Future transport in Hertfordshire, with particular reference to Hemel Hempstead in DBC

Preamble: This document is not an overall policy statement, rather a list of suggestions to be incorporated into such a statement and refers to matters that could be the responsibility of HCC or DBC or other authorities.
Italics items added to incorporate suggestions during the meeting

Underlying principle

Recent press reports (Telegraph, 10th August) suggest that over the next 20 years there will be a huge "order of magnitude" increase in storage of electrical energy. This will enable the grid to supply sustainable electricity needed to charge electric vehicles without a huge increase in CO_2 emissions. This opportunity should be matched by authorities basing all transport that is under their control or influence to be electrically powered from sustainable sources.

Current situation:

The older "new towns" were planned when multiple car ownership was not endemic or the aspiration of residents. There are now serious issues with excessive car ownership, resulting in dangerous parking, obstructed footpaths, ruined grass verges and loss of visual amenity.

HCC should have an **aspiration** to reduce reliance on cars for short commuting and social journeys. This could be achieved by "carrot and stick" incentives:

> ➤ electric bike charging points;
> ➤ bike lanes;
> ➤ improved bus services, including those for surrounding villages;
> ➤ paved canal paths so that they can be shared with cyclists, with segregation from walkers and anglers;
> ➤ more controlled parking zones, and yellow lines, particularly on junctions;
> ➤ Many more Permit parking-only areas, with the aim of reducing in the long run the number of vehicles per household;
> ➤ bye-laws to restrict obstruction by cars on pavements, parking on grass verges;
> ➤ More effective enforcement of traffic infringements when they occur.

Improved public transport is key to this, and is predicated on there being more demand for Public Transport if the aspiration is achieved.

> ➤ Cheaper bus fares would encourage more use, but this does not necessarily result in loss of income if bus usage were to increase
> ➤ Buses serving outlying villages with circular routes could be particularly efficient.

Examples of specific bus routes are included in the Appendix 1 to 3

➢ *Bus Services between towns should travel directly between centres, with as few stops as possible, in order to speed up journeys*
➢ *Connectivity between different routes should be developed to the maximum extent. This includes Bus / Bus routes, and Bus / Train routes;*
➢ Uncertainty of bus times can be eased by an inexpensive QR code on each bus stop, which when read by a smart phone would indicate the likely arrival time of the next bus, not the scheduled time. Money would have to be put aside for developing the software, if it doesn't exist already.
➢ *HCC should lobby for an enlarged TFL to include Home Counties, akin to the erstwhile London Regional Transport Authority. Amersham, Chesham and Watford already benefit from TFL, and this will include the whole length of Crossrail when complete.*
➢ Other suggestions for public transport are in appendix 4 to 6.

There needs to be more "**thinking out of the box**" regarding public transport. Old problems can be solved by unconventional ideas. The distinction between affordable or assisted bus routes and privately run Taxi service needs to be blurred.

> As an example, to assist commuters getting away from stations in the evening there could be a hybrid taxi / bus scheme, in which a small bus or a minibus takes all the commuters needing to go to one area, with a sat-nav type software to deliver each person to their own postcode by the most efficient route. There would be a flat fare, plus a small surcharge to take each person to their destination. There is potential for charging this electronically.

Air Quality.
There are significant localities where Air Quality falls below acceptable standards. This could be addressed by:

➢ Rapid conversion to Hybrid and Electric buses.
➢ Adjacent schools could share school buses from the same catchment area.
➢ "Smart" traffic lights could reduce the deadtime when no vehicles are entering the junction from any direction, thus reducing the queues of waiting traffic. For an example, see appendix 8.
➢ Roundabouts should replace traffic lights whenever there is room. There is potential for "Smart" traffic lights to smooth the flow into roundabouts at peak times of the day.
➢ Traffic should be encouraged to run at a uniform speed, with reduced speed limits.
➢ Speed bumps should be phased out; braking and accelerating at bumps increases fuel consumption and air pollution (The damage to vehicle suspension by speed bumps is well attested. This could be more dangerous than other methods of traffic calming).

Infrastructure
There has already been a suggestion that the new East - West Cross-Rail link could

connect to the Euston line with West Coast services with a relatively short section of track in Willesden Junction / Old Oak Common area. (http://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/plans-to-extend-crossrail-to-hertfordshire-will-cut-journey-times-into-london-by-15-minutes-9653512.html) This would link Hertfordshire residents with the West of England, East and West London, and reduce journey time into London Paddington
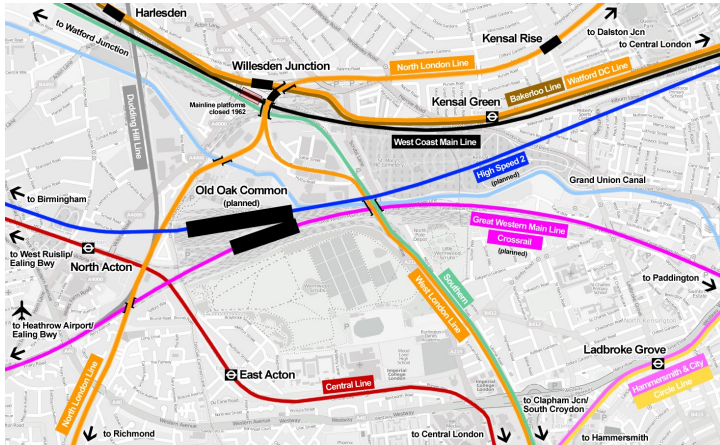
Unfortunately, this proposal has recently been shelved, but Hertfordshire should lobby vociferously for this initiative to be reconsidered.

Planning permissions for new developments with car parks should be turned down when the extra traffic impinges on already heavily congested areas. For an example, see appendix 7.

Safety

Road signs, and road markings are an integral part of Road Safety, and drivers rely on these for safe judgements. Currently, throughout the county there are obliterated or illegible road signs, and non existent road markings. If an accident were to be attributed to these failings, the compensation could be more than the cost of effectively rectifying the faults. Lighting needs to be good and road signs should be clearly displayed. It is vital to have clear white lines at junctions, kerbside and in the middle of the road, and an infrastructure plan should prioritise maintenance of this.

Appendix:

Examples of possible circular bus routes:
1. Hemel Hempstead Bovingdon. Chipperfield, Flaunden, Gt. Gaddesden, Gaddesden Row, Water End, Markyate and Flamstead.
2. Berkhamstead Ringshall, Little Gaddesden, Nettleden. Frithsden and Potten End.
3. Tring Aldbury, Long Marston, Puttenham, Wiggington and Wilstone.
4. 500 bus service from Aylesbury to Watford should call at Watford Junction.

Other public transport ideals:
5. Bus Services to train stations should be scheduled to coincide with commuter train times

6. These and other services need to run regularly, in the evening and on Sundays.

Car parks adding to congestion:
7. "Waitrose" car park in Berkhamsted allows vehicles in from the Potten end direction, but they can only leave onto the heavily congested High Street.

Location for installing "Smart" Traffic Light.
8. The lights in Berkhamsted cross roads have no traffic crossing for 50% of the time. (result of a short personal survey). During this time the queuing traffic has most engines running.