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Welwyn Hatfield Parking Strategy

2020 – 2030

Our Aim

The Council will use parking management, including enforcement and future provision, as a tool to benefit road safety, the environment, traffic management and economic vitality of the town centres and local shopping parades.

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INTRODUCTION

The number of vehicles on the roads has risen to such a level that parking requires parking controls in several locations across the borough.

For example, it is commonplace to find vehicles parked close to junctions, causing visibility problems; parked on footways and verges causing damage and nuisance. There is a noticeable increase in parking in the evenings and weekends when residents come home from work and current parking enforcement resources are not always available to manage the demand for parking in some areas, even when restrictions are in place.

The Council's Parking Strategy sets out the steps to achieve sustainable parking across the borough through:

- Maintaining traffic management and road safety, in particular, areas where there are schools;
- Supporting the economic vitality of town and shopping centres;
- Improving our environment;
- Creating and monitoring residential and on-street parking, including parking permits;
- Continual engagement with our residents and businesses.

Our approach to managing parking across the borough is in line with local and national policies summarised in the Policy Context from pages 27-29, as well as supporting the Council's priorities and objectives and our overall vision.

- To work together to keep Welwyn Hatfield a great place to live, work and study with a vibrant and growing economy.

Once the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan is adopted there will be greater certainty on the overall planned growth for the area and the major development opportunities. This Parking Strategy is intended to cover the period 2020 to 2030. It is acknowledged, however, that the strategy should be kept under review during this period, as technological and transport patterns change over time and not least because of the implications of major development opportunities in some areas of Welwyn Hatfield.

This strategy will strike a balance between:

- *The local economy* – using parking measures to support town centres and other business locations (e.g. providing enough parking at appropriate pricing and duration).

- *Travel Demand Management -* using parking controls as a means of managing traffic and to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.
- *Cost* – the costs of car parking (e.g. providing, enforcing and maintaining car parking) and where available and appropriate to fund contributions towards other related transport services.

During the drafting of this strategy, we like every other council, businesses and residents were impacted by COVID-19. This has further confirmed how parking is important; from ensuring that key workers have had access to affordable parking, whist understanding that parking provides a significant source of income to the Council.

There is likely to be changes in the way residents, businesses and their customers travel to and from work in the future as more organisation have set up home working for their employers. The Council will need to work with HCC and other Local Authorities to make sure future projects and scheme feed into the change of direction.

The nation has seen a significant drop in carbon emissions, and it would be remiss of us not to capitalise on this moving forward.

The Council will be looking at increasing the number of Electric Vehicle charging points across the borough in this financial year, this may extend further dependent on Government funding and local appetite.

The infrastructure for more sustainable methods of transport, such as cycle paths are likely to improve across the borough. The Council will need to work with HCC to make sure as much as possible these remain free of parked vehicles with the relevant Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) in place so they can be enforced by the Council's Parking Enforcement team.

It is the intention to provide a yearly update to the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel (CPPP) on the progress of the actions in this strategy.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Parking Enforcement

The Council delivers its parking service via an agency agreement between HCC and our authority. This agreement commenced in 2005 and has enabled WHBC to exercise Resident Parking Permit Schemes (RPPS) and other auxiliary parking controls.

Decriminalised parking enforcement must operate within the legal framework of the Traffic Management Act 2004. There are guidelines which have been set out by the Department for Transport which indicate income generated on-street, including charges, permits and PCN income needs to be ring-fenced. Additionally, if a surplus (after the cost of any enforcement contract, or other parking services the Council provides) arises, it would need to be fed back into transport initiatives to the benefit of the area.

1. Traffic Management and Road Safety

The safety of the public highway which includes verges, pavements and carriageways is the responsibility of HCC as the highway authority. However, whenever we look to improve parking in an area, we will also consider whether we can improve road safety, for example through the introduction of double yellow lines at junctions or other restrictions such as clearway orders.

The Council deals with requests for changes to parking controls in a holistic manner. This means we take relatively large areas (normally wards) and review the parking provision, looking at historical concerns and other outside influences, such as the proximity to town centres, rail stations and Universities.

Consultations then takes place with all relevant interested parties to promote parking restrictions, which will seek to address issues identified by the Council or through responses to the consultations.

When identifying areas for potential parking controls the Council will consider the wider implications of any parking restrictions for all road users and HCC Transport Plans.

Objectives:

- To improve road safety at junctions.

- To ensure effective enforcement of the borough's parking restrictions; investigate all options including camera enforcement as a way of achieving this.

- Work with the DVLA and Police to address illegal vehicles within the borough.

- To reduce where possible competition for kerbside space, between residents and other groups.

- To support HCC's Transport Strategy and encourage modal shift towards alternative modes of transport, such as buses, railways, cycling and walking.

