundary?	Y	N
Can the scheme be delivered without third party involvement?	Y	N
Do all elements of the scheme involve standard work processes?	Y	N
Can the scheme be delivered in the short term?	Y	N

Scheme:
Improve bus stop facilities/waiting areas

Scheme Reference:
PTM4

Scheme Status:
This scheme will be included in the UTP.

Purpose:
To increase bus usage within the study area it is important that all bus stops reach a minimum standard. This is outlined in Hertfordshire County Council's document 'Quality bus infrastructure in Hertfordshire'. This document states that bus stops should, as a minimum, provide:

- Hard standing linked to the footway and disabled-friendly, including use of 'easy access' kerbing
- Adequate lighting
- Adequate capacity for the requirements of the individual stop based on peak hour usage
- Stops to be marked with an appropriate length bus stop cage
- Designed measures to prevent obstruction of the bus's approach and departure from the stop.
- Extent of the cage to be surfaced in an agreed coloured material.

Details:
Although the majority of the bus stops within the study area meet this standard, a number of bus stops would benefit from being upgraded.

To increase bus patronage it is important that, at key bus stop locations, there is a high standard of bus stop (including shelters, being well lit and provision for level boarding). It is hoped that, by providing good bus stop facilities in the right locations, existing bus users will realise a benefit and not switch to other modes of transport, in addition to encouraging users of other modes of transport to begin travelling by bus. A full audit of bus stops within Hitchin is needed to asses which stops need to be upgraded. The upgrade could be carried out based on passenger usage levels.

Indicative costs:
Indicative costs for upgrading on a per bus stop basis are:

- Kassel kerbing and a shelter - £14,000
- Timetable frames - £100
- Bus cages - £600 (although there are significant discounts if more than one is carried out on the same visit e.g. 4 recently cost HCC £900)
- Level boarding - £6,500 per stop

Benefits:

- Benefit for existing public transport users;
- Increase the propensity for car users to switch to bus travel; and
- Ensuring all bus stops are DDA compliant

Risks:

- No sources can be found to fund the stop upgrade;
- Stop upgrade has no effect on bus patronage

Scheme:
Introduce real time information across the network

Scheme Reference:
PTM16

Scheme Status:
This scheme will be included in the UTP

Purpose:
Stakeholders indicated that there was a lack of bus service information. Real time information is seen as an important means of raising the profile and attractiveness of bus transport, as well as providing users with current up to date information that can help them make an informed decision about their journey.

Details:
Within many cities and towns the introduction of real time information has provided great benefit to the travelling public allowing them to make informed decisions on the type of journey to be made. As services are less frequent on some Hitchin routes than in major cities it is felt that real time information will give a greater assurance to the travelling public that a bus service is going to arrive and provide an accurate time for when it will . 'The Business Case for RTI: long-term results of the East Kent Trial' carried out by the Real Time Information group is a study looking at the short, medium and long term impacts of implementing a real time information system. The conclusions were:

- The short term impact of RTI is a modest improvement in public perception of the quality of service provided, and a modest improvement in the operator's ability to manage the fleet. No negative impacts have been identified. The impact on patronage is neutral.
- In the longer term the public becomes increasingly sophisticated in its requirements, expectations and responses. Significant passenger growth happened in East Kent, though the contribution of RTI though this cannot be assessed precisely because of other potential factors. Still no negative impacts have been identified.

Based on this analysis, the case for local authorities is very strong; the case for operators is superficially good, though less robust. To get good value requires the full participation of the local authority and bus operators. Indeed one of the key qualitative benefits of an RTI project is that it brings these parties together.

