

Appendix A

Hitchin UTP Public Consultation Comments Log

This table contains the comments made by members of the public during the Hitchin UTP consultation events (held on 29/09/10 and 02/10/10) and responses submitted in writing during and after the consultation period.

Source	Ref	Comment	Amendment Made		Being Updated	Justification
			Yes	No		
	Cycling	Provide a cycle route east-bound along Stevenage Road		x		UTP scheme CM16 recommends the implementation of the medium and low priority routes identified through the Cycle Route network survey. One of these proposed routes (number 9) runs along both Stevenage and London Road. It is intended that this route will be provided as a medium term scheme (3-5 years) through the UTP
	Parking	Remove on-street parking along the western end of Stevenage Road and instead provide parking bays within the grass verge		x		NHDC have been made aware of this proposal and it will be considered when parking in Hitchin is reviewed by NHDC in 2011/12 as programmed in the North Herts Parking Strategy
	PT	The frequency of bus services along Stevenage Road is perceived to be poor	✓			The perceived poor frequency has been included within UTP scheme PTM15. It is, however, considered that improving the frequency of bus services is primarily a commercial decision for the bus operators, unless funding subsidies were to be forthcoming from HCC, which is considered unlikely in the current economic climate
	Parking	It is considered that town centre parking should be free		x		This would not be in line with the current North Herts Parking Strategy and would result in the loss of a significant revenue source which may have implications for parking management in the town.
	Walking	The pedestrian crossing on Paynes Park (close to junction) is problematic in terms of it's location- speed of motorists, sight lines, stopping distances etc		x		This can be highlighted as being a perceived problem, however this existing crossing would have undergone the relevant safety assessments as part of the detailed design stage
	Parking	The short stay parking which would be lost as a result of the Hermitage Road scheme will need to be accommodated elsewhere	✓			The text for the Hermitage Road scheme will be updated to reflect the fact that the car parking spaces will be accommodated within the existing locations (to be improved as part of the parking schemes), or through the creation of additional spaces, see below

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Parking	Scope for on-street, short stay, parking on Bancroft opposite the taxi rank	✓			NHDC have indicated that there is scope to increase the short stay parking provision on Bancroft, including at this specific location. This will be considered as part of the NHDC review of parking in Hitchin in 2011/12. The text in HM19 has been updated to reflect this.
Parking	An audit of short stay parking in the town centre should be carried out		x		During the development of the NHDC Parking Strategy detailed parking assessments were carried and recommendations made. The outcome of this survey work was incorporated within the Parking Strategy which is available from NHDC. As part of this strategy, parking within Hitchin will be reviewed in 2011/12
PT	Provide an underpass into the station from St. Michaels Road to improve accessibility		x		WM8, WM12 and PTM11 all considered improving pedestrian access to the station through the provision of a footbridge over the railway on the A505, and eastern access through the existing sidings and a southern access from the Benslow Lane footbridge. All the technical assessments (including HCC feasibility studies) led to the conclusion that these schemes are not feasible for implementation in the 0-5 years of the UTP. Improving access does however remain a longer term consideration which will be reviewed on an annual basis to determine whether they can be developed further.
Cycling	The condition of the cycle route between Letchworth and Hitchin is poor and particularly problematic for cyclists wishing to access the rail station and town centre	✓			UTP scheme CM13 has been designed to implement Route 8 of the Cycle Route Network survey which serves the eastern part of the town and provides a link to Letchworth. This scheme is intended to be delivered in the short term (0-3 years) of the UTP. Whilst it does not provide a designated cycle link under the Cambridge Road railway bridge (a tunnel or footbridge not being feasible to implement during the Plan period of 0-5 years), it nevertheless provides cyclists with a route from Letchworth to Hitchin town centre
Walking	Pedestrian guard-rails should be put up to stop people crossing roads at inappropriate locations	✓			This is something which we can recommend as part of the pedestrian crossings that are being proposed within the UTP, but this is primarily a detailed design and safety issue. In addition, HCC have indicated that there is now a general presumption against using guardrails

