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PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday, 3 February 2021

Time: 6.30pm,

Location: Virtual via Zoom

Contact: Lisa Jerome 01438 242203

committees@stevenage.gov.uk

Members: Councillors: S Speller (Chair), M McKay (Vice-Chair), D Bainbridge, S Barr, L Chester, M Downing, ME Gardner, J Hanafin, L Kelly, G Lawrence, J Lloyd, G Snell and T Wren

AGENDA

PART 1

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2. MINUTES - 6 JANUARY 2021

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 6 January 2021.

Pages 3 – 12

3. 20/00672/FP - GARAGES AND FORECOURT AREA TO REAR OF 13 - 19 THE CHACE

To consider the erection of 3no. three bed dwellings, parking and amenity space following demolition of garages.

Pages 13 – 28

4. STEVENAGE CONNECTION AREA ACTION PLAN: ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

To provide Members with an overview of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report (Appendix A).

Pages 29 – 130

5. PARKING STRATEGY CONSULTATION

To consider any comments on the consultation approach for the draft Parking Strategy 2021-2031.

Pages 131 – 192

6. INFORMATION REPORT - DELEGATED DECISIONS

To note a report on decisions taken by the Assistant Director Planning and Regulatory in accordance with his delegated authority.

Pages 193 – 212

7. INFORMATION REPORT - APPEALS/CALLED IN APPLICATIONS

To note a report on decisions taken by the Assistant Director Planning and Regulatory in accordance with his delegated authority.

Pages 213 – 218

8. URGENT PART I BUSINESS

To consider any Part I Business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

9. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the following motions that:

1. Under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in paragraphs 1-7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended by Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006.
2. That Members consider the reasons for the following reports (if any) being in Part II and determine whether or not maintaining the exemption from disclosure of the information contained therein outweighs the public interest in disclosure.

10. URGENT PART II BUSINESS

To consider any Part II Business accepted by the Chair as urgent.

STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 6 January 2021

Time: 6.30pm

Place: Via Zoom

Present: Councillors: Simon Speller (Chair), Maureen McKay (Vice-Chair), Doug Bainbridge, Sandra Barr, Laurie Chester, Michael Downing, Michelle Gardner, Jody Hanafin, Lizzy Kelly, Graham Lawrence, John Lloyd and Tom Wren

Start / End Start Time: 6.30pm
Time: End Time: 8.05pm

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Graham Snell. The Chair on behalf of the Committee sent best wishes to Councillor Snell who was recovering in hospital after a recent illness.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 MINUTES - 8 DECEMBER 2020

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee held on 8 December 2020 are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 14 BRICK KILN ROAD (20/00599/FP) ITEM WITHDRAWN

The Chair advised that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda to ensure that the consultation to be carried out with the local residents on the application was as full and comprehensive as the Committee asked for at the previous meeting.

4 24 JULIANS ROAD (20/00608/FP)

The Committee received a report relating to 24 Julians Road and the previously agreed erection of 3no. four bed dwellings. The current application sought a variation of a condition to allow the conversion of the integral garage at Plot 1 of the development.

The Principal Planning Officer advised the Committee that the applicant had requested that the application be withdrawn as it was their intention to reinstate the garage as approved. Therefore members were not required to consider the merits of the planning application. However, Members were still asked to consider authorising the serving of an Enforcement Notice in case it was required in the near future.

In response to a question, officers advised that the typical timescale for enforcement was between 1 and 2 months although this could be affected by the current Covid-19 restrictions.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Assistant Director Planning and Regulation be delegated the power to serve the Enforcement Notice on the applicant if necessary to ensure compliance with the reinstatement of the integral garage.

5 **FLATS 23 AND 24, WALPOLE COURT, BLENHEIM ROAD (20/00620/FP)**

The Committee considered an application for the change of use from Residential Flats (use class C3) to Physiotherapy Clinic (use class D1) at 23 and 24 Walpole Court to facilitate the continued provision of the service while redevelopment of the main site granted under reference 18/00398/FPM took place.

The application was before the Committee for determination as the applicant was Stevenage Borough Council.

The Principal Planning Officer gave an introduction to the Committee. She advised that the determining issues related to the acceptability of the application in land use policy terms, the impact on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers and the provision of appropriate parking to serve the Clinic.

The Committee was informed that the proposed change would not harm the character and appearance of the area, the amenities of adjoining dwellings or the safety and efficiency of the public highway. The application was also for an interim arrangement only, prior to the long term redevelopment of the site.

It was **RESOLVED**:

That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:-

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Site Location Plan; Block Plan; H/17381; TBC-02
- 2 This permission is for a limited period only expiring two years after the date of the planning permission; and the use hereby permitted shall be discontinued on or before that date.

INFORMATIVES

1. Community Infrastructure Levy

Stevenage Borough Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule at Full Council on 27 January 2020 and started implementing CIL on 01 April 2020.

This application may be liable for CIL payments and you are advised to contact the CIL Team for clarification with regard to this. If your development is CIL liable, even if you are granted an exemption from the levy, please be advised that it is a requirement under Regulation 67 of The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) that CIL Form 6 (Commencement Notice) must be completed, returned and acknowledged by Stevenage Borough Council before building works start. Failure to do so will mean you risk losing the right to payment by instalments and a surcharge will be imposed. NB, please note that a Commencement Notice is not required for residential extensions if relief has been granted.

Stevenage's adopted CIL Charging Schedule and further details of CIL can be found on the Council's webpages at www.stevenage.gov.uk/CIL or by contacting the Council's CIL Team at CIL@Stevenage.gov.uk.

6 **NORTH CAR PARK, CORNER OF SIX HILLS WAY AND LONDON ROAD
(20/00624/FPM)**

The Committee considered an application for the variation of condition 1 (Approved Drawings) and 6 (Car Parking) attached to planning permission 16/00482/FPM

The application had been referred to Committee because the level of parking of the approved development under planning permission 16/00482/FPM is proposed to be amended from that which was previously determined by Committee.

The Principal Planning Officer gave an introduction to the Committee. He advised that the only issue for consideration in the determination of this application was how the variation of the conditions would impact on the approved scheme and whether any additional conditions were warranted. The main issues for consideration therefore, was the acceptability of the proposed changes to the scheme in respect of the impact on the appearance of the area and impact on parking. The previously agreed Section 106 obligations would also need to be revised through a Deed of Variation

In response to concerns regarding the reduction in car parking spaces, the Principal Planning Officer advised that as the application site fell on the boundary of two different residential accessibility zones including the Town Centre accessibility zone, the level of parking was considered acceptable. The site was in a highly sustainable location, in close proximity to a number of local services and amenities located within the Town Centre. The site was also in close proximity to a number of bus services and within walking distance to Stevenage Train Station.

In relation to a question regarding disabled parking bays the Principal Planning Officer advised that a condition would be imposed to ensure the correct standards were adhered to. He also agreed to discuss with the applicant the possibility of providing mobility scooter charging points within the development.

It was **RESOLVED:**

That Planning permission be GRANTED subject to the applicant having first entered

into and completed a deed of variation to the original S106 agreement which was secured under planning permission 16/00395/FPM. This is in order to bind this planning permission to the obligations set out in the original S.106 agreement. The detail of the deed of variation of the S106 agreement to be delegated to the Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation in conjunction with the Council's appointed solicitor and subject to the following conditions/reasons:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans:

1233-P-13 A; 1233-P-14 A; 1255-P-15 A; 1233-P-16 A; 1233-P-17; 1233-P-21; 1233-P-22; 1233-P-23; 1233-P-24; 1233-P-25 A; 1233-P-26 A; 1233-P-31; 1233-P-32; 119-3EX-00; 119-3GA-01
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before 1 May 2021.
- 3 The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be completed in accordance with the approved materials specified under discharge of condition application 20/00359/COND.
- 4 The hard and soft landscaping of the development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with the approved hard and soft landscaping details specified under discharge of condition 20/00359/COND.
- 5 Any trees or plants comprised within the scheme of landscaping, which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 6 Prior to the first occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted the approved car parking area shall be marked, including the provision of two disabled bays in accordance with Manual for Street standards, shall be surfaced and constructed in accordance with the details identified on drawing 119-3GA-01 and shall be permanently retained in that form.
- 7 Prior to the first occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted, details of the secure cycle parking facilities shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The cycle parking facilities shall be provided in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted.
- 8 No construction work relating to this permission shall be carried out on any Sunday, Public or Bank Holiday nor at any other time except between the hours of 0730 and 1800 on Mondays to Fridays and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays.
- 9 No external lighting shall be installed on site unless details of such lighting, including the intensity of illumination and predicted light contours, have first been submitted to, and approved in writing the Local Planning Authority prior

to first occupation of the development. Any external lighting shall accord with the details so approved.

- 10 An Armco or similar barrier should be located in positions where vehicles maybe in a position to drive into or roll onto the railway or damage the lineside fencing. Network Rail's existing fencing/wall must not be removed or damaged. The barrier would need to be installed at each turning area, roadway and car parking area which is located adjacent to the railway.
- 11 No development shall take place until a construction method statement and Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved statement and plan shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The statement shall provide for:
 - Parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
 - Routes for construction traffic;
 - Hours of operation;
 - Method of wheel cleaning to reduce the transfer of mud onto the highway;
 - Pedestrian and cycle protection;
 - The proposed methods of construction (including details of any excavation/buildings/piling/scaffolding which are located within 10m of the railway line and/or in close proximity to Thames Water assets);
 - Risk assessment in relation to the railway;
 - Arrangement and siting and construction compounds;
 - Details on the screening or enclosure of plant and machinery;
 - Details of dust control measures;
 - Details of any vibro-compaction machinery which is to be used in development
- 12 In line with the Phase 1 Environmental Assessment (Document reference: 016/1462 Rev 01, prepared by EAME dated July 2016) a watching brief should be adopted during the initial preparation works to identify any potentially contaminated materials e.g. hydrocarbon staining due to the previous use of the site of the car park. Where identified, materials should be segregated, sampled, analysed, categorised and disposed of off-site in accordance with current legislative requirements.
- 13 In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition 14, which is subject to the approval of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition 15.
- 14 In the event contamination is found, the detailed remediation scheme to bring the site to a condition suitable for the intended use by removing unacceptable

risks to human health, buildings and other property and the natural and historic environment must be prepared, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must include all works to be undertaken, proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, timetable of works and site management procedures. The scheme must ensure that the site will not qualify as contaminated land under Part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 in relation to the intended use of the land after remediation.

