



# B197 Sustainable Transport Corridor

Community & Stakeholder Prospectus 2025



# Policy Objectives

Hertfordshire County Council's **Local Transport Plan 4** (2018-2031) outlines how transport can help deliver a positive future vision for Hertfordshire.

**Policy 1: Transport User Hierarchy** supports the creation of built environments that encourage greater and safer use of sustainable transport modes.

**Policy 7: Active Travel – Walking** commits the Council to delivering infrastructure to provide safer access to key services, and pedestrian facilities to enable and encourage walking.

**Policy 8: Active Travel – Cycling** aims to deliver a step change in cycling, through infrastructure improvements to enable and encourage more cycling and implementing measures to increase the priority of cyclists relative to motor vehicles.

**Policy 14: Climate Change Network Resilience:** as part of our response to climate change adaptation, we'll design, construct, maintain and operate all infrastructure in the light of the risk from a changing climate.

# Policy Objectives

**Policy 15: Speed Management:** through its Speed Management Strategy we will seek to manage the network to achieve appropriate speeds in the interests of safety, other road users and the environment.

**Policy 17: Road Safety** improve safety on the county's roads, working towards an ultimate vision of zero fatalities and serious injuries.

**Policy 18: Transport Safety & Security** improve the perception of safety and security on Hertfordshire's transport system where this could deter people from travelling, particularly by active modes and passenger transport.

**Policy 19: Emissions Reduction** promoting a change in people's travel behaviour to encourage a modal shift in journeys from cars to walking, cycling and passenger transport.



Creating a cleaner, greener, healthier Hertfordshire



# Strategic Vision

Hertfordshire's [North Central Growth & Transport Plan](#) and [South Central Growth & Transport Plan](#) highlight the desire to improve connections between Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage through the formation of a sustainable transport corridor along the B197 via Oaklands, Woolmer Green and Knebworth.

The area is anticipating significant growth. Improving bus, walking and cycling connections would improve transport choice and reduce reliance on the private car for journeys between the communities along the corridor

The sustainable transport corridor would connect to Stevenage, Knebworth, Welwyn North and Welwyn Garden City train stations, as well as key local destinations including schools, shops, places of worship and community centres.

# Corridor Vision

Following our strategic priorities and to meet our policy objectives, we have developed a vision for the B197 corridor between Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage.

Walking, cycling, junction, speed, public transport and safety issues have been highlighted.

## Priorities

Improving cycle connections

Improving sustainable travel links

Enhancing and emphasising place functions over movement functions to enable access to the corridor.