Example of Real Time Information display at a bus stop

Example of Real Time Information display

Benefits:

- Improvement in public perception of public transport reliability
- Potential increase in bus patronage;
- Increase in user satisfaction; and
- Increase in potential for passengers to make an informed journey decision

Risks:

- Public transport patronage does not increase as a result of increased availability of information

Scheme:
Revise the boarding and alighting points of buses within the town centre

Scheme Reference:
PTM19

Scheme Status:
This scheme is now progressed through UTP scheme HM37

Background:
During the development of the UTP, the layout of bus stops within Hitchin town centre was identified as being quite disparate, reducing the ease with which people can use bus services and detracting from the appeal of using public transport, particularly for visitors to the town. There are currently 10 separate boarding and alighting points within Hitchin town centre, as shown on the figure below. This layout can be confusing for the public transport user as it is not always clear from which stop to catch a particular service (and the boarding and alighting points may differ). In addition, there is a high level of congestion within the town centre which impacts upon bus journey times and bus journey time reliability.

Current boarding and alighting points within the Town Centre

http://www.intalink.org.uk/Maps/Hitchin-Boarding.pdf

Proposals:
This scheme aims to simplify the boarding and alighting points by consolidating bus infrastructure in Hermitage Road, providing a shared space environment which caters for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users as well as motorists.

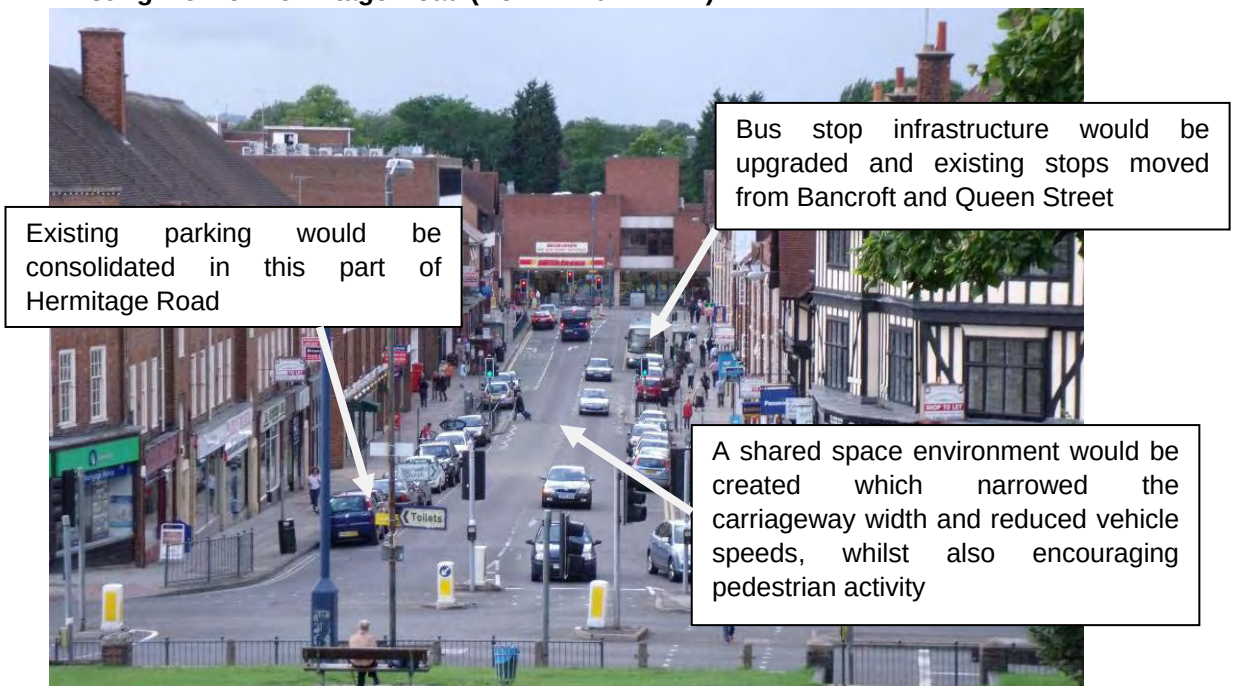
To achieve this, the existing bus stops on Bancroft and Queen Street will be relocated to the western end of Hermitage Road. All bus infrastructure will be consolidated in this part of Hermitage Road so as to provide a central hub which will be simple to navigate and benefit from real time information.

