**WELWYN GARDEN CITY (EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)**

**Introduction**

A series of town based evidence packs have been developed to support the emerging Growth and Transport plans. These include analysis of a range of socioeconomic factors; land use; demographic factors; consideration of current transport provision; usage to identify issues and constraints in relation to travel to / from and within the towns.

An assessment is also included of likely future transport pressures taking into account proposed growth and predictions from modelling work using the countywide transport model COMET.

The key findings from Welwyn Garden City evidence pack are outlined below.

**Community Characteristics**

This section looks at the current land use, employment, education and social characteristics of the study area drawing on a variety of information sources including; Address Base Premium, ONS census 2011, Business Registrations and Employment Survey, DCLG Indices of Deprivation, Experian Mosaic profile and the Hertfordshire County Travel Survey.

Welwyn Garden City has four main employment centres with Shire Park, Mundells, &Tewin Road being the largest; three state secondary schools (Monks Walk, Stanborough and Sir Frederick Osborn) and an independent school (Sherrardswood); and a variety of sports and leisure facilities.

Generally the west side of Welwyn Garden is affluent. The MSOA encompassing Peartree however has unemployment higher than the national average and has high levels of deprivation. Life expectancy is also lower than national averages in much of the eastern part of the town

There are no declared Air quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the area however; there are a number of congestion hotspots with dwellings in close proximity to them.

**Economic Portrait**

This section investigates the current economic climate in the study area drawing on information sources such as the East of England Forecasting Model, ONS Census 2011 and the Business Registrations and Employment Survey.

Welwyn Hatfield district has around 117,000 inhabitants and around 84,000 jobs with key employment sectors identified as wholesale & retail which is considerably higher than the UK average. Other key employment areas include Education, Business Services, Professional Services and Other Services.

There are about 10 top employers clustered within the town centre with the largest employer being Tescos which has its head office in Shire Park. There seems to be little disparity between the job types provided in the study area and the types of jobs and skills study area residents work in.

**Transport Network**

This section summarises existing transport infrastructure in the study area drawing on a variety of map based information sources held by HCC.

The study area has the strategic A1(m) corridor running through it & the A414 east west corridor running to the south with key local distributor routes (A1000 and A6129). There are a large number of car parking spaces around the study area that provide in total over 3000 car parking spaces. Most are controlled by the borough council although there are also a number of supermarket car parks close to the town centre.

Welwyn Garden City is located on Great Northern line with direct rail services to Kings Cross and Moorgate in London, Stevenage and North Herts. There are 2 stations within the study area.

Bus services connect Welwyn Garden City with other Hertfordshire towns such as Hatfield, St Albans, Hemel Hempstead, Watford & Stevenage. Within the study area there are good cycling facilities with a number of dedicated cycle paths. Welwyn Garden City also benefits from inter urban cycle routes with off road connections towards Stevenage.

**Network Analysis**

This section summarises current transport performance in the Study area drawing heavily on census journey to work data as well as Trafficmaster journey time analysis, TRACC analysis and collision data.

The study area has dominance of in commuters with 43% of trips entering the area and only 29% leaving indicating a net in-commute. This is due to the area having large employment areas at Shire Park, Mundells, &Tewin Road which draw work trips into the area.

A large proportion of the commuting into the area is from North Herts District and the adjoining districts of Stevenage, St Albans and East Herts. There are also a significant number of trips from other areas of Welwyn Hatfield (especially Hatfield town).

Over 80% of in commuting trips are by private car and sustainable travel is low considering the good transport links between the study area and other areas in Hertfordshire (Stevenage & Hatfield) and also London.

Out commuting is dominated by travel to other areas in Welwyn Hatfield (36%) and also a stronger level of out commuting travel into London (31%) with trips to inner London dominated by rail.

Around 18% of work trips are internal (i.e. people live and work in the study area). Despite the relatively short distances involved, over half of these trips are by car with a further 26% of trips made by foot and 6% by bicycle. The number of trips made by bus or coach is however low (4%).

Shire Park, Mundells, &Tewin Road business areas is a key employment area within the study area and most trips to this area are by car (78%).

The town centre employment area has only 5% of trips by rail despite the presence of the station here.

Congestion hotspots are evident at the key junctions with the strategic road network (A1m northbound to junction 6) as well as on A1000 Bessemer Road and at the B1000/Waterside and Stanborough junctions. A number of key junctions are also defined as hazardous sites where clusters of collisions are evident.

Bus service provision is relatively good with frequent services in the study area serving residential areas such as Peartree, Hall Grove and Howlands and a number of interurban bus connections to surrounding towns like Stevenage, Hatfield & Hertford. Accessibility is generally good with all areas in the town and parts of rural areas within a 20 minute bus journey of Welwyn Garden City town centre.

The stations is within the town centres and generally has good accessibility. The majority of the study area is within a 15 minute cycle journey time of either Welwyn Garden City or Welwyn North stations.

The majority of Welwyn Garden city is within a 15 minute cycle ride of the town centre. The walk catchment is more limited and parts of Panshanger and the south and East of the town are over 30 minutes walk from the town centre.

**Future Transport**

This section draws comparisons between 2014 and 2031, using data from the COMET strategic transport model as well as data from the local council regarding development and growth statistics.

Welwyn Hatfield borough is set to experience a 19% growth in population over the next 15 years and a 10% growth in employment with main growth seen in retail, professional services & health and care sectors.

A number of housing development sites are proposed in or adjacent to the study area within the current Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Local Plan.

Growth in flows between 2014 and 2031 are predicted to occur on the B197 Road, Waterside Road & Bessemer Road towards Mundells A1000 Roundabout during the AM & PM peak hour (8-9AM & 17-18PM).

Journey time comparisons between the AM & PM peak area shows increases in journey times are found to destinations towards the west and south such as St Albans and Barnet.