Actions:

a) To consult on proposals for the introduction of junction protection (double yellow lines) at all junctions to improve visibility for all users including pedestrians.

b) To facilitate clear passenger transport routes, which are regularly impeded by obstructively parked vehicles.

c) Amend the terms and conditions so that all vehicles which have a car park season tickets and/or resident parking permit are taxed and MOT'd.

d) Review current parking provision on-street and in our car parks to ensure there is a mix of parking spaces to support businesses and are accessible to all users; by having the right amount of parking provision, and management of those spaces. Provide disabled parking spaces/limited waiting for some areas to encourage turnover of customers.

2. <u>Economic Vitality of Town Centres and Shopping Centres</u>

HCC has defined both Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City as 'Primary Urban Centres'. This is based on a consideration of population, agglomeration potential, current economic/employment importance, future housing growth and existing travel patterns. Therefore, the attractiveness of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield as retail and tourist destinations, has resulted in sustained parking pressures in and around both centres.

We recognise that parking availability also influences the vitality and viability of town centres. Therefore, it is imperative this is at the heart of any design or layout, working closely with the businesses, local employees and the residents in these areas to make sure any change make it easier for those to live, work and socialise.

Off-street parking is charged in Welwyn Garden City town centre during the daytime Monday to Sunday. This is currently free in Hatfield town centre.

On-street parking in Welwyn Garden City town centre and local village amenity centres is free and tends to be closer to the shops than the off-street parking and, therefore, this is very popular. On occasions, people drive around to find a free parking space, rather than use one of the many car parks available, which can create congestion in these areas.

In the residential streets surrounding the two main towns, there is a mixture of parking controls, including resident parking permit schemes, to prevent non-residential parking.

<u>Objectives:</u>

- Continue to improve the Council car parks, to be more attractive for our customers.

- When proposing changes, be mindful of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and other Transport Strategies, to create towns where walking, cycling and public transport are encouraged and support strategies to address climate changes and air quality.

- To ensure there is adequate parking facilities for all users including local workers, residents, disabled people, visitors and businesses; whilst recognising the need to encourage sustainable travel and adapting to new technology and trends in parking.

- To ensure the restrictions help to encourage a thriving commercial town centre, providing adequate short stay parking spaces for shoppers, and provision for residents and local workers.

- Where possible to support the Town Centre Management with events.

- To increase the turnover of parking provision in the town centres and local shopping parades, maximise the use of car parking spaces within the Council carparks.

- To ensure the parking system is friendly and flexible for all users.

- To provide clean and safe car parking facilities and accessible to all users.

- To support the local economy, particularly small to medium businesses and retail outlets.

- To ensure the combined car parking capacity in the town centres meets with demand, including other car park operators.

- If there are difficult decisions to be made about how the space is prioritised, the aim should be to balance the needs of the business, visitors and shoppers, by placing the emphasis on shorter stay spaces in the centre, and longer stay spaces in peripheral car parks.

Actions:

a) Work with all parties to ensure the parking controls in the town centres (on-street and off-street) and neighbourhood shopping parades meets the needs of the businesses and their visitors:

   i) Businesses – ensuring the loading/unloading facilities meets the needs of the businesses especially those with no rear access.
   ii) Taxi – Taxis provide an important service, especially for journeys to and from the town centres and railway stations.

iii) Local workers – Investigate options for employee parking schemes, particularly for those on low wages and/or part-time.

iv) Residents – To look at ways of being able to provide some parking outside of peak times for residents to utlilise.

v) Customers and visitors – Good split depending on proximity to the town centre of short and long stay parking.

vi) Disabled people – Recently, the criteria has been extended, which means there will be more people who fall under this legislation. This will mean more people looking for disabled parking spaces in and around the town centres.

vii) Business Improvement District (BID) – Where possible support the BID on events

viii) Commuters – Currently the Council car parks are operating around 80-85 per cent of their capacity on weekdays.

b) Provide support such as parking suspensions and advice to facilitate local events.

c) Investigate marketing options with a view to support the vitality of the town centres.

d) Increase the number of car parks which qualify for the Park Mark Award.

e) Work in partnership with other parking providers (Sainsburys, Howards Centre, John Lewis, Waitrose, Asda, Station car parks) to support customers with fair and competitive parking options.

f) Review tariff structure through the Council's budget setting process.

g) Review parking restrictions in all car parks, so there is an even split between long and short stay spaces, taking into consideration their proximity to the town centre.

h) Car parks - Look at ramps, tactile paving and dropped kerbs to improve pedestrian movement.

i) Capital/Revenue investment in car parks for essential maintenance work or development.

j) Advertise/promote public car parks 'out of hours' for residents within town centres.

k) Investigate costs for CCTV to be installed in all our charging car parks.

l) Review/improve 'wayfinding' signage in and around the town centres.

m) Investigate if there is some capacity in roads surrounding the town centre to offer a same number of commuter parking bays.