- 15 The approved remediation scheme as required under condition 14 if contamination is found must be carried out in accordance with its terms prior to the commencement of development other than that required to carry out remediation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Local Planning Authority must be given two weeks written notification of commencement of the remediation scheme works. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced, and is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority.
- 16 No waste materials generated as a result of the proposed demolition and /or construction operations shall be burned on site. All such refuse shall be disposed of by alternative methods.
- 17 The development hereby permitted shall be constructed in accordance with the Noise Impact Assessment Report (Report reference 13395.NIA.01, prepared by KP Acoustics Ltd, dated 01/07/2016).
- 18 No development shall take place until a detailed Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) to detail how waste materials generated as a result of the proposed demolition and/or construction methods shall be disposed of, and detail the level and type of soil to be imported to site as part of the development has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 19 Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, the applicant shall provide details of the Electric Vehicle Charging Points and Passive Infrastructure which shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Electric Vehicle Charging Points and Passive infrastructure shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to first occupation of the development.

7 PART OF HIGHWAY EMBANKMENT, CORNER OF SIX HILLS WAY AND LONDON ROAD (20/00625/FP)

The Committee considered an application for the installation of a new fire escape route to be created from one of the two stair cores of the adjacent development approved under planning application 16/00482/FPM. The escape route was necessary as the stair core could not discharge directly into the proposed car park.

The application was before the Committee for determination as it was inter-related to planning application 20/00626/FPM which was also before the Committee. In addition there had been a number of objections from local residents on the application.

The Principal Planning Officer gave an introduction to the Committee. He advised that the main issues for consideration were the impact on the visual amenities of the area, impact on trees and highway implications. He advised that the safety and operation of the highway network would not be prejudiced and subject to conditions, there would not be a detrimental impact on the existing trees which were to be retained.

It was **RESOLVED:**

That Planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions/reasons:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans:

119-3EX-01; 119-3GA-12
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 3 Prior to the commencement of development, a scheme of supervision for the arboricultural protection measures as well as details of the construction methodology in order to mitigate the impact on the retained trees shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and scheme of supervision for the arboricultural protection measures.

8 STEVENAGE BOROUGH COUNCIL DEPOT, CAVENDISH ROAD (20/00692/FP)

The Committee considered an application for the reconfiguration of existing waste transfer bays including replacement transfer bay enclosures and the creation of 1 no. additional transfer bay with associated enclosure.

The application was before the Committee for determination as the applicant and landowner was Stevenage Borough Council.

The Principal Planning Officer gave an introduction to the Committee. He advised that the main issues for consideration in the determination of the application were its acceptability in land use policy terms, impact on visual amenity, impact on amenities, parking and highway implications and impact on the environment.

The proposal was for the reconfiguration and replacement of enclosures to the waste transfer bays as well as the creation of one new transfer bay. The existing timber enclosures would be replaced by 4m high concrete enclosures with a steel frame support system. The bays were being replaced due to their declining condition

and following the recommendations of a fire safety audit at the Waste Depot.

In response to a question regarding highway safety it was noted that Hertfordshire County Council as Highways Authority did not consider the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the safety and operation of the highway network.

In terms of the potential for any increased smells from the site, Members were advised to contact the Council's Waste Management Team with any issues.

It was **RESOLVED**:

That Planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions/reasons:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans:
133A-C-008 100; 133A-C-008 120; 133A-C-008 130; 133A-C-008 140; 133A-C-008 150.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
- 3 No construction work relating to this permission shall be carried out on any Sunday, Public or Bank Holiday nor at any other time except between the hours of 0730 and 1800 on Mondays to Fridays and between the hours of 0900 and 1300 on Saturdays.

9 **INFORMATION REPORT - DELEGATED DECISIONS**

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

10 **INFORMATION REPORT - APPEALS/CALLED IN APPLICATIONS**

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

11 **URGENT PART I BUSINESS**

The training requirements and needs of the committee were considered by Members. Draft topics for consideration included:

- Changes of use from Amenity to other uses in residential areas;
- Built Environment Conservation plus Listing buildings;
- Neighbourhood Planning and Public Realm;
- Design Quality and Beauty/ Aesthetics;
- 'Planning Changes' as per recent White Paper.

Any additional subjects which Members would like considered should be sent to the Chair, Vice-Chair and the Assistant Director Planning and Regulation prior to the

initial working group meeting in 2 weeks time.

12 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Not required.

13 **URGENT PART II BUSINESS**

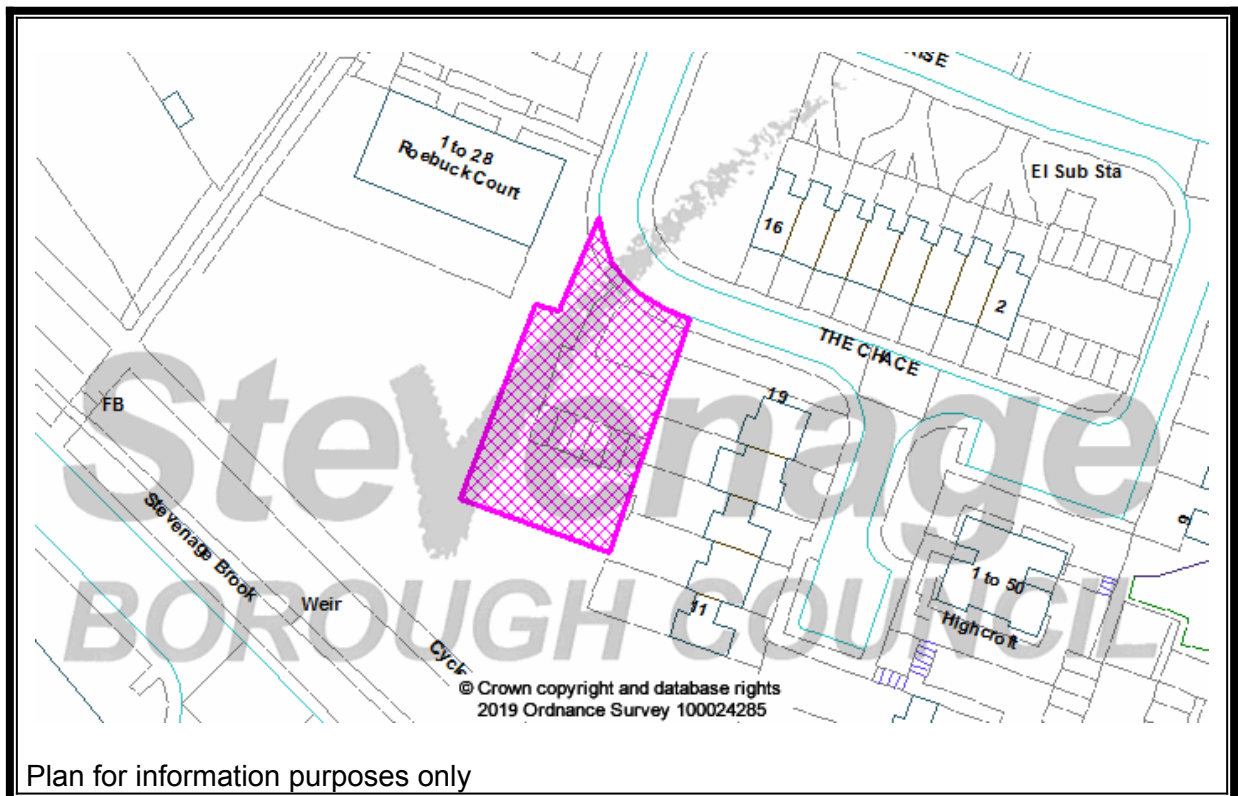
None.

CHAIR

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Meeting:	Planning and Development Committee	Agenda Item:
Date:	3 February 2021	
Author:	Ailsa Davis	01438 242747
Lead Officer:	Zayd Al-Jawad	01438 242257
Contact Officer:	Ailsa Davis	01438 242747

Application No:	20/00672/FP
Location:	Garages And Forecourt Area To Rear Of 13-19 The Chace
Proposal:	Erection of 3no. three bed dwellings, parking and amenity space following demolition of garages
Drawing Nos.:	3055.CHAC.100; 3055.CHAC.101 REV D; 3055.CHAC.102 REV C; 3055.CHAC.103 REV D; 3055.CHAC.104 REV B; 3055.CHAC.105 REV A; 3055.CHAC.106 REV A; 3055.CHAC.107
Applicant:	Surfbuild
Date Valid:	10 November 2020
Recommendation:	GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION



1. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The application site is located on the southern side of The Chace, which is a looped cul-de-sac off Turpins Rise. The application site comprises a hardsurfaced parking area and a block of pre-fabricated garages comprising 6no. garages in total and in part, an area of grassed open space to the south. The development site is located to the west of the rear gardens of Nos.11 – 19 The Chace, which is a terrace of two storey dwellings sited on a north/south axis. The rear facing windows of these dwellings face onto the application site. The topography of the site slopes downwards in a southerly direction towards the B197 London Road.
- 1.2 The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character comprising two-storey terraced houses, isolated garage blocks and two residential tower blocks known as Highcroft and Roebuck Court. The area immediately surrounding the application site comprises amenity grassland with scattered mature trees, which acts as a buffer between the B197 London Road to the south and the edge of the Roebuck residential area to the north. The site is accessed via the existing garage block vehicular access from The Chace.

2. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 There is no relevant planning history relating to this site.

3. THE CURRENT APPLICATION

- 3.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the erection a terrace of 3no. three bedroom dwellings, parking and private amenity space following demolition of the garage block. The proposal would involve the creation of three vehicular accesses from The Chace with front driveways offering a tandem parking arrangement for two cars per dwelling. The proposed dwellings would be sited on an east/west axis in the centre of the site where the garage block is currently located. The rear gardens would incorporate the area of grassed amenity space to the south of the garage block. The eastern flank wall of dwelling 3 would face onto the rear elevation of Nos. 13, 15, 17 and 19 The Chace.
- 3.2 The application comes before Committee for consideration as it has been “called in” at the request of Councillor John Lloyd. The grounds for call in were as follows:
- Impact on neighbouring properties
 - Car parking
 - Impact on trees and landscaping
- 3.3 In addition, Cllr Lloyd cited the prospect of the development severely overlooking the houses in the cul-de-sac, the loss of 5 or 6 on street parking places and the fact there appears to be a side elevation window directly overlooking the houses.
- 3.4 There were concerns that the flank wall of the terrace was sited too close to the existing rear elevations of Nos. 13, 15, 17 and 19 The Chace, on the basis that the original plans did not meet the 15m side to rear separation distance between new and existing two storey dwellings, as specified in Appendix C Space standards and separation distances for dwellings of the Local Plan (2019). In response, amended plans were submitted re-siting the terrace away from the neighbouring dwellings. The proposed site plan now meets the 15m separation requirement. Additional information relating to visibility splays, access gradient and vehicle crossovers as requested by the Highway Authority was also submitted to remove their holding objection.

4. PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.1 The proposal has been publicised by way of letters to adjoining properties (Nos. 11 – 19 The Chace) and a site notice was displayed on the lamppost next to the site entrance. At the time of drafting this report, responses had been received from the occupiers of numbers 13, 15, 17 and 19 The Chace. These responses were based on the original plans, which have been superseded. The objections on the superseded plans are for the following reasons:-
- Loss of garages which could be used for parking will result in increased pressure for on street parking in locality;
 - No evidence provided to support the statement that the garages are underused;
 - Loss of light to rear rooms and gardens of Nos.13, 15 and 17 The Chace;
 - Ground subsidence concern;
 - Side window of plot 3 would overlook rear rooms and gardens of Nos. 13, 15 and 17 The Chace;
 - Loss of trees and green space to rear of garage block;
 - Damage to boundary fencing of No.15 The Chace;
 - Loss of back yard gate access to No.15 The Chace;
 - Loss of view from rear of No.15 The Chace;
 - Terrace would have an overbearing impact of Nos. 11 – 19 The Chace;
 - Impact on personal wellbeing and property values;
 - Inaccurate reports supporting application
 - Noise disturbance from occupiers of proposed dwellings
- 4.2 Following a neighbour re-consultation of the amended plans, the occupiers of Nos.15, 17 and 19 The Chace raised the following objections:
- Loss of parking;
 - Poor design;
 - What will happen to rear boundary wall which is part of the garages?
 - Loss of light to rear of dwelling;
 - Loss of outlook/visual amenity;
 - Ground subsidence concern;
 - Driveway gradient too steep;
 - Loss of privacy and security concerns;
 - Loss of trees, natural habitat and green area;
 - Damage to boundary fencing;
 - Unknown/unclaimed plot of land between Nos. 13 and 15 The Chace and the proposed terrace;
 - Loss of back-yard gate access;
 - Terrace would have an overbearing impact of Nos. 11 – 19 The Chace;
 - Disturbance from building work;
 - Inaccuracy of submitted reports and plans;
 - Loss of view from rear of No.15 The Chace;
- 4.3 Following criticism that that Planning Authority had not consulted widely enough, consultation letters were sent to residents living within Roebuck Court to the north west of the site and Nos. 12, 14 and 16 The Chace opposite on the 21 December 2020. The following comments were received from No.14 The Chace and 23 Roebuck Court:
- Loss of parking would make on street parking more difficult in this area;
 - Buildings seem to be too large for the space they are to be built on, and will lead to the loss of the green space behind them.

- 4.4 The above is not a verbatim of the comments and representations which have been received. A full copy of the comments received on this application can be viewed on the Council's website.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority (response dated 30/11/20)

- 5.1.1 *Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:*

There is insufficient information supplied with this application to enable the Highway Authority to reach a recommendation. The plans do not provide the level of detail needed. Please see below for a guide to required information – (a) Detailed Vehicle Crossover drawing to scale; (b) Visibility splays and (c) Gradient of access.

- 5.1.2 The required information relating to vehicle crossovers, visibility splays and access gradients was submitted to the Planning Authority on the 9 December 2020 and the Highway Authority was re-consulted.

5.1.3 Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority (response dated 04/01/21)

- 5.1.4 *Notice is given under article 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that the Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:*

The proposed plans for three consecutive fully ramped crossovers represent an accessibility issue in terms of the Highway Authorities' responsibility to provide a safe and suitable footway network for pedestrians of all ages and abilities and represents a safety issue in the event that the footway crossovers are subject to wet or icy conditions. At the entrances to the driveways a flat area with a width of 900mm carried through at footway level should be provided to enable pedestrians and wheelchair users to avoid the ramps to dropped kerbs. The proposed footway crossovers are not in-line with section 1.14.1 Footway and Verge Crossover of the Roads in Hertfordshire: Highway Design Guide.

- 5.1.5 Amended plans were submitted on the 16 January 2021 to address this issue. The Highway Authority was re-consulted and responded on 18 January 2021 with the following comments:

The Highway Authority are satisfied with the vehicle crossover detail shown on Drawing No. 3055.CHAC.106 as this includes a flat area with a width of 900mm carried through at footway level for all three proposed footway crossovers.

A Section 278 agreement will be required for works on the public highway. This S278 agreement will include the positioning and any associated costs for the relocation of the lamppost. As noted in the previous Highway Authority response (4th January 2021), the Highway Authority request that each dwelling is fitted with an electrical vehicle charging facility. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have announced a climate emergency and the provision of electric vehicle charging facilities is in-line with Policy 5 of the HCC Local Transport Plan. This has been recommended by way of Planning Condition.

Following the receipt of additional information, the Highway Authority does not wish to raise an objection to the proposals subject to the inclusion of the recommended planning conditions and informatives.

5.2 SBC Environmental Health

5.2.1 No objection, subject to conditions relating to contaminated land and construction noise.

5.3 SBC Garage Services

5.3.1 Confirmed that the garages are void and there is no demand for their use.

6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES

6.1 Background to the development plan

6.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that the decision on the planning application should be in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For Stevenage the statutory development plan comprises:

- The Stevenage Borough Council Local Plan 2011-2031
- Hertfordshire Waste Development Framework 2012 and Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted 2012 and 2014); and
- Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016 (adopted 2007).

6.2 Central Government Advice

6.2.1 A revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in February 2019. This largely reordered the policy substance of the earlier 2012 version of the NPPF albeit with some revisions to policy. The Council are content that the policies in the Local Plan are in conformity with the revised NPPF and that the Local Plan should be considered up to date for the purpose of determining planning applications. The NPPF provides that proposals which accord with an up to date development plan should be approved without delay (para.11) and that where a planning application conflicts with an up to date development plan, permission should not usually be granted (para.12). This indicates the weight which should be given to an up to date development plan, reflecting the requirements of section 38(6) of the 2004 Act. The NPPF and the PPG, with which Members are fully familiar, are both material considerations to be taken into account in determining this application.

6.3 Adopted Local Plan

Policy SP1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development;
Policy SP2: Sustainable development in Stevenage;
Policy SP6: Sustainable transport;
Policy SP7: High quality homes
Policy SP8: Good design;
Policy SP11: Climate change, flooding and pollution
Policy IT5: Parking and access;
Policy GD1: High quality design;
Policy HO5: Windfall Sites;
Policy HO9: Housing Types and Sizes;
Policy NH6: General protection for open space
Policy FP1: Climate change

6.4 Supplementary Planning Documents

Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD (2020);
Stevenage Design Guide SPD (2009)

6.5 Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

- 6.5.1 Stevenage Borough Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule in 2020. This allows the Council to collect a levy to fund infrastructure projects based on the type, location and floorspace of a development. This proposal would be CIL liable.

7. APPRAISAL

- 7.1 The main issues for consideration in the determination of this application are its acceptability in land use policy terms, impact on the appearance of the area, impact upon residential/neighbouring amenities and means of access/loss of garages/parking.

7.2 Land Use Policy Considerations

- 7.2.1 The principle of residential development within urban areas is set out in both national and local policy. Paragraph 61 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019) requires that the planning system should deliver a mix of housing in terms of size, type, tenure and price to support a wide variety of households in all areas. Policy SP7 of the Local Plan states that the Council will support applications for housing development on unallocated sites where they are in suitable locations. As an unallocated site in the Local Plan, Policy HO5 relates to non-designated sites known as 'windfall' housing sites stating that permission for unallocated sites will be granted where:

- (a) The site is on previously developed land or is a small, underused urban site;
- (b) There is good access to local facilities;
- (c) There will be no detrimental impact on the environment and the surrounding properties;
- (d) Proposals will not prejudice our ability to deliver residential development on allocated sites; and
- (e) The proposed development would not overburden existing infrastructure.

- 7.2.2 For the purpose of clarity, the definition of previously-developed land, as stated within the NPPF, is 'land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure'. The majority of the application site does meet the definition of previously developed land as it comprises a garage block and area of hardstanding and so complies with criterion (a) of Policy HO5.