# Community & Stakeholder Visions

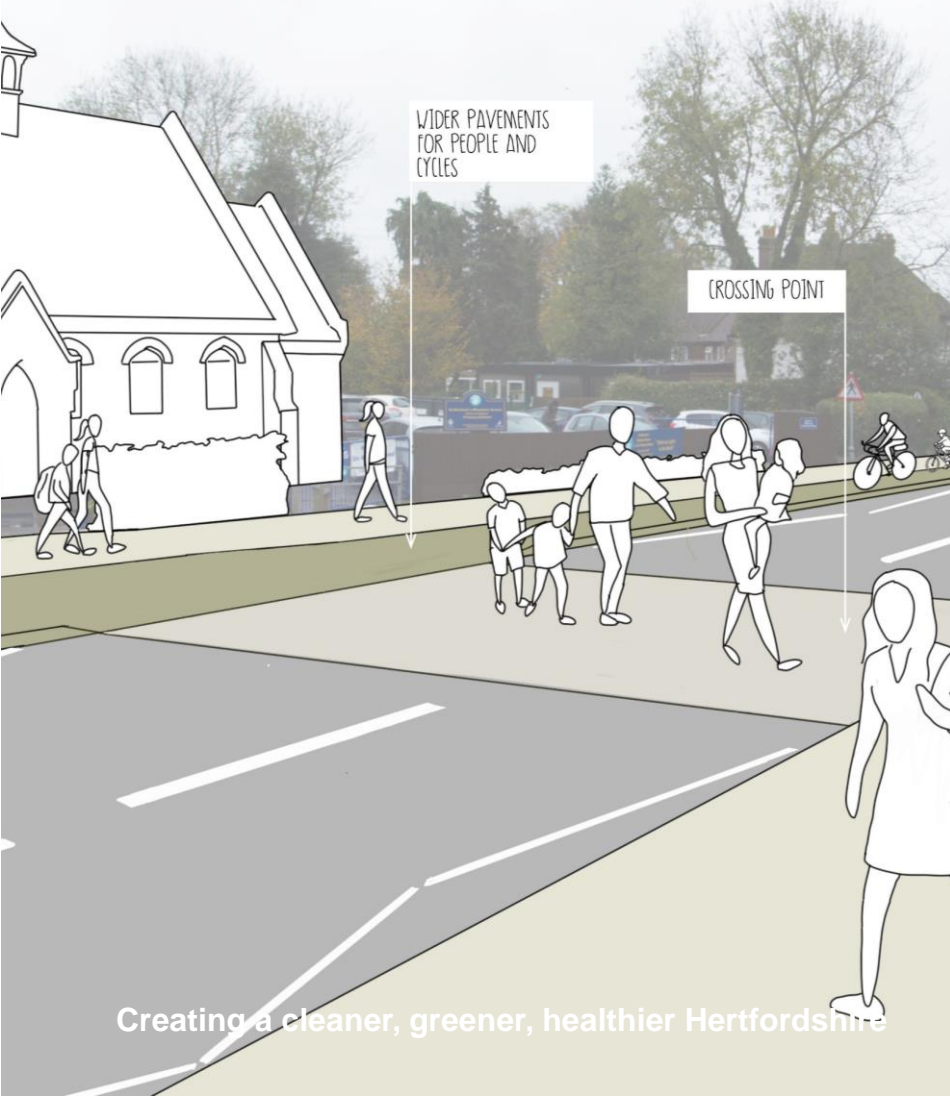
**2017 petition** from the Oaklands and Woolmer Green community requesting a reduction in speed limits and better crossings.

**2023 engagement** with Oaklands & Woolmer Green community highlighting a need for safer crossing points, lower speed limits, wider pavements and quieter roads.

Respondents were supportive of the aim of making it safer and easier to walk, wheel and cycle in Woolmer Green and Oaklands, and improving the safety of school children and families on their journeys to school.

Provision of dedicated space for cycling and bike racks supported.

Comments focussed around reducing the speed limit, improving crossings and parking concerns around the school, at junctions and around bends.



# Community & Stakeholder Visions

**September 2024 consultation** on Safer Routes to School proposals focused on the community priorities of safer crossings, slower speeds and wider footways, but excluding off-road cycle facilities.

85% support from respondents.

Aims supported by the local MP, the county councillor, district and parish councils.

Connecting and simplifying lower speed limits through the corridor was raised by many people through the consultation, as well as the potential for 20mph sections outside the schools.

20% of survey respondents indicated that they cycle in the area. The exclusion of off-road cycle facilities could prevent these people from making more local journeys by bike and would stop some of the 80% indicating that they didn't cycle locally from even considering using a bike for local journeys.

Concerns raised about the use of vertical traffic calming.





# Barriers & Challenges

Traffic volumes c15,000 per day

Works will be disruptive

Costs uncertain and no funding secured

Diversion route for A1M and regular disruption on the A1M

A1M smart motorway proposal paused

Drainage problems at Oaklands

Vertical traffic calming unsuitable

Some sections not compliant with speed limit reduction under current Speed Management Strategy





# Action Plan

Phased delivery approach **prioritising crossings** in the first instance.

Opportunities for **speed limit reduction** investigated.

We will not be putting in vertical traffic calming but will look to other opportunities to encourage speed reduction through the corridor.

More extensive footway widening and potential improvements for people cycling will be investigated in later phases as and when it is possible to reassess the A1M diversion route.

# Delivery Strategy

1. Key crossing points to be delivered as soon as reasonably practicable.
2. 20mph limits on side roads progressed following consultation.
3. Delivery of vertical traffic calming features paused and reviewed due flooding, traffic levels and noise concerns.
4. 30mph limits through Oaklands and Woolmer Green community centres and 40mph to Clock Roundabout without vertical features if Speed Management Group approves.
5. Work with the drainage team to establish if flooding at Oaklands can be resolved through maintenance by the riparian landowner or if this is a constraint the scheme needs to work around.
6. Clarify if the speed and traffic management approaches can be evolved through innovation to address concerns associated with the A1M diversion.