3. Environment

Vehicles can have a major impact on the environment, whilst also causing localised verge damage and can cause obstruction for pedestrians and emergency services and other service providers such as waste collections.

Parking on pavements and verges is prohibited in London, however local authorities outside London must introduce Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to prevent this type of parking. This is a very expensive and time-consuming process.

Congestion is likely to be at its worst in town centres as cars queue to access parking facilities. Improving sustainable transport would provide visitors coming to the town centres with more options other than using a car.

Objectives:

- To reduce the dependence on the car, particularly in town centres.

- To reduce where possible the environmental damage caused by cars and car ownership, particularly in residential areas.

- To review the number of Electric Vehicle charging points within the borough.

- Investigate ways of encouraging sustainable transport.

- Where possible, formalise parking provision in residential areas in which environmental damage is occurring.

Actions

 a) When consulting affected parties on parking restrictions include proposals for a Verge Protection Order as a matter of course.

a) Investigate funding opportunities to increase the number of destination electrical charging points across the borough.

b) Where appropriate convert verges and green areas to parking provision, in areas which are experiencing high levels of other environmental damage.

c) Look at ways of addressing over run on verges by larger vehicles.

d) Work with Car Club operators to invest in car clubs throughout the borough, to offer residents an alternative option to owning a vehicle or at least a second vehicle.

e) Work in partnership with other boroughs to look at ways of providing a practical cross boundary solution for residents wanting to use alternative modes of transport such as car clubs.

f) Look at locations to increase motorcycle and bicycle provision.

<u>Parking Improvements</u>

The Council has a programme of improvement works, which runs alongside the parking restriction programme. When consulting with residents, businesses and other affected parties on changes to the parking controls in their area, the Council also identifies areas which could increase parking. Alternatively, replacing parking provision in areas where restrictions prevent parking (such as junction protection in the form of double yellow lines).

The Council is also aware of the environmental impact of on-street parking in some areas (parking on verges and/or footway) and will investigate options to resolve the long-term issues.

All parking improvements can be on either public highway, Council or on Housing land, dependent on which one will determine the approval process. All residents and businesses in the affected locations will be consulted on the proposals.

Improvements on Housing/Estate land need to be approved by our own Planning Department, by submitting a planning application, before going onto the contractor to begin construction. This approval process can take up to twelve weeks before being passed through to a contractor.

This programme of works also improves the look and feel of the environment and balance schemes on the need versus the characteristic of the area.

4. <u>Residential areas/On-Street Parking:</u>

The Council has been managing on-street parking controls since 2005 and has considerable experience of the most appropriate way of addressing parking issues in residential areas.

The Council has an Agency Agreement with HCC which allows the Council to implement Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) that provide parking controls, mainly in the form of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs).

The introduction of CPZs has previously been focussed on ending non-residential car parking in residential areas, normally long-stay and mainly associated with commuters, local workers and town centre users. The CPZs have been very successful in achieving the prevention of non-residential parking.

However, experience over the years has shown that:

- Vehicles migrate, not always to the most obvious areas;
- CPZs are more expensive with regards to design, implementation, enforcement and maintenance.

The Council to date, operates 42 CPZs throughout the borough. These schemes are in place where there is a third-party pressure such as a town centre, university and railway stations.

In order to implement measures to support residents parking, the Council will continue to seek their views/support before progressing to possible implementation.

When assessing area for changes, residential amenity is not the only criteria which needs to be considered, the needs of local businesses and safety are also important considerations. Whilst controlled parking is used primarily to restrict use of residential roads for parking by non-residents, its purpose is not to guarantee each resident a space outside of their property.

Parking close to residents' homes is becoming increasingly challenging. Whilst all drivers can suffer inconvenience at times, disabled drivers are more seriously affected. Currently HCC are responsible for installing advisory disabled bays but these are not enforceable so anyone can park in these without penalty. Although most drivers recognise the need for these bays when they are misused there is no alternative option to disabled residents who are directly affected.

The Council operates a Programme of Work, which is recommended by the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel (CPPP) and approved by Cabinet. This is reviewed regularly and prioritised according to the severity of parking at hand, projects and developments, which may impact parking in some areas of the borough, available funding and resources.

Objectives

- Provide workable solutions to address parking issues which have been reported through to the council via residents, councillors and other affected parties.

- Investigate better ways of engaging with affected parties when consulting them on changes to the parking controls in their areas.

- Provide measures to address the problems created by verge and pavement parking.

- Investigate options to find solutions for insufficient parking provision for all parties.

- Seek alternative options for additional parking provision.

- Overnight/weekend issues – commercial vehicles and lorries.

- Review existing parking controls to ensure they are still fit for purpose.