- 7.2.3 The site is also conveniently located to access local facilities. It lies within walking distance of the neighbourhood centre in Broadwater Crescent, with shops and a doctor's surgery. A Tesco superstore is also located within walking distance of the site to the south, across London Road. It is considered therefore, that the site also complies with criterion (b) of Policy HO5. The impact on the environment and surrounding properties is addressed further in this response (criterion c of Policy HO5). The proposals would not prejudice the ability of the Council to deliver strategic residential development and three additional dwellings would not overburden existing infrastructure, complying with criteria (d) and (e) of Policy HO5.

- 7.2.4 In assessing the loss of open green space which forms part of the application site to the rear of the garage block, Policy NH6 stipulates that for development of any existing, unallocated open spaces, development would be permitted where:

- A) the loss of the open space is justified having regard to:
 - i) the quality and accessibility of the open space;
 - ii) the existence, or otherwise, or any interventions to improve the quality or access;
 - iii) whether the open space is serving its function and purpose; and
 - iv) whether alternative space(s) remain available for community use, and
- B) Reasonable compensatory provision is made.

7.2.5 The application site is, in part, formed of grassed amenity space which is located to the rear of the garage block. The space is part of a larger area of open space surrounding the application site, which acts as a buffer between the B197 London Road to the south and the edge of the Roebuck residential area to the north. The area of green space to be incorporated into the application site is small (approx. 260m²) compared to the total area of green space in this location. The remaining space, with its mature trees, will continue to provide usable amenity space for local residents and continue to serve its function as a separation buffer between London Road and the residential area to the north. As such, it is considered the loss of this small area of open space will not harm the function or amenity of the remaining space of which it is part and is therefore acceptable.

7.2.6 Turning to compensatory provision, given the limited area which is being incorporated into the application site compared to the total area of open space in this location, it would be unreasonable to require the applicant to provide compensatory open space elsewhere as the loss of the open space does not undermine the function of the remaining area.

7.2.7 Paragraph 73 of the NPPF stipulates that strategic policies should include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period, and all plans should consider whether it is appropriate to set out the anticipated rate of development for specific sites. Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old. The supply of specific deliverable sites should in addition include a buffer (moved forward from later in the plan period) of:

- a) 5% to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; or
- b) 10% where the local planning authority wishes to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites through an annual position statement or recently adopted plan, to account for any fluctuations in the market during that year; or
- c) 20% where there has been significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years, to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply.

7.2.8 Since November 2018, housing delivery has been measured against the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) as set out by the Government planning policy and guidance. The results of the HDT dictate whether a local planning authority should be subject to consequences to help increase their housing delivery. Where an authority's HDT score is less than 85% of its housing requirement, the Council must incorporate a 20% buffer into its housing supply calculations in line with paragraph 73 of the NPPF. Where an authority's score is below 75%, the Council will be subject to the HDT's most severe penalty and must apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

7.2.9 The latest HDT results, published by MHCLG in January 2021, identifies that Stevenage only delivered 64% of its housing requirement. This is significantly below the 75% target and renders the adopted Local Plan housing policies as out of date. Consequently, Stevenage Borough Council must apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development in its decision making and give great weight towards the need to deliver housing.

- 7.2.10 Additionally, Policy SP7 of the adopted local plan also identifies that there is a need to provide 7,600 new homes within Stevenage and this policy allocates 1,950 new homes to be provided elsewhere in the Borough. Taking this into consideration, the proposed development would support the Council's ambition in delivering a number of homes which fall outside the designated sites.
- 7.2.11 It is therefore concluded that, subject to a satisfactory impact on the environment and surrounding properties to be discussed below, the principle of residential development on this site is considered acceptable.

7.3 Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

- 7.3.1 In terms of design, Paragraph 127 of the NPPF (2019) stipulates that planning decisions should ensure development functions well and adds to the overall quality of the area, not just in the short term but over the lifetime of the development. It also sets out that development should be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping is sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Paragraph 130 of the NPPF (2019) states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to make available opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
- 7.3.2 Policy GD1 of the Local Plan (2019) generally requires all forms of development to meet a high standard of design which includes forms of built development, elevational treatment and materials along with how the development would integrate with the urban fabric, its relationship between buildings, landscape design and relevant aspects of sustainable design.
- 7.3.3 The proposal seeks the demolition of a block of 6 garages and a hard surfaced area. The existing pre-fabricated garages, visible from The Chace, are relatively poor in appearance and have no architectural merit. The replacement of the garages with a terrace of three dwellings, with off street parking as proposed, is considered to enhance the visual amenities of the area. The proposed terrace would have a similar footprint to the existing garage block and area of hardstanding and the proposed dwellings are of a similar size and design to other properties in the road, which is predominantly characterised by terraced properties.
- 7.3.4 In terms of proposed design and external materials, the dwellings will comprise grey concrete roof tiles with Rijswaard Baksteen buff stock facing brick. The fenestration design will be of a standard style. The front entrances will be shielded by an open sided front porch. It is considered that the design and external materials would reflect the existing architectural character of the area and the proposed dwellings would fit well into the wider locality in terms of their siting and appearance.
- 7.3.5 Taking into account the aforementioned, it is not considered that the introduction of a terrace of three dwellings or the layout of the proposed development would be unduly harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

7.4 Amenity of occupiers of proposed dwellings

- 7.4.1 The local plan stipulates criterion for new development in respect of living standards, in line with the nationally prescribed space standards contained in the Nationally Described Space Standards (2015). These standards address the total unit space and bedroom sizes to ensure proposed residential units provide a good living environment.

- 7.4.2 The standards recommend the minimum gross internal floor area for a two storey three bedroom dwelling with five bed spaces (as shown on the submitted plans) would be 93sq.m. The submitted plans suggest all three units will have approximately 95sq.m gross internal floor area, which just exceeds the requirements. Built in storage space is shown on the first floor plan provided. Furthermore, the standards stipulate bedroom sizes for double rooms. A double bedroom should be a minimum of 11.5sq.m in area. The proposed double bedrooms fall short of this requirement and average approximately 9sq.m in area. However, it is considered as the bedrooms are only slightly under and the total floor space for the dwellings meets National Space Standards, the internal living accommodation is acceptable.
- 7.4.3 The proposed dwellings would have windows serving all the habitable rooms. As such, the outlook from and daylight/sunlight levels within the dwellings are considered to provide an acceptable form of living accommodation for the proposed occupiers.
- 7.4.4 Turning to external amenity space, the Council's Design Guide (2009) states a minimum of 50sq.m of useable garden with a minimum 10m depth where the boundary abuts another property to the rear. However, this is more in reference to privacy standards and these are addressed in the next section. All three dwellings would have a garden area in excess of 65sq.m, with a depth of 12m. The amount of external private amenity space proposed exceeds the Council's standards in terms of area and length. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in this regard.
- 7.4.5 In terms of siting, the proposed dwellings will form a terrace where the front and rear building line will be uniform. It is considered the orientation and siting of the proposed dwellings are acceptable and will not lead to a loss of amenity or poor living environment for future occupiers of these properties.

7.5 Impact upon Amenity of Neighbouring Properties

- 7.5.1 The application site is adjoined by Nos. 11 to 19 The Chace to the east and is surrounded on all other sides by open space (except the access). The main issue to consider with regards to impact on neighbouring amenity is whether the siting of the terrace, in particular the dwelling in plot 3, would harm the amenity of the occupiers of Nos.13, 15, 17 and 19 The Chace to the east by reason of overbearing impact, loss of outlook, light or privacy.
- 7.5.2 As discussed in paragraph 3.5 above, in light of concerns that the flank wall of the terrace was sited too close to the existing rear elevations of Nos. 13, 15, 17 and 19 The Chace, amended plans were submitted moving the terrace away from the neighbouring dwellings. The proposed site plan now meets the 'side to rear' 15m separation requirement as set out within Appendix C Space standards and separation distances for dwellings of the Local Plan (2019). On this basis, it is concluded sufficient separation has been achieved to ensure there will be no loss of outlook to the rear rooms of Nos. 13 – 19 The Chace.
- 7.5.3 With regards to privacy, a planning condition can be added requiring the proposed ground and first floor flank windows in the dwelling in plot 3, which serve the staircase area to be obscure glazed to avoid mutual overlooking between the proposed dwelling and Nos. 13 – 19 The Chace. This would sufficiently overcome the issue and avoid the need to refuse the application for this reason.
- 7.5.4 In terms of differences in height and the potential for the proposed terrace to have an overbearing impact on Nos. 13 – 19 The Chace or overshadow the rear gardens and rooms of these dwellings, Chapter 5 of the Design Guide (2009) advises where there is doubt that adequate sunlight and daylight will be achieved, indicators can be used to assess the amount of light reaching a new or existing window. The Building Research Establishment (BRE) guidelines "Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good

Practice” (1991) should be used, which provides guidance on avoiding unacceptable impacts and sets out non-mandatory targets for levels of daylight and sunlight within existing and proposed developments.

- 7.5.5 This can be established by undertaking a simple 25° ‘rule of thumb’ test using the BRE guidelines. If the proposed development cuts through the 25° line, then it is likely to interfere with the diffuse skylight enjoyed by the existing buildings. This being the case the proposal is likely to cause problems of loss of light and it will be necessary to undertake a detailed sunlight and daylight assessment. On considering the height difference and separation distance between Nos. 13 – 19 The Chace and the proposed terrace on site section drawing ref. 3055.CHAC.104 REV B, the proposed development passes the 25° rule of thumb test. As such, it is considered the proposal will not have an overbearing impact or cause a loss of light to the rear gardens and rooms of Nos. 13 – 19 The Chace.