Highways	Flare the Paynes Park approach to roundabout to make it three lanes		x		A transport model was developed to assist in the development of the UTP. The junction of the A505/ A602 at the bottom of Paynes Park has been reviewed and some improvements to capacity have been recommended, however the Payne's Park approach was not deemed to present any significant problems in terms of capacity in the current or future years. Therefore no improvements have been proposed for this approach.
Highways	Concern that the closure of Hermitage Road will sever a through-route and cause congestion on neighbouring roads	✓			This scheme has been reviewed following the public consultation and the UTP no longer proposes closure of Hermitage Road to private vehicles. The scheme now consists of proposals to make Hermitage road a shared space route, where vehicles can still access the route but the landscape and environment will be changed to encourage more pedestrian activity, as would be expected with bus interchange point. This means that access is still possible but at lower speeds than before, meaning that the bus interchange can be implemented and parking can also be accommodated.
PT	Bus routes should be altered so that all buses terminate at the rail station	✓			Scheme PTM14 contains analysis of this issue. The conclusion of this assessment showed that the provision of bus services between the rail station and other key destinations was already satisfactory and if additional demand existed the commercial operators would be providing these services. It is therefore not proposed through the UTP to provide any additional bus routes.
Highways	The Paynes Park one-way system should be reverted to two-way		x		Detailed testing of this option (UTP scheme HM20) showed that reverting the gyratory to two-way encouraged more through trips in the town centre, worsening congestion and limiting the ability of the network to accommodate demand as a result of future growth.

Saturday 2nd October	PT	Alternative locations for a bus hub should be considered- Queen Street, Portmill Lane etc		x		These locations were considered as part of the UTP, building upon the Mouchel report for the PTE which looked at various options for a bus interchange. However, Hermitage Road was considered to be the most appropriate location for such a facility due to its proximity to the town centre, ability to accommodate bus infrastructure, carriageway width, links with other UTP schemes and the potential to create a high quality environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Also, this scheme can be implemented within the Plan period, whereas St. Mary's square, Queen Street etc were considered to be long term schemes
	Highways	Speeding issues on St. Michaels Road		x		This location was already examined through UTP scheme HM33 to determine whether traffic calming measures are required; as a result St. Michaels Road is included in the UTP as a location for speed surveys
	Cycling	Explore using more informal routes through Hitchin for cycle paths		x		The high, medium and low priority routes identified in the Cycle Route Network Survey, and included in the HUTP, make extensive use of a number of informal routes across the town. However, should any specific links be identified then these could be incorporated into the cycle routes proposed
	Rail	Build new rail sidings by the industrial area to remove the need for the current ones		x		HCC have indicated that the sidings issue has been raised with Network Rail, but that they would only build new sidings where there was a business case. Commercial operators do not currently have an interest in these sidings
	Walking	Look at providing pedestrian access to the station from St.Michaels path		x		This has been examined through scheme PTM11.1 which concluded that this option was not feasible to implement in the 0-5 year timescale of the UTP due to cost and land ownership issues. Providing improved access to the rail station does however remain in the Plan as a longer term aspiration for the town
	Walking	Footpath on Walsworth Road has been out of service	✓			This specific problem would be addressed through UTP scheme WM10 (review the quality and provision of footways across Hitchin)
	Walking	Look at pedestrianising Sun Street and Bucklesbury Road		x		This option was considered as part of the scheme to pedestrianise the High Street and stop vehicles from routing through the town centre from the north. It was concluded that given the existing one-way system, the level of demand and the fact that there is no parking (except disabled) in this area, there was no need to physically restrict vehicles from using this route

