**Bishop’s Stortford & Sawbridgeworth (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 the Bishop’s Stortford and Sawbridgeworth 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.

The area has a number of discrete employment areas including the town centre, the Raynham Road, Stortford Hall and Stort Valley industrial areas and the Twyford Business Centre. There are however no large individual employers (although Stansted Airport provides key employment for the area). There are 5 state secondary schools (including single sex schools and a faith school which draw from a large catchment area) and two independent schools. Bishop’s Stortford has a variety of sports and leisure facilities.

Generally the study area is affluent and performs well on the various health indicators. The MSOA to the south of the town centre however has an areas of deprivation and there are barriers to housing and services in the southern part of Bishop’s Stortford and to the west of the town. Car ownership is higher than the Hertfordshire average in much of the study area.

There are two declared Air quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the area at the Hockerill junction in Bishop’s Stortford and on London Road in Sawbridgeworth.

**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.

East Herts has around 114,000 inhabitants and around 75,500 jobs with key employment sectors identified as Wholesale and Retail, Construction and Business Services.

There are however few large employers in the area with even the largest employers having less than 1000 employees. Stansted Airport to the east and Harlow to the south also provide key employment for the study areas residents.

Although a number of residents are employed in professional / scientific / technical and financial and insurance jobs, there is no evidence of these being key types of employments within the study area.

**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 M11 corridor running to the east of it. Bishop’s Stortford is bypassed by the A120 to the north and partially by the A1184 to the south. The A1250 (a key east west route ) and the B1383/ A1060 (a key north south route) however converge at the Hockerill junction. The A1184 linking Bishop’s Stortford with Harlow runs through the centre of Sawbridgeworth.

There are a number of car parking spaces around the study area that provide in total around 2,700 car parking spaces.

The study area is located on the West Anglia line with direct rail services to Liverpool Street, Cambridge and Stansted Airport. There are 2 stations within the study area.

Bus services connect Bishop’s Stortford with Sawbridgeworth, Harlow, Saffron Walden and Stansted. There are less frequent services to Hertford and Letchworth / Hitchin / Stevenage.

Within the study area there are a limited number of cycling facilities. These are however disjointed and there is no coherent network.

**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 out commuters with 50% of all work trips being out commute compared with 23% of in commuting trips. .

A large proportion of the commuting into the area is from origins in Essex (particularly from around Stansted Mountfitchet and Elsenham). 90% of these are by private car (including passengers). There are almost no inbound cycle trips into the study area.

Out commuting is dominated by travel to Stansted airport, Harlow and Central London (particularly the City). There are also a number of trips to Hoddesdon, Ware and Hertford. 22% of outbound trips are by rail (reflecting the commute to London. Almost 70% of outbound trips are by car. Levels of cycling and bus use are low.

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 third being made by foot. Use of bus is low for internal trips (less than 3%) and there are few internal cycle trips.

Very few commuting trips are made the main workplace areas by bike, bus or train. Even in the area adjacent to the station, inbound train mode share is only 4%.

Congestion hotspots are evident at the key junctions on the A120 and A1184 around Bishop’s Stortford, on the A120 at Little Hadham and in the centre of both Bishop’s Stortford and Sawbridgeworth. A number of key junctions are also defined as hazardous sites where clusters of collisions are evident.

Bus service provision is limited compared with other areas in Hertfordshire. Although hourly services are provided to Stansted, Sawbridgeworth, Saffron Walden and Harlow these are not classified as frequent and services to other locations such as Hertford and north Herts / Stevenage only run every 2-3 hours and for limited times of the day. Although there is a community transport town service connecting the Herts and Essex hospital with the town centre this only runs during the morning. There are some residential areas in the southern part of Bishop’s Stortford which are located away from current bus routes and stops.

Bishop’s Stortford station is located to the south east of the town centre. Most of the urban area is within a 20 minute cycle ride but large areas of the south west of the town are over 30 minutes walk or bus ride away.

Sawbridgeworth station is located to the east of the town centre and there are areas in the southern part of the town along with High Wych, Spellbrook and Sheering which are over 20 minutes walk from the station. All areas are however within a 15 minute cycle ride.

**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.

East Herts is set to experience a 17% growth in population over the next 15 years and a 14% growth in employment with the main growth seen in the Business Services, Professional Services, Accommodation & Food Services and Construction sectors.

A number of housing development sites are proposed in or adjacent to the study area within the current East Herts District Local Plan. Stansted Airport also has permission to expand up to 35 million passengers per annum.

The main future growth in flows is predicted along the A120 corridor. Journey times towards the west are however are predicted to be improved by the implementation of the A120 Little Hadham bypass.