7.6 Means of access/loss of garages/parking

- 7.6.1 With regard to access, the proposal seeks to use the existing vehicle access and proposes the creation of two additional crossovers so each dwelling has its own access, driveway and off street parking. Following a request from the Highway Authority for further information, details of the proposed vehicle crossovers, access gradients and visibility splays were provided. Following a second consultation response from the Highway Authority dated 4 January 2021, the proposed vehicle crossovers were further amended to provide a flat area with a width of 900mm carried through at footway level at the entrances to the driveways to enable pedestrians and wheelchair users to avoid the ramps to dropped kerbs.
- 7.6.2 The Highway Authority confirmed in their response dated 18 January 2021 the proposed footway crossovers now comply with section 1.14.1 Footway and Verge Crossover of the Roads in Hertfordshire: Highway Design Guide and that as all other matters had been resolved, their holding objection could be lifted. The Highway Authority has determined that the proposed access arrangements are acceptable, subject to the conditions and informatives set out in section 9 below.
- 7.6.3 With regards to the concern that the proposed accesses would result in the loss of existing on street parking along The Chace, leading to increased pressures elsewhere for parking within the locality, the existing on street parking is an informal arrangement only and not protected under the Local Plan. As such, the loss of these spaces is not a material planning consideration and there is no requirement to replace them.
- 7.6.4 The Council’s Parking Provision SPD (2020) requires two off street parking spaces to be provided for a three bedroom dwelling. The proposed parking arrangements show two tandem parking spaces for each dwelling, in accordance with standards. The proposal would not result in an unacceptable level of on-street parking, which would prejudice highway safety and is considered acceptable in terms of parking provision.
- 7.6.5 In assessing the loss of the existing garages and the associated 6 car parking spaces, Policy IT5 of the Local Plan states planning permission for development proposals which result in the loss of off-street parking spaces (excluding public car parks) or formally defined on-street bays will be granted where:
- c. The parking lost is replaced as near as possible to the existing provision in an accessible location; or
 - d. It can be demonstrated that the provision is not suitable or required.

- 7.6.6 The development proposal, whilst seeking to provide the required amount of off street parking for the proposed dwellings, does not seek to replace the parking lost as a result of the redevelopment of the garages. Therefore, criterion (d) of policy IT5 is relevant. Comments have been sought from the Council's Garages Services section, who has confirmed that the garage block is void and that there has been no demand for their use. This has led to the decision by the Council to sell them. Consequently, it is considered it has been sufficiently demonstrated that the existing garages are not required and therefore criterion (d) of Policy IT5 has been met. The loss of the garages is therefore considered acceptable.
- 7.6.7 With regards to secure cycle parking and refuse/recycling storage, all units are shown to have adequate refuse/recycling storage at the front and secure, covered cycle parking within the rear gardens. The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in this regard.

7.7 Other Matters

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 7.7.1 The Council adopted CIL on 1 April 2020 and the CIL Charging Schedule specifies a payment for new floor space in line with the following rates (plus appropriate indexation):

Development Type	CIL Rate (£ per square meter)	
	Zone 1: Stevenage Central, Stevenage West Urban Extension and North of Stevenage Extension	Zone 2: Everywhere else
Residential		
Market housing	£40/m ²	£100/m ²
Sheltered housing	£100/m ²	
Extra care housing	£40/m ²	
Retail development	£60/m ²	
All other development	£0/m ²	

- 7.7.2 CIL is a non-negotiable charge. The exact charge will be determined by the Council's CIL officer after an application has been granted in accordance with the CIL Charging Schedule and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). Opportunities for relief or exemption from the CIL charge exist and will be taken into account in the calculation of the final CIL charge.
- 7.7.3 CIL replaces the need for S106 agreements to specify financial and/or land contributions for non-site-specific infrastructure projects. This allows infrastructure to be planned on a borough-wide scale rather than on a site-by-site basis as mitigation against the impacts of individual proposals. A CIL Form 1: Additional Information has been submitted with the application. This proposal would be CIL liable.

Trees and Landscaping

- 7.7.4 The proposed site plan shows that all existing trees within and adjoining the application site are to be retained and incorporated into the rear gardens to provide amenity value for the future occupiers. A landscaping condition will be added to any planning permission requiring details of a scheme of soft and hard landscaping and details of the treatment of all hard surfaces. The scheme shall include details of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details showing all trees to be removed, or retained, together with details of all new planting to take place including species, size and method of planting. A further

condition protecting all retained trees during and after construction will also be included to ensure the existing landscape setting is maintained.

Climate Change Mitigation

- 7.7.5 Policy SP11 and FP1 of the Local Plan specifies the Council's position on climate change and energy conservation. Much of this can be addressed through building techniques and the materials proposed. A condition will be added to any future planning permission requiring details to be submitted of measures to address adaptation to climate change.
Impact on property values

- 7.7.6 Concern has been raised about the impact that the development would have on property values. However, despite the concerns raised, it has long been established through planning case law that property values are not material planning considerations.

Consultation

- 7.7.7 A number of concerns have been raised by local residents that the Council has not undertaken a thorough consultation process with local residents about this planning application. However, the Council has complied with the regulations which are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and gone further by undertaking additional consultation of the residents opposite and the residents at Roebuck Court to the north west.
- 7.7.8 In line with the aforementioned Order, residential properties adjoining the application site have been notified via a letter and a site notice has also been erected next to the site entrance. Furthermore, this planning application has been published on the weekly planning list and all of the relevant plans and documentation associated with this application have been uploaded onto the Council's website.

Loss of rear gated access

- 7.7.9 In response to assertions made by some occupiers in nos. 11-19 The Chace that they have access rights from their rear boundary onto the site, the applicant's representatives were asked to approach the Council to establish whether the Council are aware of or have granted access rights to said occupiers to access Council land. The response from the Council's Estates team was that as far as they are aware, there are no such access rights from the Council land into the rear of The Chace properties.

Damage to neighbouring boundary fencing

- 7.7.10 In the unlikely event that this does occur during construction, it will be the responsibility of the developer to rectify the issue with the owner of the fencing.

Ground Subsidence Concern

- 7.7.11 The Ground Investigation report accompanying the application does not raise any issues regarding the likelihood of subsidence occurring as a result of the proposed development.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The proposal is considered to be a residential windfall site on previously developed land. Whilst the proposal would result in the loss of existing garaging and an area of hardstanding, it has been demonstrated that the existing garages are void and underused. Adequate parking provision for the proposed dwellings is considered to be provided. Additionally, the proposal has demonstrated that the development of three dwellings on this

site could be accommodated without detriment to the character and appearance of the area and without adversely affecting residential amenity. Sufficient amenity space would be available for future occupiers and the parking and access arrangements are considered to be acceptable.

- 8.2 Given the above, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the conditions set out in section 9 of this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That Planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

3055.CHAC.100; 3055.CHAC.101 REV D; 3055.CHAC.102 REV C; 3055.CHAC.103 REV D; 3055.CHAC.104 REV B; 3055.CHAC.105 REV A; 3055.CHAC.106 REV A; 3055.CHAC.107

REASON:- For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON:- To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

- 3 The building works required to implement this permission shall be carried out only between the following times:

0800 to 1800 Mondays to Fridays
0830 to 1300 Saturdays
And not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

The hours specified relate to activities which are audible at the site boundary.

REASON:- To satisfactorily protect the residential amenities of nearby occupiers and the operation of adjoining businesses.

- 4 No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of soft and hard landscaping and details of the treatment of all hard surfaces. The scheme shall include details of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land and details showing all trees to be removed, or retained, together with details of all new planting to take place including species, size and method of planting.

REASON:- To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development.

- 5 All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the first occupation of the building(s) or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner.

REASON:- To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development.

- 6 All hard surfacing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out within 3 months of the first occupation of the building(s) or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner.

REASON:- To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development.

- 7 Any trees or plants comprised within the scheme of landscaping, which within a period of five years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
REASON:- To ensure a satisfactory appearance for the development.
- 8 No tree shown retained on the approved plans, or subsequently approved landscaping scheme, shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree be topped or lopped within five years of the completion of development without the written approval of the Local Planning Authority.
REASON:- To ensure the protection of those trees which should be retained in the interests of visual amenity.
- 9 The ground and first floor flank windows in the eastern elevation of the dwelling in plot 3 shall be glazed with obscured glass and shall be fixed so as to be incapable of being opened below a height of 1.7 metres above floor level, and shall be retained in that form thereafter.
REASON:- To safeguard the privacy of the occupiers of adjoining properties.
- 10 Notwithstanding the details shown in this application the treatment of all boundaries including details of any walls, fences, gates or other means of enclosure shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. The approved boundary treatments shall be completed before the use hereby permitted is commenced or before the building(s) is occupied.
REASON:- To ensure a satisfactory standard of development in the interests of amenity and that it has an acceptable appearance.
- 11 If during the course of development any contamination is found or suspected, works shall cease and the local planning authority shall be informed immediately. The local planning authority may request the nature and extent of any contamination to be investigated in order that a suitable remediation strategy can be proposed. The development shall not continue until any required remediation as agreed in writing by the local planning authority has been undertaken, and the local planning authority has confirmed it has been undertaken to its satisfaction.
REASON:- To prevent harm to human health and pollution of the water environment.
- 12 No development shall take place above slab level until details of measures to address adaptation to climate change have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These measures shall then be implemented and permanently maintained in accordance with the approved details.
REASON:- To ensure the development is adaptable to climate change through provision of energy and water efficiency measures.
- 13 Prior to the first occupation / use of the development hereby permitted the proposed access /on-site car and cycle parking / servicing / loading, unloading / turning /waiting area shall be laid out, demarcated, levelled, surfaced and drained in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use.
REASON:- To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).
- 14 Prior to the occupation / use of the development hereby permitted, the development shall include provision for each dwelling to be served by an active electric vehicle charging point.
REASON:- To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and to promote sustainable development in accordance with Policies 5, 19 and 20 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

INFORMATIVES

1. Community Infrastructure Levy

Stevenage Borough Council adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule at Full Council on 27 January 2020 and started implementing CIL on 01 April 2020.