Actions

a) Consult on proposals to address and prevent parking on pavements, verges and other green areas.

b) Look at ways to increase parking provision without compromising the Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield New Town ethos.

c) Investigate the possibility of the sale of permits to non-residents in areas which have capacity.

d) Assess all garages to see if there is a possibility of using these or helping to manage more effectively.

e) Investigate options to address commercial vehicles taking up spaces in residential roads.

f) Investigate options to provide lorry overnight parking.

5. Resident Parking Permit Policy

When consulting residents on parking controls, residents are favouring resident parking permit schemes over yellow lines. This is because this restriction is more flexible for residents as they can purchase a permit/vouchers for themselves and their visitors during the days and time the restriction operates.

The first scheme was introduced in Old Hatfield in 2009. WHBC now have 42 resident parking permits schemes operating on a variety of days and times throughout the week.

Up until 2017, applications were paper based and only able to be processed during the Council opening hours. This was restrictive for residents and not environmentally friendly. Also, a large amount of the administration time was spent trying to take payments over the telephone.

A new on-line system (NSL Apply) was introduced in 2017 and this system provided an alternative process for residents and businesses to apply and pay for permits and visitor vouchers at any time. The system is virtual, so the Council's Parking Enforcement team have access to the system, to enable them to check the vehicle registration number to see if it has a voucher or permit. This is available 24/7, making the process of applying for permits and vouchers more accessible and convenient for residents and businesses.

The terms and conditions of permit and vouchers have not been reviewed since 2012.

Objectives:

- Make sure the permit policy and terms and conditions are fit for purpose.

- Ensure there are processes for those without access to a computer, elderly or with other disabilities.

- Always look to improve the application process to make it as convenient as possible.

- To review each of the zones to understand if there are areas which are underused.

Actions:

a) Review of charging regime – the current permit policy has not changed since the first resident parking permit scheme was introduced.

b) Review visitor voucher allocation per scheme, to ensure they meet resident's needs.

c) Review the capacity of each zone, in some locations there could be an opportunity to consider selling business permits in some roads, which are under occupied.

d) A Parking Permit Policy will be produced, and reviewed when required, and/or reviewed every five years to ensure that it meets the needs of the both residents and businesses. With the more recent trend of the redevelopment of commercial property into residential property, this can conflict in some locations. The Policy will look and provide guidance relating to eligible properties, zone capacity, days and times of operation and size. Specific local needs will be addressed during each individual scheme design and consultation with stakeholders.

6. **Schools**

School enforcement has become very challenging in recent years with an increasing number of people driving to drop off and collect children. Many schools are located in and around residential areas. This can cause conflict between these commuters and other road users for those periods of the day.

Traditionally enforcement of school zig zags and other safety restrictions are undertaken by the Parking Enforcement Officers on a rota basis. They focus on

moving people off the restrictions and/or in some cases issuing parking tickets. However, when the officers are on patrol in these areas, school commuters tend to comply with the parking restrictions. However, when the officers are not in the area drivers do go back to parking or stopping on the school zig zags and double yellow lines.

Objectives

- To improve safety and compliance at schools

Actions

a) To investigate alternative methods of management and enforcement.

b) Work with HCC's Safer Routes to Schools team to address parking issues around schools in the borough.

7. Communication and Consultations

Traffic Regulation Orders are created under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Consultations follow a statutory legal process, as set out in The Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. This means there is a statutory consultation process which needs to be adhered to when introducing any changes to parking controls.

A key part of any proposals to change the parking controls is consultation with all affected parties. This is generally instigated with letters and plans sent to properties directly affected by the parking controls. This provides them with an opportunity to influence the process and provide more detailed information on how the area is currently used and the challenges that they face.

Previously, the response rate has varied between residents and businesses. One of the reasons for this is that we address the correspondence 'To the Resident/Occupier', due to the team not having access to other systems within the Council to utilise and personalise the correspondence. So, when the letter arrives it can look as though it is a circular and, as such, is less likely to be opened. Therefore, in recent years, the initial proposals and when the scheme reaches the statutory stage of the consultation the correspondence is hand delivered in envelopes design specifically for parking consultation. This has improved the response rate in most areas.

One of the areas the Council can also assess is the ability to create more parking provision in residential areas without detracting from the character of the specific

area. There are several conservation areas and an Estates Management Scheme which also operates in Welwyn Hatfield, which is also taken into consideration.

Poor parking gets a lot of press attention; parking enforcement ensures fair access to parking, and acts as a deterrent to inconsiderate and dangerous parking. This is turn alleviates congestion and pollution by keeping the highway open for the free flow of traffic, improving road safety and accessibility for all road users, including Blue Badge holders.

The Council has an obligation to produce an Annual Report each year which provides information on what the Council's Parking Services does each year. This report also includes financial and statistical information.

Objectives

- To maximise the existing car parking provision, and to create more, where practicable, on-street and off-street parking, for the benefit of the residents, businesses and visitors.

- To bring forward a programmed area wide parking consultation with residents, businesses and affected parties on parking measures within a 10-year programmed cycle.