To facilitate this Hermitage Road is considered to be an appropriate setting for a shared space scheme; making the route accessible to both pedestrians and vehicles with a design which enables pedestrians to move more freely. This could include a level surface without kerbs or an appearance more in keeping with the High Street or Market Square of Hitchin. The final design would need to be developed within the context and setting of the town but the key themes would relate to lowering vehicle speeds and providing features which encourage pedestrian activity and shared use of space

The short-term parking in Hermitage Road caters for a maximum of around 25 cars and it is intended that this provision will be partly relocated to Bancroft (replacing bus stop location G); with the remaining parking being consolidated at the eastern end of Hermitage Road, potentially using a diagonal parking pattern to reduce carriageway width and vehicle speeds, contributing towards the shared space environment, without the loss of direct access by car to the shops along Hermitage Road.

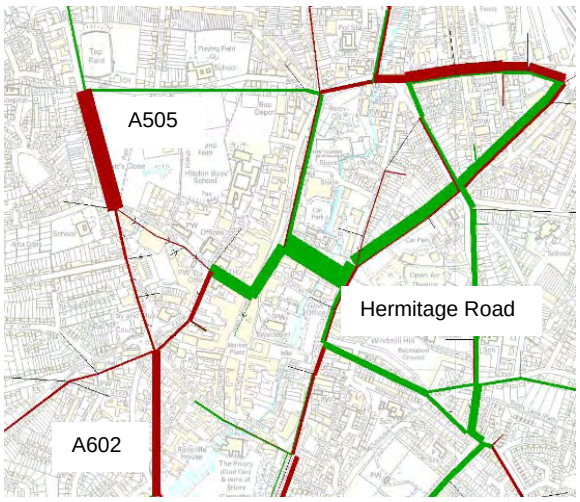
In addition, there may be some economic benefits from this scheme, as a high quality pedestrian environment, combined with a higher footfall through the consolidation of bus services, could increase the attractiveness of Hermitage Road for retailing and other services. This will help to contribute towards the vitality of Hitchin's shops and business which is a key objective of the UTP.

Existing view of Hermitage Road (from Windmill Hill)

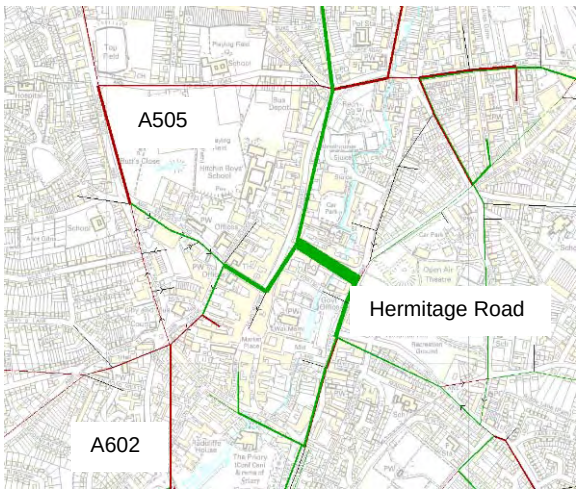


Model Testing

These revised access arrangements have been tested in the transport model in isolation in the 2014 Do Nothing (without any of the other proposed schemes within the town) scenario. The impact of making Hermitage Road into a shared space area in the morning and evening peaks is shown in the figures. Effectively the designation of this area as a shared space would reduce the speed of vehicles using the road and also reduce the capacity of the route.



Morning Peak – Demand Flow (veh/hr) 2014 DN (PTM19) compared with 2014 DN



Evening Peak – Demand Flow (veh/hr) 2014 DN (PTM19) compared with 2014 DN

Green represents a decrease in flow in the 2014 Do Nothing with scheme scenario compared with the 2014 Do Nothing scenario and Red indicates an increase.