This application may be liable for CIL payments and you are advised to contact the CIL Team for clarification with regard to this. If your development is CIL liable, even if you are granted an exemption from the levy, please be advised that it is a requirement under Regulation 67 of The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) that CIL Form 6 (Commencement Notice) must be completed, returned and acknowledged by Stevenage Borough Council before building works start. Failure to do so will mean you risk losing the right to payment by instalments and a surcharge will be imposed. NB, please note that a Commencement Notice is not required for residential extensions if relief has been granted.

Stevenage's adopted CIL Charging Schedule and further details of CIL can be found on the Council's webpages at www.stevenage.gov.uk/CIL or by contacting the Council's CIL Team at CIL@Stevenage.gov.uk.

2. Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
3. Obstruction of public highway land: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
4. Road Deposits: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit mud or other debris on the public highway, and section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available via the website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/highways-roads-and-pavements.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.
5. Construction standards for 278 works within the highway: The applicant is advised that in order to comply with this permission it will be necessary for the developer of the site to enter into an agreement with Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure the satisfactory completion of the access and associated road improvements. The construction of such works must be undertaken to the satisfaction and specification of the Highway Authority, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. Before works commence the applicant will need to

apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements. Further information is available via the website <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx> or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

1. The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item.
2. Stevenage Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents – Parking Provision adopted October 2020.
3. Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 adopted 2019.
4. Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 adopted May 2018.
5. Responses to consultations with statutory undertakers and other interested parties referred to in this report.
6. Central Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework February 2019 and Planning Policy Guidance March 2014.

Planning & Development Committee Report Cover:

Report name:

Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Draft

Officer(s) presenting:

Zayd Al-Jawad, Lewis Claridge

Reason for it being before Planning & Development Committee:

To provide Members with an overview of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report.

That the comments of the Planning & Development Committee regarding the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan be included in the report to the Executive on this matter.

It is recommended that delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director: Environment and Regeneration, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration, to make minor amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report prior to its consultation.

As background context, after reviewing Stevenage's Local Plan during the Hold Direction, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) asked Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) to prepare an Area Action Plan (AAP) for Stevenage Station Gateway Area (identified in the Local Plan as Site TC4). This is a limited area within the wider Stevenage Central area.

An Area Action Plan (AAP) is an optional development plan document which provides specific planning policy and guidance for a particular location or area of significant change. The AAP can create new policy over and above the Local Plan.

The AAP has been developed in conjunction with consultancy David Lock Associates and the document is a draft "Issues and Options" version. The AAP outlines the core issues that are present within the station area as well as the background policy and wider context that affects its development. This is an early stage of the preparation of an AAP, and initial high level scenarios and options that focus on mobility are presented for feedback from targeted stakeholders.

It is important to note that this is an early stage of preparation of the Area Action Plan. The options proposed are high level, strategic options to develop an improved environment, maximise density of space and economic opportunities around Stevenage Railway Station, in order to enable development. The Issues and Options Report contains key concepts at this early stage and is does not suggest specific proposals for the Railway Station and Lytton Way.

Other briefings:

Senior Leadership Team (12th January 2021)

Clearance Board (22nd January 2021)

Executive (10th February 2021)

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (17th February 2021)

Likely next steps:

The Local Plan regulations state that an Area Action Plan, as a Development Plan Document, must be consulted on publicly for no less than 6 weeks. Therefore officers would like to progress the AAP public consultation for a minimum of 6 weeks towards the end of February 2021, if possible; if this is not practical or feasible, there will be a delay until after the local elections.

Once we have progressed the Issues & Options public consultation we will begin to consider Preferred Options for the Station Gateway AAP. A further (minimum) 6 week public consultation will be undertaken for the Preferred Options AAP, with representations considered and incorporated into the final version of the AAP. This final version will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Public Examination.

Meeting Planning & Development Committee
Portfolio Area Environment and Regeneration
Date 3 February 2021



STEVENAGE CONNECTION AREA ACTION PLAN: ISSUES & OPTIONS REPORT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

KEY DECISION

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Members with an overview of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report (Appendix A).
- 1.2 To seek Members' approval to carry out public consultation on the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report.
- 1.3 It is important to note that this is an early stage of preparation of the Area Action Plan. The options proposed are high level, strategic options to develop an improved environment, maximise density of space and economic opportunities around Stevenage Railway Station, in order to enable development.
- 1.4 Stevenage Borough Council, as a co-operative Council, seeks to engage widely with businesses, residents and other stakeholder groups. The Issues and Options Report contains key concepts at this early stage and does not suggest specific proposals for the Railway Station and Lytton Way.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the content of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report be noted.
- 2.2 That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director: Environment and Regeneration, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration, to make minor amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report prior to publication for consultation.
- 2.3 That the Executive approve the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report for consultation for a minimum 6 week period, following the Executive meeting. Consultation dates to be determined by the Assistant Director: Environment and Regeneration.
- 2.4 That the comments of the Planning & Development Committee regarding the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report be included in the report to the Executive on this matter.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 An Area Action Plan (AAP) is a type of Development Plan Document (DPD) providing a planning framework for a specific area of opportunity, change or conservation. AAPs give a geographic or spatial dimension and focus for the implementation of policies for that area. AAPs can create new policy over and above the Local Plan, within the designated AAP area.
- 3.2 The Council, in conjunction with consultancy David Lock Associates (DLA), is developing an emerging Area Action Plan for the Stevenage Station Gateway area, titled the "Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan". As it will be a DPD, this will become part of the Development Plan for Stevenage, and as such is required to be subject to statutory consultation and examination. The final AAP document is required to be adopted by full Council.
- 3.3 The AAP will provide an opportunity for stakeholders to engage and shape this area. It also acts as a catalyst for developers interested in supporting this key part of the Local Plan
- 3.4 The requirement to produce the Stevenage Station Gateway AAP (site area TC4 as identified in the Local Plan) resulted from a letter from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in March 2019. This lifted the Holding Direction placed on the Stevenage Borough Local Plan in 2017.
- 3.5 Stevenage Borough Local Plan Policy TC4 ("Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area") states:

Within the Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area, as defined on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted for:

- a. An extended and regenerated train station;*
- b. New bus station;*
- c. High-density Use Class C3 residential units;*
- d. New multi-storey or basement car parking;*

- e. New Use Class B1 office premises;*
- f. A new Use Class C1 hotel; and*
- g. New Use Class A1 and Use Class A3 restaurant and cafe uses.*

Applications should address the following design and land use principles:

- i. Major reconfiguration of Lytton Way between Fairlands Way and Six Hills Way;*
- ii. Demolition of the Arts & Leisure Centre to facilitate better east-west integration and create new development sites in the environs of the train station*
- iii. The provision of replacement sports and theatre facilities elsewhere within Stevenage Central*
- iv. A significantly regenerated and enlarged dual frontage train station of high quality, with associated facilities*
- v. New public squares on the eastern and western frontages of the train station*
- vi. High quality office buildings within a short walking distance of the train station*
- vii. At least one multi-storey car park and cycle parking plus drop-off space*
- viii. Establishment of an attractive east – west pedestrian route across the East Coast Main Line*
- ix. High quality landmark gateway environment to create a positive image of Stevenage for all rail visitors*

- 3.6 The Council provides regular updates to MHCLG on progress with the AAP as one of the conditions set in the Secretary of State's letter to the Council in March 2019.
- 3.7 The AAP has been developed in conjunction with DLA and the attached document is a draft "Issues and Options" version. This report outlines the core issues that are present within the station area as well as the background policy issues and wider context that affects its development. This is an early stage of the preparation of an AAP, and a series of initial options that focus on mobility are presented for feedback from targeted stakeholders.
- 3.8 Once the Council has proceeded with the Issues & Options public consultation and begins to consider the preferred options for the Station Gateway area of Stevenage, it is possible that further consultancy assistance will be required to consider costs, feasibility of and graphics related to development of Preferred Options documentation. This will be taken forward into the public consultation Preferred Options AAP and onto the final version of the AAP that will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Public Examination.

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

Recommendation 2.1: That the content of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report be noted.

- 4.1 The draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report is included in Appendix A. A broad overview of the key points from the draft version is presented below.

Policy Context

- 4.2 There are a range of high level policy objectives which align with the Local Plan and national policy direction for the AAP to respond to. These include:
- Sustainable travel considered throughout;
 - Green infrastructure in the public realm;
 - Climate change consideration in all development decisions;
 - Design of the highest architectural standards.
- 4.3 The high level, strategic options proposed for the area included within the AAP will be strongly influenced by the masterplan for the SG1 development which lies to the east and within the town centre. Connections to this development and connections through into the town square and central area will form the emerging physical context within which the AAP sits.
- 4.4 The Council's "Future Town, Future Transport" Strategy (2019) is the transport plan responding to Hertfordshire County Councils Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). This brings forward modal shift and sustainable transport measures across the county.
- 4.5 Other strategies are of relevance for the AAP. For example, "Stevenage Re-Imagined: A Ten-Year Arts and Heritage (Cultural) Strategy for Stevenage" provides wider context on the aspirations for public realm and the illustration of the town's cultural heritage. The AAP will seek to reflect the aspirations of this strategy going forward.
- 4.6 The document contains a number of policy actions for the 'Stevenage Gateway' area (approximately concurrent with the AAP area). These are split across short term and medium term plans, and the AAP must respond to them.
- 4.7 The Station Gateway area of Stevenage is a key location for economic competitiveness. Other locations which are a similar time distance away from London terminals are seeing considerable commercial growth, for example Reading, Slough, Milton Keynes and Croydon. Stevenage is perfectly placed in terms of mobility, and already hosts major international companies.
- 4.8 Creating an attractive, healthy, memorable and enjoyable place in the Station Gateway area will provide the seeds for high quality mixed-use development to come forward and make the most of the station area, and contribute widely across the town.
- 4.9 This report has been prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. The impact of COVID-19 on rail travel is uncertain. It seems likely that we will see less peak-time travel in the future, reducing the pressure on rush-hour services as more people work from home or stagger their working hours. Rail demand is likely to return to comparable levels as the economy and situation return to normal in the medium to long term, but potentially spread throughout the day.