- To ensure that everyone can access information on the Council's Parking Services which is accessible to all.

- Aim to continue to improve the public's perception of parking in the borough.

- Use innovative solutions to improve and reach more people when consulting on changes to the parking controls

Actions:

a) Adhere to the statutory consultation process when consulting all affected parties on proposals to change the parking restrictions in the borough.

b) Where residents compete for kerbside parking provision in their own roads with other groups (local workers, commuters, etc.)produce new schemes to give greater priority to residents.

c) To work with the British Parking Association on the Positive Parking Agenda.

d) Produce an Annual Report each year, which provides statistical and financial information regarding the performance of the Councils parking team and car park estate.

e) Each year submit the Parking Services Annual Report for a British Parking Association Award.

f) Make use of social media and other communication methods to promote parking consultations which are taking place in the borough.

g) Involve residential groups and Ward/County Councillors in each stages of the consultation process.

8. <u>Business Park and other employment areas</u>

Hatfield Business Park is the borough's largest employment area. There is a significant amount of commuter traffic from workers driving to and from the area. This can impact the residents in the areas as workers are competing for space.

Shire Park is another large employment area in Welwyn Garden City. Again, although a large amount of parking is available within the site, there are a significant number of vehicles associated with Shire Park, which are parking in residential areas.

<u>Objectives</u>

- Refer to Local Transport Plan (LTP4) and other Transport Strategies, to create towns where walking, cycling and public transport are encouraged and support strategies to address climate changes and air quality.

- Investigate ways to achieve the Hatfield 2030+ Vision.

- Investigate options to maximise parking opportunity during the Welwyn Garden City North development

- Look at ways to be able to facilitate sustainable transport including but not limited to, EV charging points, Car Clubs, Car share schemes.

- Explore methods to encourage modal shift from vehicles.

- Investigate ways to tackle congestion and improve air quality and have a positive impact on climate change.

<u>Actions</u>

a) Work with HCC on seeking improvements in the quality and frequency of bus services to and from the employment areas.

b) Work on cycle routes with HCC to ensure pedestrian and cycle routes to and from employment areas are well maintained and safe

c) Where businesses compete for kerbside parking provision in their industrial areas with other groups (commuters, etc.), introduce new schemes to give greater priority to businesses. Bid for 106 contributions to improve the bus links/service.

d) Encourage bus operators to develop partnerships with employers in order to provide incentives for staff to use other modes of transport.

9. **The Future**

Technology is changing and improving rapidly, the Council needs to keep up and look at innovative ways to provide the council parking service.

The level of technological change that may occur during the life of this strategy is likely to be considerable, including the increasing electrification and automation of the vehicle fleet. Furthermore, communications technology is leading to a change in the way consumers find information and pay for services. This strategy proposes a flexible approach to ensure future adaptation of policy.

Parking availability for any type of vehicle is also an important factor in determining how people travel. This also influences the vitality and viability of town centres and the design and layout of parking can affect the quality of place of residential areas. In some areas on-street parking can act as a traffic calming measure, in others it is a problem for residents and businesses and can be a barrier to accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists, passenger transport, emergency and other service vehicles.

The Draft Local Plan, when adopted, will focus on how the Council can provide in region of 16,000 new homes in the borough in the next 20 years. The Council needs to make sure the parking provision can cope with the increase numbers of residents moving into the borough and options for visitors.

<u>Objectives</u>

- Be involved with the future development of alternative modes of transport, such as autonomous travel.

- Work with neighbouring authorities to provide cohesive alternative networks to make this a viable/practical option for residents, workers and visitors to the county.

- Improve the infrastructure and the number of electric charging points within the borough.

- Improve the car club infrastructure in the borough.

- Aim towards car parking provision becoming self-financing.

Actions

a) Development and regeneration by reviewing the Council's parking standards for new developments, which may be provided at any existing neighbourhood centre to ensure the balance of parking is adequate for all users.

b) The need for ongoing programmes of providing new provision but recognise that the budget is not indefinite and the need to look at more radical approaches if required, involving innovative and creative solutions.

c) To influence developments of new properties to provide appropriate parking provision for the high level of car ownership within the borough, or to provide suitable alternatives to help residents reduce the need to having a vehicle such as car club schemes.

d) Review the parking charges each year as part of the budget setting process

RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT

The management of on and off-street parking falls into two areas; the enforcement of on and off-street (car parks) parking (i.e. the public 'face' of the service). And secondly, the back-office management, which assists with the enforcement function. Both functions are carried out through a contract with East Hertfordshire District Council, with APCOA (physical enforcement provider) carrying out the physical enforcement. The contract is three-way contract with Stevenage Borough Council the other partner.

The design of new schemes is managed by the Parking Services Team at WHBC, alongside the day-to-day management of season tickets and residents parking permit applications, as well as handling customer enquiries.