Testing in both the AM and PM traffic model has indicated that, as a result of the revised access arrangements, traffic diverts to the main roads (A505 / A602), and helps to reduce the amount of traffic within the town centre area of Hitchin, namely Hermitage Road and Brand Street. By displacing traffic, from the lower capacity town centre roads and junctions to the higher capacity main roads and junctions, it is likely that this could result in lower levels of delay experienced by buses and an increased level of bus journey time reliability. The displacement of the traffic should allow for the relocation of the bus stops currently on Queen Street and Bancroft to Hermitage Road. This should result in a far simpler layout for the public transport users to understand, and could result in higher levels of interchange between bus services. The central location of Hermitage Road to the north of the town centre also provides good access between the bus stops and central shopping area.

This scheme compliments several other proposed UTP schemes, including:

- PTM4 – Improve bus stop facilities / waiting areas
- HM37 – Introduce a shared space scheme for the town centre

Indicative Costs:

An outline cost for this scheme is £38,000. This relates to design fees only (costs provided by HCC)

Benefits:

- A central bus interchange hub
- Improved bus infrastructure
- Ease of pedestrian movement and changes in pedestrian activity
- Reduced traffic dominance
- Increase in public transport patronage
- Economic regeneration

Risks:

- There is no funding for the scheme
- Bus operators may object to the new layout
- Loss of parking on Hermitage Road, compensated by introduction of more parking on Bancroft

Way Forward

This scheme has close links with HM19 (Reduce the through movement of traffic within the town centre) which also proposes elements of shared space for the Bancroft and Brand Street. Following comments from local members it was decided to develop a new scheme for introducing a shared space scheme for the town centre (HM37). This consolidates the detail contained with PTM19 and HM19 and recommends a single scheme for Heritage Road, Brand Street and Bancroft, providing a high quality environment for non motorised users whilst also addressing the issues of rat running and improving bus infrastructure.

Scheme:
Improve the availability and marketing of public transport across Hitchin

Scheme Reference:
PTM20

Scheme Status:
This scheme will be included in the UTP

Purpose:
This scheme, through increased marketing of public transport and increasing the amount of information available to residents of Hitchin, is intended to increase awareness of the existing public transport services.

By raising the amount of information that is readily available for the residents of Hitchin, it is hoped residents will be able to make an increasingly informed choice regarding the transport options currently available to them. It is proposed that this scheme is implemented through a marketing campaign, raising the profile of public transport services and directly informing the benefits to the individual user that can be achieved through taking public transport. This could be achieved by highlighting its cost benefits (e.g. cheaper than taking the car and parking, ticketing options – Plus Bus, concessionary ticketing etc); ease of use; the high frequency of bus services; reduction in carbon footprint; and the amount of routes covered by the public transport network.

This scheme should be supplemented by an increased amount of public transport information available at bus stops, which is addressed through PTM16 – Introduce real time information across the network. In addition, this scheme will need to be developed in tandem with UTP scheme SM8 to produce an integrated strategy for marketing sustainable modes.

Details:
This scheme is an extensive marketing campaign, using the expertise of marketing consultants, to raise awareness of public transport and the benefits to individual users. It is envisaged that this campaign should attempt to increase bus and rail patronage within Hitchin.

Respondents at consultation indicated that there was a perceived lack of integrated ticketing options for public transport users. The campaign should promote schemes such as Plus Bus, Explorer and the other discount and concessionary ticketing options which provide the travelling public with added value.

It is also important that the marketing campaign captures the benefits of taking public transport compared to travelling by car. The marketing campaign should draw on the ease of using public transport, for example, the ease of commuting by bus rather than the stressful environment of driving a car during rush hour.

