



**South West Herts Growth and Transport Plan Consultation:
Response from Dacorum Environmental Forum**

Re Question 5.' Do you have any further comments to make on the objectives?', we support components of the following Objectives:

- (Objective C) "attractive alternatives to the private car transport"
- (Objective D) "reducing transport-generated air and noise pollution"
- (Objective F) "Improve safety and perception of safety and security risks"

While we support Green modes of transport such as walking and cycling, there is a need to balance the interests of cyclists and pedestrians when considering schemes to facilitate more cycling. The balance should have regard to the relative numbers of these two modes, and this should be reflected in the budgets for any proposed schemes. According to Table NTS0506 of the National Travel Survey, which gives the average number of trips per person by month in England, for the period 2013-17, pedestrian trips generally outnumber cycling trips by a factor of 20 for all months except June and July, when the ratio falls to 10. It should also be borne in mind that cycling is less of an option for older age groups, particularly when hills are involved.

The last few years have seen a step increase in the number of pavements in Dacorum that have been opened to cyclists, which contrasts with the long-established principles of the Highway Code. Some of the pavements are quite narrow, and many are in the close vicinity of motorised traffic. This goes counter to Objective F (safety) since it has been to the detriment of pedestrians, and is a deterrent to potential pedestrians, as they do not want to be stressed by constantly listening out for an approaching bell or shout from behind, or to be startled by an unanticipated cyclist passing at close quarters. In addition, in support of Objective F all the agencies involved in the Plan should prioritise training and law/bylaw enforcement for cyclists.

"Dismount" signs for cyclists are also important for pedestrians, as they need to know which paths are (in theory) "safe" from cyclists. Just as the guiding principle behind provision for cyclists has been to create routes free from motorised traffic, it is correspondingly important to provide pedestrian-only routes for pedestrians. Adequate signage should be properly budgeted for in any proposed schemes. In many cases the current signage does not clarify where the cycle route ends, for instance:

- Most of the cycle approaches to the in-theory pedestrianised Marlowes.
- The path/cycleway on the south side of St. John's Road, Boxmoor, between Little Lower Heath Lane and the Catholic Church, where there appears to be no dismount signs as one enters the village.
- The alleyway from Ridge Lea to Footpath HH20, where there is a "no cycling" sign at the Ridge Lea end, but nothing at the entrance from White Hill or Jocketts Road.

In order to encourage cyclists to dismount when entering a pedestrianised zone, adequate provision for parking bicycles should be located around the "dismount" signs. At present such provision for instance in Hemel Hempstead appears to be limited to Marlowes and to be lacking at neighbourhood shopping centres.

Priorities for signage should comprise clearer designations between cyclist and pedestrian lanes and routes. In some places such as Gadebridge Park and Cassiobury Park these were originally marked, but have almost disappeared through lack of maintenance. Repeater on-surface reminders such as the circular "no cycling" signs in Verulam Park illustrate best practice.

Naturally, these recommendations come with price tags, but it would be money better spent than for instance on Proposal SM27, the Magic Roundabout cycle flyover.

More generally, the strategy of the Plan appears to be that if private cars are put at a disadvantage compared to walking, cycling and public transport, some car drivers will choose not to drive. This is laudably visionary, but could have unintended consequences if not enough drivers choose to change mode. For instance the closure of Fishery Road to general traffic (PR67) may result mainly in longer journey routes, and it is unclear what these alternative routes would be and what environmental consequences would ensue. Clearly the swing bridge at Winkwell is not an option. Is it suggested that all traffic must pass through the village of Boxmoor?

Please also consider providing rentable electric cars at edge of town locations.

In support of Objective C "attractive alternatives to the private car transport" all the agencies involved in the Plan should prioritise the prevention of pavement parking that stops free and safe passage for pedestrians and pushchair and wheelchair users.

In support of Objective D) "reducing transport-generated air and noise pollution" all the agencies involved in the Plan should prioritise existing law enforcement regarding noise and emissions limits.

Re SM8 'Hemel Hempstead town-wide bus service reconfiguration' and PR19 'East Hemel (Maylands) Multi-Modal Transport Interchange' and any related proposals, we are reluctant to see a shift of the main bus interchange hub from the Marlowes area to Maylands, which would be particularly inconvenient for travellers from Chaulden, Gadebridge, Boxmoor, Warners End and the future LA3. Emphasis should be placed on increasing bus services for these areas rather than enhancing the little-used bus service between the railway station and Marlowes.

We support the apparent absence of the "Northern Bypass" across the Lower Gade Valley, a proposal that has appeared in previous plans.

GWE

28/9/18