The Council is directly responsible for the daily management of car parks and parking payments (in terms of income, ticket machines, planned and reactive maintenance) as well as monitoring the status of machines. In addition, the Council allocates resources to the physical maintenance of car parks, again on a planned and reactive basis.

The entire daily management resource covers the whole of the borough's parking services for both on and off-street. Any changes to one aspect of the service as a result of this strategy, are likely to have implications for the whole service resource. The level of resources available will dictate how the strategy will be delivered and the services are managed.

The Council is attentive of the limitations on its resources, and as such seeks to achieve the most efficient and effective ways of working.

This entails regularly reviewing the scale of its operations, with a view to ensuring that parking management and enforcement remains financially sustainable in accordance with its Medium-term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Parking Programme.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

National Position

At the end of September 2019, there were 38.9 million licensed vehicles in Great Britain, a 1.3 percent increase compared to September 2018. Cars make up most licensed vehicles. There were 32 million cars (82.2 per cent).

The average car spends about 80 per cent of the time parked at home and is parked elsewhere for about 16% of the time. The car is only on the move for four per cent of the time. Source: Spaced Out: Perspectives on Parking Policy.

In England in 2018, nine percent of household vehicles were parked in a garage overnight; 63 per cent were parked on private property (but not garaged); 25 per cent were parked on the street; and two per cent were parked in other places.

Approximately 70 per cent of respondents usually parked their vehicles on private property, but since 2002 there has been a change in this trend. The proportion of vehicles parked in garages has decreased from 22 per cent to nine per cent, and the proportion parking elsewhere on private property has increased by about the same amount (from 50 percent to 63 percent). People in the most rural areas are more likely to park their vehicles on private property than those living in urban conurbations (89 per cent compared to 65 per cent). The same trend of fewer vehicles parked in garages is seen across a range of rural and urban areas.

Source: National Travel Survey: England 2018 and Table NTS0908

The South East region of Great Britain had the highest traffic levels in 2018, with a billion vehicle miles driven on its roads. This accounts for 17 per cent of all traffic in 2018, of all the roads in Great Britain 12% are in the South East.

Of the five local authorities with the highest levels of traffic, three are in the South East region (Hampshire, Kent, Surrey) and the others in the East of England region (Essex, Hertfordshire). These are all authorities with relatively large road networks, and they all contain some of the major motorways of Great Britain.

Source: Department for Transport and Table TRA8905

As you can see from the above statistics, parking issues are not confined to town centres; many of our residential roads suffer excessive parking congestion accounting for a number of safety hazards and environmental damage to pavements and verges. In the last five years the council has spent more than £1,200,000 increasing parking provision to alleviate parking issues. This level of investment is not sustainable, and we need to find alternative methods to manage these difficulties in the future.

Local Position

Access to Transport

In England, about 76 per cent of households have access to a car and/or van. There have been significant long-term increases in the proportion of households with access to a car or van. The proportion of households without a car has fallen from 48 percent in 1971 (based on the Census) to 24 per cent in 2018, while the proportion of households with more than one car or van increased over this period, from eight per cent to 35 per cent.

Since 2000, there have been more households with two or more cars or vans than households with no car or van.

Source: National Travel Survey: England 2018 and Table NTS0205

The Hertfordshire County Travel survey in 2012 showed an increase in car ownership, with households with no cars decreasing from 19 per cent to 11 per cent or 89 per cent of households having access to a car. Households with one car have increased from 39 per cent to 42 per cent, and households with two or more cars increasing from 43 per cent to 47 per cent. In Welwyn Hatfield, 87 per cent of residents aged over 17 have a full driving licence, which is slightly above the Hertfordshire average of 86 per cent - marginally higher than the national average of 76 per cent. (NTS 0201)

There were 2.29 million valid Blue Badges on issue in England as of 31 March 2019 - a decrease of 2.5 per cent (59,000 badges) when compared with the

previous year. This decrease continues the declining trend in the number of badges held since 2012 (bar a small increase in 2017).

On 31 March 2019, 4.1 percent of the population in England held a valid Blue Badge - down from 4.2 per cent the previous year. In 2010, the proportion was five per cent. Source: Blue Badge Scheme Statistics, England: 2019

In WHBC, five per cent of residents have a blue badge which is the same as Hertfordshire as a county.

Those respondents aged 18-24, 84 per cent have a full driving licence, which is much higher than the Hertfordshire average of 74%.

People and their commute to work by car

There are 26.5 million working people aged 16 – 74 in England and Wales. Of these, 16.7 million people either drive themselves to work (15.3 million) or obtain a lift (1.4 million).

In rural areas, nearly three quarters (73.4 per cent) of workers travel by car (whether as a driver or passenger). This method of travel also dominates the commute in urban areas (outside of London) with 67.1 per cent of people either driving themselves or obtaining a lift. Even amongst Londoners, the car is the most popular single mode of travel, used by 29.8 percent of workers.