Issues and Challenges

- 4.10 Detailed analysis of the area has divided the issues within the TC4 station area boundary into three categories; experiential issues, functional issues and development issues.
- 4.11 Experiential issues include:
- The presence of Lytton Way, a wide dual carriageway mostly segregated from pedestrians that takes up a great deal of land. It does not function as an urban street that could host other uses and development along it to create an attractive and enjoyable place.
 - Street trees are present within the car parks but are surrounded by tarmac surfacing. As a result the public realm is a poor environment for anyone not in a car.
 - At present the station area is a place of transit and only hosts the railway station as a use.
- 4.12 Functional issues include:
- Poor connectivity to the town centre – the only real route is the overbridge, which runs directly through the station. Although this is a direct route, it then drops into a surface car park which provides a poor entrance to the town.
 - Barrier to east-west movement – constrained connection discourages movement across the railway tracks.
 - Little support for active modes of travel – to expand cycle provision and narrow footpaths exist.
 - The Station is in need of an upgrade – in 2017, Arup's "Rail Station Vision" study concluded that the new station, built on an overbridge to the south of the existing station was the strongest option. This would align with the SG1 development and the new bus station.
 - Constricted space, except for cars – pavements have been reallocated as motorbike parking and poor street furniture.
 - Safety and accessibility issues – poor overlooking and passive surveillance of the ground level leads to a perception of a lack of safety, particularly when dark. Cycle paths are also isolated and poorly overlooked. A lack of uses fronting the space other than the rail station, where dwell times are typically low as a place of transit, means there are generally few people around.
- 4.13 Development challenges include:
- The area around the station is a key location for economic competitiveness.
 - The Leisure Centre building offers opportunities for opening up high quality development and improving east-west linkages. This is subject to funding being available.

Emerging Framework

- 4.14 Chapter 6 of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues & Options Report is the key chapter for which feedback is targeted from stakeholders who operate within and around the area covered by the AAP.

- 4.15 The AAP area is split into five separate zones:
- North – made up of the existing surface car parks north of the railway station, at the extreme north of the AAP zone.
 - Central (Phase 1) – made up of the existing surface car parks immediately north of the railway station.
 - Central (Phase 2) – made up of the existing station drop-off areas and immediate surrounds of the existing station. This land is primarily in the ownership of Network Rail and would only be able to come forward for development after a new railway station building was constructed further to the south.
 - Station Square – made up of the existing surface car parks immediately south of the railway station. This in effect is a reserve site, future-proofing the potential to develop a new railway station, should funding become available.
 - South – made up of the existing surface car parks north of the railway station, at the extreme south of the AAP zone.
- 4.16 A series of objectives and key principles have been developed for the emerging framework of the AAP.
- 4.17 Objectives of the emerging framework include creation of a new gateway and arrival experience, enhanced movement and access for all transport modes, creating new mixed used developments to unlock opportunity, integrating green infrastructure throughout the area and ensuring sustainability in mobility alongside low carbon developments, which respect the heritage of the town.
- 4.18 Key design principles of the emerging framework include providing people-friendly spaces, improving links from the rail station to the bus station, improving step-free and disabled access, future-proofing the area for a rail station upgrade, consolidating surface car parking to enable development and to ensure good access for all travel modes, including high quality cycling facilities.

Core Enhancements

- 4.19 All proposed high level scenarios for the reconfiguration of Lytton Way have a set of core enhancements, primarily in the North and South zones of the AAP area, north of Swingate and south of Danesgate. These apply to all potential options and include:
- Reduction in width of Lytton Way to be reallocated to pedestrian or cycle movement with associated green infrastructure.
 - An additional segregated cycleway adjacent to Lytton Way, away from the railway tracks.
 - Improved access to the Police Station.
 - A large public square, future-proofed for a new railway station or enhanced station entrance.

- An east-west “boulevard”, running from the west of the railway line to the town centre and would cross the station and public square.
- A cycle hub at the southern end of the Station Square plot.
- Development plots made available by the consolidation of surface car parking into a Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP), subject to funding being available.

Central Area Options

- 4.20 The draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues & Options Report designates three potential strategic scenarios for the Central Areas of the AAP zone. No preferred option or scenario has emerged at this early stage of the AAP. All three high level options are focused around opportunities for improved mobility and are discussed below.
- 4.21 Option 1: All Traffic Modes would reduce Lytton Way to a single carriageway, suitable for all modes of travel. As it approaches the area outside the station, it would transition to becoming a shared space carriageway with a change of materials to reduce speeds.
- 4.22 Advantages of Option 1 include that it would retain through access for all modes of travel; there would be a significant improvement in space allocated for active modes; and no re-routing of bus routes would be required.
- 4.23 Disadvantages of Option 1 include potential conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians; and the option does not clearly prioritise sustainable travel modes.
- 4.24 Option 2: Buses and Taxis only again would reduce Lytton Way to a single carriageway and restrict movement to buses and taxis only. A change of surface material reinforces this restriction. As it approaches the area outside the railway station, it would transition to becoming a shared space carriageway with flush kerbs and bollards to calm vehicle speeds.
- 4.25 Advantages of Option 2 include the reduction in vehicle traffic, making pedestrian and cycling movement easier; a reduction in noise outside the railway station; again, no re-routing of bus routes would be required; and there would be a clear prioritisation of sustainable modes of travel.
- 4.26 Disadvantages of Option 2 include the potential conflicts between buses, taxis and pedestrians, though the risk is lower than Option 1; and there would be a potentially significant change to traffic flows around Stevenage town centre.
- 4.27 Option 3: Pedestrianised Plaza would remove regular vehicle movement from the front of the railway station, with Lytton Way ceasing to be a through route. An access route is retained for emergency services needing to access the railway station and immediate environs.
- 4.28 Advantages of Option 3 include free movement for walking and cycling modes in front of the railway station, with few conflict points; a much larger area could be given over to a flexible public square; there would be a reduction in noise outside the railway station; there would be a clear prioritisation of active modes of travel; and buses would still be able to access the new bus station.

- 4.29 Disadvantages of Option 3 include that bus routes would be required to re-route; there is potentially significant change to traffic flows around Stevenage town centre; and there would be no bus access and route to the north of the AAP zone.

Bicycle Path Potential Layouts

- 4.30 The draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues & Options Report also designates two potential scenarios to address the challenges created by the existing bicycle path, running along the railway edge. This currently suffers from a generally poor user experience, lack of passive surveillance and constrains the width of potential development parcels. The two potential layouts are detailed below.
- 4.31 Potential layout 1 would retain the existing cycle path and create a new segregated path within the revised Lytton Way street profile. Retention of the existing path would provide an alternative route for cyclists to follow that would not have conflict points. This option would require development parcels to provide active frontages or overlooking on both aspects, rather than simply backing onto the railway tracks. This would therefore constrain development options.
- 4.32 Potential layout 2 proposes to remove the existing cycle path and create a new segregated path within the revised Lytton Way profile. Provision of the new path within the enhanced streetscape of Lytton Way would contribute to an activated public realm. Removal of the existing path would create a more efficient layout and would increase the quantum of developable land available.

Phasing and Temporary Uses

- 4.33 Phasing approaches have been considered at this stage of the AAP to consider in advance of a preferred approach, following public consultation. To transform the station area towards one of the options offered will require a phasing strategy that considers timing of highway works, provision of active travel infrastructure, timing of relocation of key mobility uses such as taxi ranks and drop-off and relocation and consolidation of station surface car parking.
- 4.34 To enable a phased approach, it is proposed in the AAP that a strategy employing temporary uses should be put in place. The phasing strategy clearly identifies locations suitable for such temporary uses, which can enliven the space around the station and establish the groundwork and footfall for permanent development in the future.

Future Development Parcels

- 4.35 The emerging framework details potential to maximise development opportunity at each of the five identified development plots in the AAP zone. A series of potential scenarios for each of the five plots are discussed. The Council will consult with all relevant partners in these plots. For example, Network Rail will be consulted on their views regarding an improved Railway Station.

- 4.36 Each development parcel has the potential to support a mix of uses that contribute towards the components of placemaking. A brief outline of each parcel's development opportunity is detailed below:

North – this parcel offers an opportunity to create a landmark development which could predominantly be residential-led. Storey heights should be a minimum of 6 storeys and could rise to over 10 storeys, dependent upon the configuration of the buildings. A basement storey of surface car parking, to retain a proportion of commuter parking provision would be required as part of this development parcel.

Central (Phase 1) – this parcel offers the opportunity to locate a wide variety of uses including a hotel, office space, residential with an active ground floor. Given the lack of adjoining development, storey heights should be a minimum of 6 storeys and could rise to over 10 storeys, A basement storey of surface car parking, to retain a proportion of commuter parking provision would be required as part of this development parcel.

Central (Phase 2) – this is a longer-term development option that will frame the new public space after a potential new station building is constructed (it would be built largely on the area occupied by the existing rail station). As such it would have intensive mixed-use, including a vibrant ground floor with retail, cafés and other active uses. As it is located to the north of the public square, a landmark or feature tower would be appropriate.

Station Square – while this is designated as a longer-term development site, primarily being occupied by a potential new rail station building, it will also form part of the public realm that will define the arrival into Stevenage. As such this should be a well-designed space that will be of high quality and act as an extension of the regeneration of the town centre.

South – the northern end of the parcel would be an ideal location for a high-quality cycle hub, such as that seen in Cambridge or in Dutch cities, providing accessible and secure bike parking and maintenance directly adjacent to the existing and proposed new railway station, as well as the bus station. Offices could be located above the cycle hub, with storey heights determined by market demand and consideration for sunlight into the new public space to the north.