	Highways	Periwinkle Lane and Strathmore Avenue should be made one-way		x		This is not considered something that would be desirable for residents along these streets given the proximity of the frontages to these streets. Further to this it was suggested as a solution to a safety problem which is outside of the UTP remit.
	HGV's	There is no solution presented to solve the considerable problems caused by large numbers of fast-moving heavy lorries using roads in the town. There are several possible solutions e.g. a new access road into the industrial area from Stotfold Road, or reduced speed limits and traffic calming (non-speed bump options). The plan needs to incorporate definite measures in the short term rather than merely mentioning long-term aspirations.		x		We have included a number of locations within the UTP where traffic calming should be investigated where it has been raised as a particular issue. This primarily related to speeding locations. We have proposed some changes to turning movements at the Cadwell Lane/ Wilby Way junction which will remove some of the HGV's from the area. We have also considered and will retain the need to investigate an additional access road to the industrial estate as part of a longer term vision when more is known about future planning aspirations as the delivery of such a scheme falls in to this time frame.
	Congestion	Congestion reduction is treated as a major objective, but this must be kept in proportion and not allowed to override other considerations. Throughout the document a high priority is given to providing small incremental amounts of road capacity, or avoiding any small delays which environmentally friendly measures might introduce.		x		We have paid particular attention to the road User Hierarchy given in the Manual for Streets (DfT - 2007), which places all other road users above car drivers, but accept that there are compromises that need to be made. The assessment that was undertaken within the Scheme Assessment Framework (UTP Volume 1 - Appendix A) clearly shows the strong emphasis placed on walking, cycling and PT schemes within the UTP.
	Paynes Park	The draft plan considers a scheme where Paynes Park is also converted back to two-way flow. This appears to have been rejected because it has been judged largely against the congestion criterion without giving due weight to the benefits of removing an unpleasant racetrack from the town centre. There is much technical detail of the traffic modelling presented, but there appears to be little downside to the two-way scheme. In view of the clear desire for removal of the gyratory system the plan should be looking for the best way to achieve this.		x		Detailed testing of this option (UTP scheme HM20) showed that reverting the gyratory to two-way encouraged more through trips in the town centre, worsening congestion and limiting the ability of the network to accommodate demand as a result of future growth. As a result this option cannot be recommended through the UTP as there is no benefit for the transport offer in the town and it does not satisfy the UTP or LTP objectives
	Roadside interviews	It is disappointing that no roadside traffic data were recorded for the B656 Codicote Road into Hitchin – fig 2.5 p12. Even assuming that this is a typographical error and the omission is actually on the Gosmore Road it is unsatisfactory that data from a well-used entry route into Hitchin has not been factored into the transport plan figures.	✓			This is a typographical error and the actual collection point was on B656 London Road (to Codicote). This will be reflected in the reporting. It was not possible to collect data on Gosmore Road given safety concerns around a suitable location to collect the data.

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Pirton Road	Traffic calming carried out in Pirton Road in 2007 made matters worse rather than better. This needs to be rectified as a short-term priority by removing inappropriate road markings and introducing measures such as vehicle activated signs	✓			Further traffic counts are currently being undertaken to determine the extent of the speeding issues. Following review of this analysis proposals will be put forward to mitigate any identified issues. This assessment will be undertaken in line with the Speed Management Strategy for Hertfordshire in order to align any mitigation with any appropriate funding sources.
Brand Street/ Hermitage Road	The proposal to ban through traffic from these roads seems likely to be unenforceable and would cause great inconvenience to residents and businesses. A better solution would be a 20 mph speed limit and a shared space street design, which would discourage some through traffic.				This scheme has been reviewed following the public consultation and the UTP no longer proposes closure of Hermitage Road or Brand Street to private vehicles. The scheme now consists of proposals to make Hermitage Road, Brand Street and part of Bancroft a shared space area, where vehicles can still access the route but the landscape and environment will be changed to encourage more pedestrian activity, as would be expected with bus interchange point. This means that access is still possible but at lower speeds than before, meaning that the bus interchange can be implemented and parking can also be accommodated.
Resurfacing	The condition of some town centre roads remains extremely poor, notably Walsworth Road and Brand Street. This is a major safety concern for cyclists in particular and is something that should be addressed before money is spent on other schemes.		x		This is not within the remit of the UTP and will be addressed through ongoing maintenance. This concern will be passed on to the relevant team within Hertfordshire Highways.
Public Transport	While it is accepted that the current bus boarding/alighting layout is in need of rationalisation, only one proposal has been put forward to alleviate this, where a number of alternatives should be considered. The proposal to make Hermitage Road a bus hub has some merits, but is likely to be opposed by businesses in the road. Also, banning all other traffic from Bancroft and Brand Street would lead to much heavier levels of traffic at peak times. Any decision on rationalising bus facilities needs to properly consider NHDC's proposed redevelopment of the town centre and the possible availability of the Royal Mail site, both of which may present better opportunities.	✓			Providing a single bus interchange at Hermitage Road is considered to be the best option to address the identified problems with public transport in Hitchin and provide the greatest number of benefits (links with other UTP schemes etc). The intention of the UTP is to provide schemes which are deliverable in the short and medium term, rather than present a list of potential options which may or may not be viable. Whilst other locations, such as the Royal Mail site, were considered, the uncertainty over their suitability and availability ruled them out. The scheme description for the Hermitage Road scheme will, however, be updated to provide further explanation on the above points. We will also be reviewing the proposed banning of other traffic from Bancroft and Brand Street to better understand the impact of doing this given the concerns raised through the public consultation.