Consultation also indicated that the frequency and routes offered by cross town bus services are perceived to be poor, including those from the railway station to the main employment areas of Hitchin (town centre and Cadwell Lane). However, consultation of the bus timetables indicates that there is a frequent bus service offered to each of these employment areas. Marketing this information to the employees of businesses in these locations should be specifically targeted in this marketing campaign. In addition to this, there could be a targeted local campaign showing where residents of a local area can catch a bus to.

For a successful campaign it is essential that the marketing is reviewed and amendments are made to the marketing material where necessary. This scheme is also inherently linked to UTP scheme SM8 (Produce an integrated strategy for marketing sustainable modes) and it will be important to develop the

schemes in tandem so as to ensure that the UTP objective to increase the number of sustainable travel measures and their uptake can be achieved.

This scheme should also be supplemented by an increased amount of public transport information available at bus stops. HCC indicate that the provision of information of bus stops is currently controlled by HCC and sub-contracted. HCC should ensure that key bus stops within Hitchin have both timetable and route information. This information could be supplemented by marketing of integrated ticketing schemes.

Benefits:

- Passenger Transport Information
- Public Transport Patronage
- Bus Service / User Satisfaction

Risks:

- Marketing campaign has no effect on public transport patronage

Scheme:
Improve pedestrian access within the rail station and from the east of Hitchin

Scheme Reference:
PTM11

Scheme Status:
This scheme is not included in the UTP.

Purpose:
It was raised at the consultations that pedestrian access to the railway station is perceived as poor, particularly from the east of Hitchin. Respondents also raised the issue of a lack of platform lifts within the station, making accessibility within the station difficult for disadvantaged users.

Details:
This scheme is addressed in two parts by other UTP schemes:

- PTM11.1 – Improve eastern access to the railway station;
- PTM11.2 – Introduce platform lifts at the railway station.

Benefits:

- Improve accessibility to railway station
- Encourage an increase in mode share of walking to the railway station
- Provide a more attractive environment for walking trips
- Help reduce the number of vehicle trips in the town

Risks:

- Improved access cannot be delivered due to physical barriers
- Funding any access improvements could be difficult to secure

Scheme:
Improve eastern access to the railway station

Scheme Reference:
PTM11.1

Scheme Status:
This scheme is not included in the UTP

Purpose:
As discussed, respondents at the stakeholder consultation indicated that access to the station is poor, with access from the eastern side of Hitchin particularly difficult.

Details:
Accessing the railway station for residents from the east of Hitchin is particularly difficult as there is no direct eastern access. It was therefore proposed that a scheme is needed to address this problem. Research was undertaken to investigate measures that would assist improved access from the eastern side of Hitchin. The optimal choice would be a new direct access to the railway station from the eastern side. This would require the removal and / or relocation of the railway sidings which sit on the opposite side of the railway track to the station (see the plan below). However, the removal and / or relocation of the railway sidings would be costly and require the agreement of Network Rail. HCC have indicated that it is unlikely that the sidings could be removed or relocated within the near future. Therefore it is unlikely that the construction of a new eastern access would be a feasible scheme within the short to medium term.

Plan of railway sidings that prevent direct access to the railway station from the East

Scheme:
Introduce platform lifts at the railway station

Scheme Reference:
PTM11.2

Scheme Status:
This scheme is not included in the UTP because it is being addressed through planned future works.

Purpose:
It was raised by stakeholders at the consultations that movements within the railway station are difficult, particularly between platforms because of a lack of lifts.

Details:
Pedestrian access within the station will be improved by the addition of platform lifts. These are due to be implemented in the 2012 - 2015 tranche of the programme called 'Access for All Stations' funded through the DfT.

The Access for All Programme is part of the Railways for All Strategy, launched in 2006 to address the issues faced by disabled passengers using railway stations in Great Britain. Central to the Strategy is the ring-fencing of £35m funding per year, until 2015, for provision of an obstacle free, accessible route to and between platforms at priority stations. This generally includes the provision of lifts or ramps, as well as associated works and refurbishment along the defined route.