The average length of a commuter trip by car/van varies little across English regions and Wales at about ten miles. It is highest in the South East (11.2 miles) and lowest in London (8.6 miles). Source: The Car and the Commute

In Welwyn Hatfield three per cent of residents made zero trips on the designated travel day, compared to 29 per cent of Hertfordshire responses. The number of people who work from home at least one day a week was 19 per cent, which is less than the Hertfordshire average of 22 per cent. More people in Welwyn Hatfield work within the same district (36 per cent) compared to the county average of 32 per cent. London (31 per cent) is the second largest destination. In Welwyn Hatfield 38 per cent trips to work are less than five miles, which is higher than the Hertfordshire average of 31 per cent.

A majority of people use the train in Welwyn Hatfield (25 per cent) compared to the Hertfordshire average of 21 per cent. The percentage of commuters who cycled to work was five per cent compared with the County average of three per cent.

More people walk to work in Welwyn Hatfield (nine per cent) compared to the county average of seven per cent. Consequently, fewer people drive to work in Welwyn Hatfield (56 per cent) compared to the County average of 59 per cent. Source: Hertfordshire Transport Vision 2050

Non-work Travel – Shopping and Education

In Welwyn Hatfield, 85 per cent of food shopping and 81 per cent of all shopping trips are less than five miles in distance. This is significantly greater than the Hertfordshire totals of 82 per cent and 76 per cent respectively. Welwyn Hatfield do the same amount of shopping, via the internet, compared to the county average of seven per cent.

Travel to education facilities undertaken by car equates to 39 per cent, with 43 per cent walking and six per cent of people cycling - which is more than the county average of three per cent. Source: Hertfordshire Transport Vision 2050.

Views on Transport

Respondents were given the opportunity to make comments on transport. Just like Hertfordshire most Welwyn Hatfield respondents made comments on buses and bus services (43 per cent).

The remaining comments related to parking (10 per cent), taxis (two per cent) cycling (nine per cent) and rail travel (seven per cent)., This is relatively equal to the Hertfordshire average, although public transport (18 per cent) featured more than the Hertfordshire average of 12 per cent. In Welwyn Hatfield 12 per cent of comments received were complimentary towards transport - marginally higher than the Hertfordshire average of 11 per cent. The highest proportion of comments from Welwyn Hatfield (eight per cent) related to traffic volume and flow and outlined how rail travel could benefit from an Oyster Ticketing System (eight per cent). Source: Transport Vision 2050

Car Ownership by local authority

Rank	Local Authority	cars/vans per 1000 people (2011)	% change since 2001	% houses with car/van (2011)	% of change since 2001	% of houses With 4+ cars/vans (2011)	% change since 2001
53	East Hertfordshire	619	3.8	87.2	0.8	3.5	24
94	Three Rivers	600	4.1	8.8	2.4	3.5	33
124	Dacorum	580	4.2	83.6	1.1	2.9	25
129	North Hertfordshire	576	6.1	83.4	2.7	2.5	40
134	St Albans	573	0.4	86.5	1.5	2.6	24
154	Broxbourne	554	0.9	82.5	-0.5	3.1	31
155	Hertsmere	553	1.7	83	0.7	3	28
197	Welwyn Hatfield	519	- 0.5	79.7	0.4	2.7	27
218	Stevenage	503	5.5	77.2	0.8	1.9	46

| 235 | Watford | 488 | -0.9 | 77.8 | -1.4 | 1.9 | 24 |

Source RAC Foundation

Summary

- The Welwyn Hatfield sample have similar characteristics to the rest of Hertfordshire, including comparable levels of driving licence and car ownership;

- Many more 18 – 24-year olds in Welwyn Hatfield have a full driving licence compared to the Hertfordshire average;

- A higher proportion of Welwyn Hatfield respondents drive for all journey purposes compared to the county average;

- A higher proportion of Welwyn Hatfield respondents work within the same district compared to the county;

- There is a greater prevalence of sustainable travel to work in Welwyn Hatfield compared to the county average, with more travelling by train or walking and cycling, and less driving.

Future Aspirations

By 2050 forecasts predict that the population of Hertfordshire will have grown by around 400,000 to over 1.5m, having a considerable impact on congestion and journey times, particularly during peak travel periods.

Hertfordshire County Council are developing a new long-term transport strategy which sets out how the County can manage this extra strain on our transport networks. The Local Transport Plan for Hertfordshire (LTP4) strategy will provide a framework to guide all future transport planning and investment.

At this stage the proposals include enhancing walking and cycling provision; better public transport between towns; technology to better manage traffic on our key routes; and embracing modern technology to facilitate an increase in shared transport schemes such as lift-share and car clubs.