# Delivery Strategy

7. Simplify the delivery of the scheme to minimise construction and burdensome traffic management constraints.
8. Engage with National Highways on their proposed route strategy update for the A1(M) (and Hertfordshire County Council's Highway Network Management Team) to understand if they can:
  - support funding of improvements to the B197 as part of the 'designated funds' programme
  - establish the feasibility of rerouting the A1(M) diversion route to an alternative A road.
9. Work with the Road Safety & Active Travel team to understand the timescale for the review of the Speed Management Strategy and if average speed cameras could be piloted along the route.
10. Review scheme scope to identify if shared cycling facilities could be introduced if the traffic management constraints associated with the A1M diversion were removed from the project.





## B197 Corridor Phase 1: Woolmer Green Signalised Crossing & Speed Management

Completion of the signalised junction with Mardleybury Road, with localised kerb build outs, particularly on the school side to future proof any continuous footway widening or cycling facilities.

The crossing is to be the key priority of this phase.

A right-hand filter lane is preserved from London Road to Mardleybury Road.

Liaison with speed management group to establish a 30mph zone though Woolmer Green without the need for vertical traffic calming.

Investigate an upgrade of the school wig-wags, potentially to include an advisory 20mph area outside the school at drop-off and pick-up times.

The Woolmer Green 20mph zone affecting side roads in the locality will also be progressed.

# Oaklands Speed Management

Sections of the B197 through Oaklands are not compliant with a reduction of speed to 30mph without traffic calming features.

These sections include Mardley Hill linking to Woolmer Green and outside Oaklands Primary School heading towards the Clock Roundabout.

Following concerns raised about the use of vertical traffic calming features along the B197, we are now not proposing their use.

We will put a proposal forward to the Speed Management Group to reduce the speed limit from the Clock Roundabout to Oaklands to 40mph and to 30mph through Oaklands to Lower Mardley Hill. We will also investigate an advisory 20mph area outside Oaklands Primary School.

If approved, we will seek to implement this alongside the Phase 1 works at Woolmer Green and the works for the 20mph zone.

# Whole Corridor Ambition

We will launch a feasibility study to examine how we can achieve our strategic vision to deliver a sustainable transport corridor along the B197 from Welwyn Garden City to Stevenage. This is to ensure that people living, working or studying in the area can travel safely and easily by foot, bike or bus to key destinations including train stations, schools, shops, workplaces and community centres.

This will involve working with key partners including borough and parish councils, National Highways and local communities.

At the same time, we will continue to develop designs to improve crossings and wider footways in Oaklands, specifically between the shops and the school. We would like to deliver this over the summer holiday period in 2026, but this is likely to be dependent on resolving or working around the potential for flash-flooding in the area.



# Summary

Support for improved crossing points, speed reduction and footway widening from consultation.

Opportunity to deliver some works during in School Holidays 2025/26 aligned with the adjoining 20mph schemes.

Significant constraints on construction exist due to traffic volumes and sensitivity of route as A1M diversion.

Issues with flooding in Oaklands are long standing due to topography and need to be considered in scheme design to avoid increasing flood risk and creating hazards.

Potential issues with maintenance and road noise from vertical traffic calming features due to the route being heavily used by HGV's when the A1M is diverted.



# Summary

National Highways reviewing strategy for the A1M. Opportunity to seek funding for interventions and review the diversion route.

Average speed cameras may become a realistic option following the upcoming Speed Management Strategy revision.