20mph zones	Only the option of a blanket 20 mph zone across all of Hitchin has been considered, and then, not surprisingly, rejected. We would like to see a more thorough analysis to find out where more localised 20 mph zones could be used to improve the environment in Hitchin. The town centre and many residential areas could benefit, particularly those adversely affected by HGV traffic on its way to the industrial area.		x	The implementation of 20mph zones requires speed surveys to be carried out to establish the mean speed for a particular road/route- this is something that is considered in UTP scheme HM33 where specific locations have been identified (It should, however, be noted that Grove Road, Wilbury Way and Woolgrove Road were not included in the UTP as locations for traffic calming following assessment). Following the speed surveys it will then be possible to determine the speed profile of the road(s). This forms part of the statutory process which Local Authorities must follow when considering the implementation of a 20mph Zone and will indicate whether traffic calming measures are appropriate for a specific site
Station access	Improved access to the station from the east is needed: either via a new entrance or improvements to the A505 underpass for pedestrians and cyclists.		x	WM8, WM12 and PTM11 all considered improving pedestrian access to the station through the provision of a footbridge over the railway on the A505, and eastern access through the existing sidings and a southern access from the Benslow Lane footbridge. All the technical assessments (including HCC feasibility studies) led to the conclusion that these schemes are not feasible for implementation in the 0-5 years of the UTP. Improving access does however remain a longer term consideration
Bypass	We are pleased to note that proposals to construct a Stevenage to Luton bypass have been found not to contribute to local transport plan indicators and have therefore been ruled out of the current plan. We are puzzled though to find these bypass proposals mentioned again under longer term aspirational schemes	✓		The terminology has been amended to read 'longer term considerations', as whilst these options (such as a southern bypass or a new access to the rail station) are not assessed fully due to the fact that they are not considered feasible for implementation during the UTP period (0-5 years), they nevertheless remain as potential options for the town in the future and may well be revisited or reassessed when there is more certainty regarding future levels of development

<p>Giles Woodruff email 05/10/10</p>	<p>Long term aspirations</p>	<p>In volume 1, table 7.3 on page 48 lists "long term aspirations". Is there anything in the plan to justify why all of these should be long term aspirations? If so where can I find it? I am particularly interested in the justification for the road-building schemes (widening of the A1(M) and the by-passes) since, unlike some of the other aspirations, these are not universally regarded as good ideas.</p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>The inclusion of 'long term aspirations' is something that was considered after consultation with the Members transport group. We had undertaken some limited modelling of the longer term schemes last year using the old Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) assumptions to identify what schemes may be required in the future. When the RSS was revoked the decision was taken to remove any analysis or detailed consideration of long term schemes from the reporting given the uncertainty about long term development aspirations. There was however a request, after Member consultation, to include some of these 'aspirations' within the document to ensure that they would be looked at in the future. The terminology may be an issues here as 'aspiration' implies that they are going to be delivered, but what we are trying to convey is that they will be considered in more detail and so this has been changed to 'long term considerations' to be revisited when more is known regarding the future development.</p>
<p>Mr Lee - raised at the Hitchin Community Surgery</p>	<p>Station access</p>	<p>Request that the station underpass from east of Hitchin station be extended to form pedestrian access from the east.</p>		<p>✘</p>	<p>A study was undertaken to improve the access here but the substantial costs associated with rail closures which would be required mean that this would be difficult to justify. Given the unknown issues with regards to development the Hitchin UTP has aimed to set out proposals which can be delivered within the next five years subject to sufficient funding being available. This scheme is not a scheme that can realistically be delivered within the next five (5) years. It will remain as a scheme that should be progressed in the future if funding is available.</p>