There are four main principles:

1. Application and adoption of new technology
2. Modal shift and encouraging active travel
3. Cost effective delivery and maintenance
4. Integration of land use and transport planning

The 'transport user hierarchy' has changed with the car at the bottom and walking,

cycling and public transport at the top. This means when transport schemes are being designed, priority will be given to walking and cycling improvements. Gone are the days of building more roads as there just is not the space and money to keep doing this. People need to think differently about how they travel to and from work, however currently the public transport network does not work for everyone to be able to do this.

Travelling north and south on public transport, although crowded and expensive, is relatively quick and practical. However, traveling from east and west requires people to travel into London to come back out again. Therefore, the car is currently the most practical transport solution.

Hertfordshire County Council have plans for a Bus Rapid Transport network to improve the bus infrastructure on the A414 which would improve travelling from east to west.

Source: Transport Vision 2050

POLICY CONTEXT

The Council's parking policies must comply with the law (particularly the Traffic Management Act 2004); and have regard to the Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions, issued in 2014. This Guidance states that enforcement authorities should design their parking policies regarding:

- managing the traffic network to ensure expeditious movement of traffic, (including pedestrians and cyclists);
- improving road safety;
- improving the local environment;
- improving the quality and accessibility of public transport;
- meeting the needs of people with disabilities, some of whom will be unable to use public transport and depend entirely on the use of a car;
- and managing and reconciling the competing demands for kerb space.

The council's role is the management (including enforcement) of all on-street parking restrictions and off-street council owned/manged car parks mainly in town centres and neighbourhood shopping parades. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (WHBC) is also the local planning authority responsible for parking standards for new developments.

In respect of on-street parking (public roads and streets) enforcement, the council acts on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) (the Highway Authority) under the terms of an Agency Agreement between the two authorities. The council's

agreement with Hertfordshire County Council includes the implementation of further on-street parking controls i.e. Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) that are intended to address safety and\or public amenity issues.

There is also a range of national, regional and local policy that is relevant to this Parking Strategy. Some of the key aims and objectives of these policies are set out below:

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018 set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced. The NPPF must be considered in preparing the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

In 2016, The Secretary of State for Transport issued Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions, which sets out the policy framework for Civil Parking Enforcement. It explains how to approach, carry out and review parking enforcement.

Countywide policy on parking is set out in the Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), which was adopted by HCC in May 2018. The Local Transport Plan adopts a transport user hierarchy policy which gives priority to more sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. Policy 4 of the LTP4 stresses the importance of parking as a traffic demand management tool.

The County Council considers greater traffic demand management to be essential in the county's urban areas in the next five years to achieve modal shift and improve sustainable travel provision. This can only currently be achieved efficiently and effectively through parking restrictions and charging applied to on-street, off-street and potentially at workplace parking. The County Council will work with the district and borough councils and other key stakeholders to develop locally appropriate strategies.

Since the development of the LTP4, there have been significant changes to the planning process and economy. Unlocking economic growth is of paramount importance and housing growth forecasts have shown that the 10 districts and boroughs within Hertfordshire need to accommodate a significant increase in housing and employment levels. Due to this, the County's transport planning strategy needs to accommodate and support future aspirations of all Boroughs and Districts. Sustainability is at the forefront - to create sustainable towns and linkages and generate modal shift from private cars.

A fundamental aspect of the review is the development of a new Transport Vision for Hertfordshire in 2050. The Transport Vision forms the evidence to support the investment needed for Hertfordshire. As previously highlighted by 2050, forecasts predict that the population of Hertfordshire will have grown by around 400,000 to

over 1.5 million, having a significant impact on congestion and journey times, particularly during peak travel periods.

The adoption of a 'transport user hierarchy' policy is identified within the Transport Vision. This will remove the priority of designing roads and urban areas for vehicle movements and give priority to other sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. Car-based commuters needs are given a lower priority in the hierarchy because of the contribution they make to congestion at peak times, and because of the urban space taken up by long-stay car parking.

The Stage Two Transport Vision 2050 document identifies several potential transport schemes including the use of Variable Messaging Signs (VMS), social media and emerging technologies to provide better information about on-street parking options within Hertfordshire's urban area, reducing the time spent circulating looking for a space. Other schemes include dynamic pricing structures, which will allow for different parking charges by time of day, location, demand, based on vehicle emissions and occupancy.

POLICIES

National

- Traffic Management Act 2004
- Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984
- The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2018
- Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions

Hertfordshire County Council

- Local Transport Plan 4
- Hertfordshire Transport Vision 2050

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

- Welwyn Hatfield Draft Local Plan
- Welwyn Hatfield Supplementary Planning Guidance - Parking Standards 2004
- Interim Car Parking and Garage Policy (August 2014)
- Retail Strategy
- BID Business Plan
- WGC North SPD (the name of this project is currently been discussed at the relevant procurement board)

- Agency Agreement with HCC

  Joint Policy Documents:

- Hatfield 2030+