Hitchin station has been identified for funding in the 2012 – 2015 programme, subject to Network Rail carrying out a feasibility study to identify how access can be improved. This process will include engagement with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the most appropriate solution can be delivered within the objectives of the Access for All Programme.

Scheme:
Increase the frequency of the bus services

Scheme Reference:
PTM15

Scheme Status:
This scheme will not be included in the UTP

Purpose:
Stakeholders have indicated that some bus services within the study area are too infrequent. This scheme proposes that HCC offer additional subsidies to operators to enable them to run bus services at higher frequencies than those currently offered.

Details:
'Commercial' and 'subsidised' are the two types of bus service which can be operated. Commercial services are those provided without any subsidy (except for the provision of concessionary fares and the mileage-based subsidy which offsets most fuel duty). Due to the bus industry now being de-regulated, if a service is being operated without a subsidy the local authority cannot dictate the frequency of service to be run by a commercial operator. In general, a commercial operator will increase the level of frequency bus services if it is profitable.

If there are gaps in the commercial bus network (either through frequency or routes being offered), local authorities are able to design bus services which bus operators can be paid to operate. These are routes which the local authority considers as socially necessary, but are not commercially viable. The fares, routes and times of these subsidised services are set by the local authority. HCC already subsidise a number of services within Hitchin which would not operate unless there was a financial incentive for operators to run these services. This scheme proposes that HCC offer additional subsidies to operators to enable them to run bus services at a higher frequency than those currently offered. Due to budget limitations it is unlikely that money for further subsidies will be available.

HCC indicate that The County Council has a statutory duty to consider passenger needs and provide appropriate services to meet those needs. The County Council also has to balance this against the commercial service provision by bus operators and not take action which would have a disproportionate effect on their businesses. Frequencies should be as high as is justified either by commercial viability, value for money criteria or financial resources available. Where these criteria cannot be met, the views of stakeholders and local members will be sought to assess whether the service should be provided.

Following the Hitchin UTP public consultation, residents stated that the frequency of bus services along Stevenage Road were poor and it is therefore recommended that this specific location be considered for an improved level of frequency.

Benefits:
- Increase in public transport patronage;
- Lower carbon emissions; and
- Lower levels of congestion.

Risks:
- Additional funding to increase bus services does not necessarily increase the level of public transport patronage
- No further funding to subsidise bus services is available.