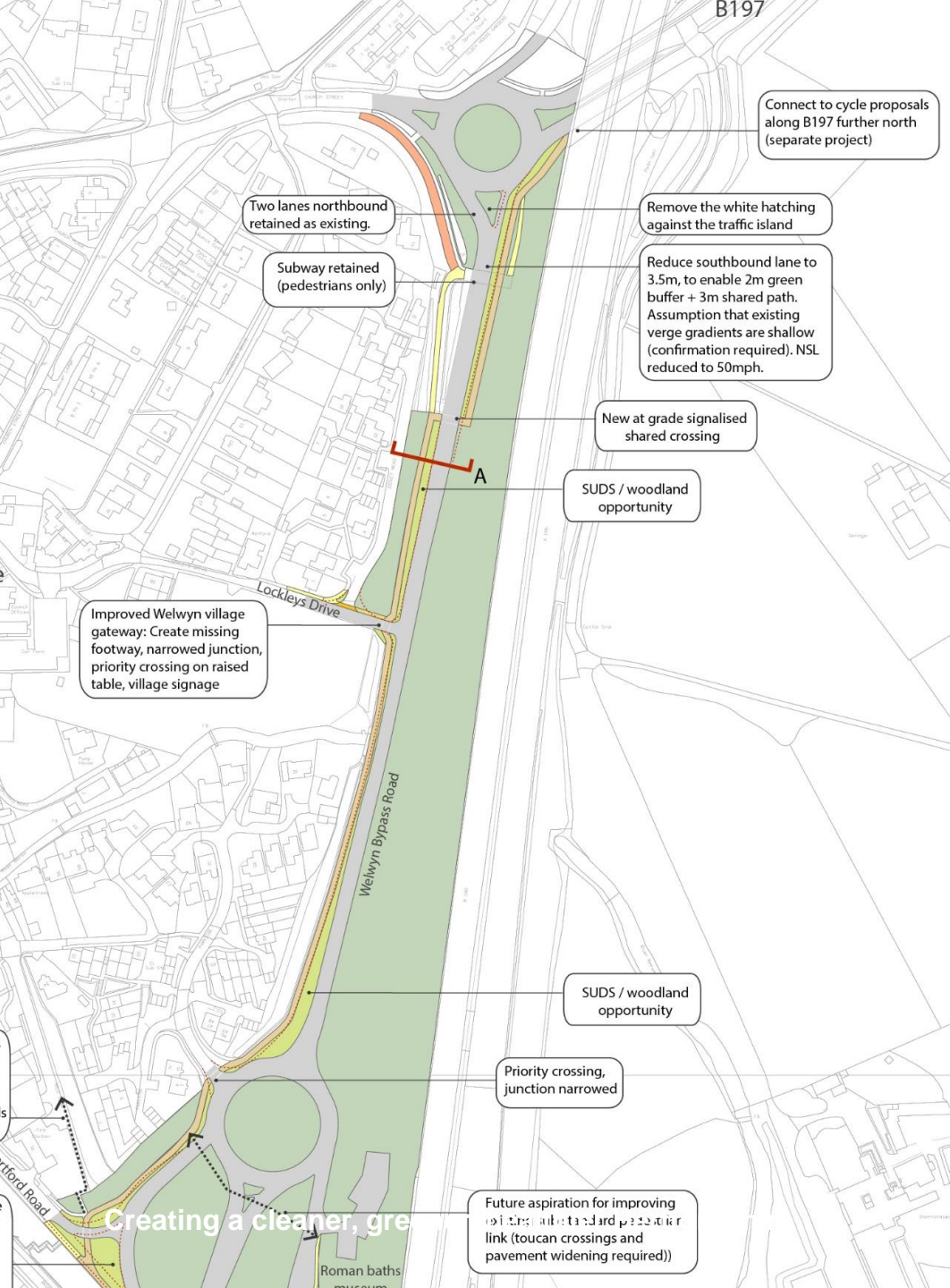
We have limited funding and want to avoid construction a scheme which needs to be subsequently modified if funding emerges for a project which meets wider strategic objectives.

Woolmer Green junction with Mardleybury Road has been identified as a strategic intervention point and following consultation, a crossing here has emerged as the practical point to start with in Phase 1.

We would also like to incorporate speed limit reductions along the B197 (particularly through the Oaklands and Woolmer Green community centres) in association with Phase 1 and the proposed 20mph zone affecting side roads and residential areas.







# Possible Future Phases

- Oaklands Drainage Investigations & Improvements
- Oaklands School Crossing & Speed Management  
Resolution of drainage and a revised Speed Management Strategy required to deliver project that best meets the needs of the community.
- Whole corridor feasibility
- National Highways Diversion Route Reallocation
- Oaklands Walking & Cycling Improvements
- Woolmer Green Walking & Cycling Improvements
- Clock Roundabout to Oaklands Walking & Cycling Improvements
- Oaklands to Woolmer Green Walking & Cycling Improvements
- Clock Roundabout to WGC Walking & Cycling Improvements
- Knebworth to Stevenage Walking & Cycling Improvements
- Knebworth Walking, Cycling & Public Transport Improvements





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