Jane Landsborough email 13/10/10	Pirton Road mini roundabout	I am writing to express my dismay at the proposal to convert the mini roundabout at the bottom of Pirton Road in Hitchin to a traffic light junction. Any visit to this area during rush hour would clarify that the congestion in this area stems from the roundabout by the Law Court. If there is money available to be spent in this area, any study of it in rush hour would clarify that it is the roundabout at the junction of Old Park Road / Paynes Park / Park Way / Upper Tilehouse Street that needs urgent review. The roundabout at the junction of Pirton Road / Upper Tilehouse Street / Wratten Road West works extremely well from all directions but the congestion around it is caused by back-up from the roundabout by the Law Court. An additional problem in the area is that during period of light traffic, cars leaving Park Way in the right hand lane often enter the roundabout at speed and continue into Old Park Road. I have often seen cars ignore the red light at the pedestrian crossing by the library. Unfortunately there are many who might be less aware of that danger and cross when the "green man" is lit without knowing the risk at that particular crossing. Presumably that problem could be solved, too, with a review of the roundabout there.		x	The junction of the A505/ A602, along with other junctions along the A505 / A602 corridor through Hitchin have been reviewed. A traffic model was developed to assist with the development of UTP schemes and this model was used to assess the impact of the UTP scheme, HM31. This scheme recommends improvements to the capacity of the Old Park Road / Paynes Park / Park Way / Upper Tilehouse Street along with improvements to the A505 / B655 Pirton Road junction. To deal with anticipated future year demand along the A505/A602 corridor, improvements were identified that improve the performance of both these junctions.
David Borner email 15/10/10	A505/B655 roundabout	I would also like to object to the proposal to replace the A505/B655 roundabout by traffic lights. As well as creating more highway engineering clutter and taking more land for road space, this would prevent access to Pirton Road and neighbouring roads for traffic arriving from Luton along the A505.		✓	The proposed design of this junction has been reviewed and it is now proposed to provide an all movements junction, meaning there would be no loss of access as a result of the proposals to signalise the junction. This scheme will go through further stages of detailed design before implementation including further public consultation. The growth in traffic forecast in the UTP means that this junction will come under additional pressure in the future and signalisation of this junction provides the best way to manage traffic in the area.

<p>Malcolm and Marian Mallett email 09/11/10</p>	<p>Hawthorn close/ Cranbourne avenue</p>	<p>the illegal turning into the no entry road into hawthorn close/Cranbourne avenue need some urgent attention. As a resident at no 51, I have personally witnessed people taking the illegal turn and then speeding along hawthorn close, as a virtually continual stream of traffic in the evening. We would fully support making the turning from A505 into Willow lane a no right turn.</p>			<p>✓</p>	<p>The UTP now includes proposals for an experimental ban of the right turn movement from the A505 Offley Road in to Willow Lane. It is understood, from police observations that the illegal movement in to Hawthorn Close is made as drivers try to jump the queue to get out of the junction of Charlton Road with the A602. Once the experimental right turn ban is implemented, surveys and observations will be undertaken in the area to determine whether this has any impact on the number of people illegally turning in to Hawthorn Close. Should it be demonstrated to not have any effect then this scheme will be reviewed in more detail.</p>
<p>Richard Thake/ Paul O'Shaughnessy emails</p>	<p>Willow Lane</p>	<p>It is considered that there are advantages to be had from a reconfiguration of parts of the lane and realignment of traffic flows along the stretch.</p>			<p>✓</p>	<p>Proposed approach as follows; 1. Experimental Order in closing Hawthorn Close to stop the illegal turning movement. This would include before and after monitoring of traffic flows and patterns in the area to determine the impact. 2. 3. A separate study to investigate the requirement for speed mitigation and deal with the issue of heavy goods vehicles Review outcomes of both 1 &2 to determine if the issues of rat running, speeding, and heavy vehicles have been alleviated.</p>