Scheme:
Introduce bus priority at selected locations within Hitchin

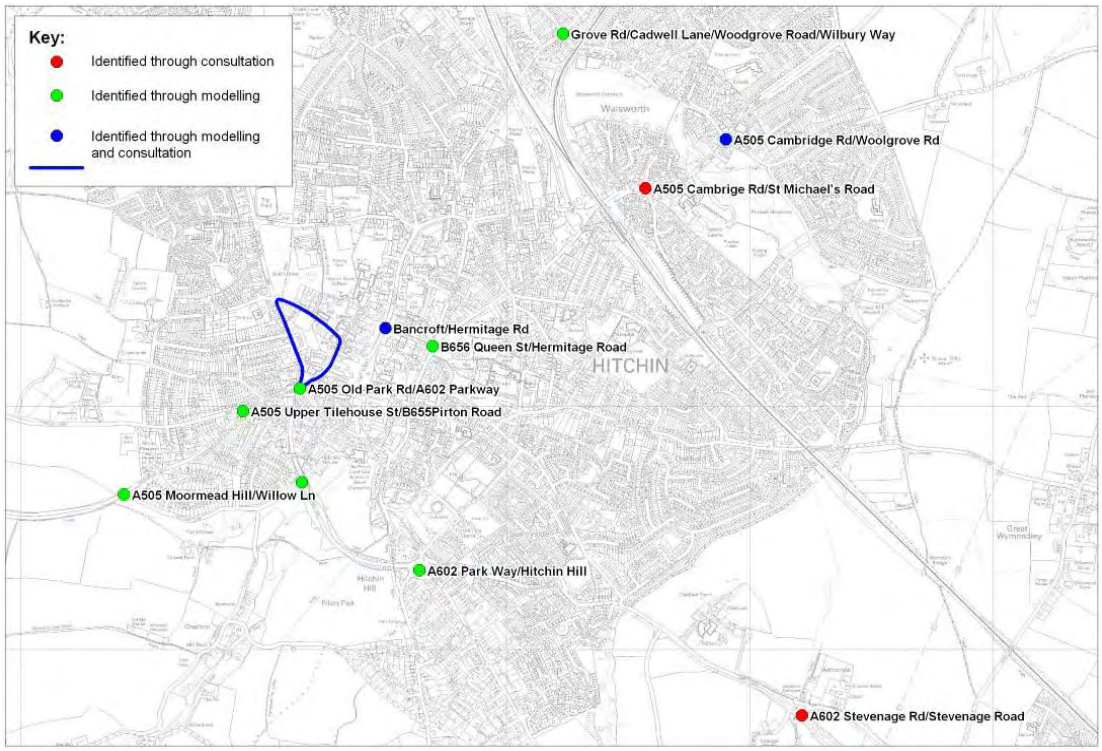
Scheme Reference:
PTM17

Scheme Status:
This scheme will not be included in the UTP

Purpose:
Stakeholders have indicated that buses within Hitchin, especially within the morning and evening peaks, travel through heavily trafficked areas. Congestion can have an adverse effect on bus journey time and reliability. By decreasing the journey times and increasing bus reliability, bus travel can become a more favourable mode of transport. Bus priority, if placed in the most heavily congested areas of the Hitchin road network, can help achieve this.

Details:
Several locations within Hitchin have been identified as being particularly congested during the peak periods, causing heavy delays for the buses. As such, they are seen as potential candidates for bus priority measures. The locations are shown below.

Identified Bus Priority Locations



These locations were then assessed for suitability for bus priority measures. The results of this assessment are indicated in the table.

Junctions identified as having high levels of delay and their suitability for bus priority

Location	Analysis
A602 Stevenage Rd / Stevenage Road	This junction is a t-junction. There is little scope to implement bus priority.
A602 Park Way / Hitchin Hill	There is delay at this junction. This is being addressed through scheme HM31.
A602 Park Way / Charlton Road	Buses run straight along Park Way, so it little scope for bus priority.
A505 Moormead Hill / Willow Lane	Buses run straight along Moormead Hill, so there is little scope for bus priority.
A505 Upper Tilehouse Street / B655 Pirton Road	There is delay at this junction. However this is being addressed through scheme HM31.
A602 Old Park Road / A602 Park Way	There is delay at this junction. However this is being addressed through scheme HM31.
B656 Queen St / Hermitage Road	The delay at this junction should be assisted through the implementation of PTM19.
Hermitage Road / Bancroft	There is delay on these roads, but should be assisted through scheme HM37, HM8 and PTM19.
A505 Cambridge Rd / St Michael's Road	This junction is a small roundabout. There is little scope to implement bus priority.
A505 Cambridge Rd / Woolgrove Rd	There is delay at this junction. However this is being addressed through scheme HM15.
Grove Rd / Cadwell Lane / Woolgrove Road / Wilbury Way	There is delay at this junction. However this is being addressed through scheme HM32.
Old Park Rd / Bedford Rd / Payne's Park one-way system	There is delay on these roads. However this is being addressed through scheme HM36.

The table shows that, at the majority of junctions where buses are currently being delayed, there are other UTP schemes that should assist in mitigating against these delays. By improving these junctions, it is hoped that bus journey times decrease, and increase bus journey time reliability. In drawing up the detailed designs for the highway improvements, it will be important to consider bus priority measures, and implement them wherever possible. However, it should be noted that, at a number of the locations, due to the current highway network constraints, it will not be possible to implement bus priority measures.