Parking Consolidation

- 4.37 The final section of the emerging framework addresses the surface car parks adjacent to the railway station, which provide around 450 parking spaces, and are typically well-used. Consolidation of the existing surface parking will be an essential component of delivering the objectives of the AAP.
- 4.38 The Council's Regeneration team have been heavily involved in the development of the AAP to date and ensuring the latest information regarding the status and location of a new comprehensive Multi Storey Car Park is incorporated into the direction the AAP document takes through its stages of preparation and development.

Recommendation 2.2: That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director: Environment and Regeneration, following

consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regeneration, to make minor amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report prior to its consultation.

- 4.39 The draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report is appended to this report. However, it may be necessary to make minor changes prior to the consultation start date. This might include cosmetic adjustments, imagery and graphics, the correction of typographical errors and any minor factual changes.
- 4.40 It is recommended that any such amendments be approved via delegated powers.

Recommendation 2.3: That the Executive approve the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report for consultation for a minimum 6 week period, following the Executive meeting. Consultation dates are to be determined by the Assistant Director: Environment and Regeneration.

- 4.41 The procedure to adopt a new SPD is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Approximately, it is as follows (as referenced in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, or "SCI"):

Consultation on initial draft policies and options (Public Consultation)
Develop submission version of policies (Public Consultation)
Submission of Plan to Secretary of State
Examination in Public of Plan
Consultation on Proposed Modifications (Public Consultation)
Inspector's Report
Adoption of Plan
Monitoring and Review

- 4.42 Essentially, the "consultation on initial draft policies and options" stage is the first stage for public consultation. The "Issues and Options" draft of the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan forms this first stage.
- 4.43 The next stage "develop submission version of policies" will form the second stage of the Area Action Plan and will form the "Preferred Options" draft for public consultation.
- 4.44 This will be followed by the version which will be submitted to the Secretary of State ahead of an independent Examination in Public by an appointed Planning Inspector. A final consultation on any modifications proposed by the Inspector to the Plan will be held prior to the Inspector's Report, which confirms whether the Plan can proceed to formal adoption. Monitoring and review of the Plan is required a period of time after the Plan has been adopted.

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening

- 4.45 Sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment are tools used at the plan-making stage to assess the likely effects of the plan when judged against reasonable alternatives. A sustainability appraisal should be prepared for any of the documents that can form part of a local plan, including core strategies, site allocation documents and area action plans.
- 4.46 During preparation of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, officers concluded that Policy TC4 (Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area) had no significant environmental impact. The statutory consultees for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening have been contacted to confirm they are content with this position.
- 4.47 There is potential to include stronger wording in the AAP referring to environmental effects of the development. This should reflect the position taken in the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal, noting the environmental benefits that the preferred option works would provide such as reduction in air pollution and contribution to net zero carbon targets.

Consultation to date

- 4.48 In the development of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report, officers have consulted internally with Stevenage Borough Council departments. Comments and representations have been incorporated into the final draft of the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report as much as possible; in particular from Development Management, Regeneration and Strategic Director level.
- 4.49 A log of internal comments has been maintained. A small number of outstanding issues remain, including discussion between Planning Policy, DLA and the Regeneration team regarding the status and location of potential Multi Storey Car Park sites, subject to funding being available.
- 4.50 The Portfolio Holders Advisory Group (PHAG) was informed of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report on 18th December 2020 and invited to submit comments ahead of this report to Executive. In the lead up to the Senior Leadership Team meeting on 12th January 2021, relevant Stevenage Borough Council departments were consulted, including the Borough Solicitor, Human Resources, Communications and Stevenage Direct Services (Finance).
- 4.51 A number of key stakeholders to Stevenage Railway Station have been informed of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report and invited to submit early representations ahead of public consultation. These bodies include Hertfordshire County Council (Highways Department), Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), Network Rail (Estates Department), Govia Thameslink Railway, Mace (partner in SG1 development), and Legal & General (landowners to the west of the railway).
- 4.52 Council officers met with Hertfordshire County Council Highways on 11th January 2021 to brief them on the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report. The background context, key issues and challenges and in particular the emerging framework and options explored were discussed. Hertfordshire County Council officers had some suggestions

that can be taken forward ahead of the AAP going to public consultation. They were broadly supportive in principle of the draft AAP, primarily as it has strong potential to reflect sustainable active travel objectives that are promoted within Local Transport Plan 4.

- 4.53 Hertfordshire County Council's Highways Department will be working closely with Stevenage officers to positively shape the document as it develops through the statutory consultation stages.
- 4.54 An important element of this early work with Hertfordshire County Council includes highway modelling work to inform the options that will be taken forward in the AAP. Hertfordshire County Council already has a 2019 base model and has tested previous options for the bus station and SG1 development. This modelling work can run in parallel with the public consultation period and would provide an indication of the relative impact and workability of the different scenarios proposed.
- 4.55 The content of the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report was endorsed by Senior Leadership Team on 12th January 2021 to progress through Planning & Development Committee and Executive ahead of public consultation.

Options for Public Consultation

- 4.56 According to the Stevenage Borough Local Development Scheme (LDS – October 2020), timetables associated with Development Plan Documents and Local Development Documents are subject to change. It was hoped that progress with the AAP for the Railway Station would be swift and that the adoption process will occur in line with the timetable in the updated LDS.
- 4.57 The Area Action Plan, as a Development Plan Document, is similar in status to the Local Plan and therefore requires Examination in Public by an appointed Planning Inspector, representing the Secretary of State. Should the AAP pass the soundness tests during the Examination in Public, the gateway process to formally adopting the AAP would progress immediately; with an expected adoption of the AAP in 2022.
- 4.58 However, as with any planning document requiring consultation and submission to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination, progress is dependent on the level of public consultation and the availability of Inspectors to run an independent public Examination. Officers will do their best to comply with the timetable but this is not always within their control.
- 4.59 The Local Plan regulations state that an Area Action Plan, as a Development Plan Document, must be consulted on publicly for no less than 6 weeks. Therefore officers would like to progress the AAP public consultation for a minimum of 6 weeks towards the end of February 2021, if possible; if this is not practical or feasible, there will be a delay until after the local elections. Two options have emerged. If Option 1 is not practical or feasible, we would delay public consultation until after the local elections (Option 2).
- 4.60 Following this, the Council must consider the consultation responses, produce a document stating the main issues raised by respondents, and summarise how the issues have been addressed by the Council.

- 4.61 As with any consultation exercise, it is not known how many responses will be received so the post-consultation stages will not be known for definite until a later date.
- 4.62 The Planning Policy team will seek to undertake an engaging technical public consultation on the AAP. As well as consulting with a wide range of consultees as outlined in the SCI, we will write to specific stakeholders and advocate online engagement, addressing issues including employment priorities, access and movement. Liaison with the Communications team will be necessary to facilitate the technical consultation element.

Option 1: Public Consultation February – March 2021

Stage	Date
First Consultation (Issues and Options) Minimum 6-week Public Consultation	February – March 2021
Consider and address responses	April – May 2021
Second Consultation (Preferred Options)	August / September 2021
Submission to Secretary of State	November / December 2021
Examination in Public	February 2022
Adoption	Spring 2022

Option 2: Public Consultation May – June 2021

Stage	Date
First Consultation (Issues and Options) Minimum 6-week Public Consultation	May – June 2021
Consider and address responses	July – August 2021
Second Consultation (Preferred Options)	November / December 2021
Submission to Secretary of State	February / March 2022
Examination in Public	May 2022
Adoption	Summer 2022

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 The costs associated with producing and consulting on the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report will be met from the agreed departmental budget.
- 5.2 A budget of £10,000 was allocated to procuring DLA to produce the Issues & Options consultation draft. This included an inception meeting; regular progress meetings; and DLA output including a range of graphics, drawings and electronic document production. This has been input to form the final draft Issues & Options version of the Area Action Plan as a detailed PDF.
- 5.3 It is possible that further consultancy assistance will be required to consider costs, feasibility of and graphics related to development of Preferred Options documentation.
- 5.4 Any potential schemes that are referenced in the AAP and subsequently developed will need to be subject to a business case and / or will require third party funding.

Legal Implications

- 5.5 Consultation on the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report will be undertaken in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 5.6 The outcomes of any consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in developing the Preferred Options version of the AAP, prior to approval by the Executive.
- 5.7 The comments of the Planning & Development Committee are invited regarding the content of the report prior to the report going before Executive.

Risk Implications

- 5.8 There are no significant risks associated with producing the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report.

Policy Implications

- 5.9 The draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report accords with, and has been produced to supplement policies in, the adopted Stevenage Local Plan (2019). As it is a Development Plan Document it may also develop policies over and above the Local Plan for the Stevenage Station Gateway area of opportunity.
- 5.10 The document is aligned with other corporate Council documents such as the Climate Change Strategy (adopted September 2020), Action Plan and Charter as well as Stevenage's Future Town Future Transport Strategy.

Planning Implications

- 5.11 The draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report will supplement the recently adopted Stevenage Local Plan (2019).

- 5.12 The document will add to and complement the Development Plan for Stevenage. It will be a material consideration for planning applications.

Environmental Implications

- 5.13 During preparation of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan, officers concluded that Policy TC4 (Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area) had no significant environmental impact. There is potential to include stronger wording in the AAP referring to environmental effects of the development.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.14 The draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report will seek to provide sustainable travel and promote active modes of transport. This will support the aims and objectives of the Stevenage Climate Change Strategy (September 2020) and contribute to the overall climate change aspirations of the Council.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.15 The draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report will seek to improve disabled and step-free access to Stevenage railway station; therefore offering further opportunities and benefits for all accessing the railway station and more widely, connecting to the town centre in future.

Community Safety Implications

- 5.16 Whilst the draft Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report does not have any direct community safety implications itself, when implementing any of the proposals the delivery body will need to consider the potential impacts on community safety.

Other Implications

- 5.17 There will be significant economic implications from future work arising from the Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan.
- 5.18 For example, the AAP could help to maximise opportunity for provision of high quality facilities for the growing local research and development industry as well as the expanding cell and gene therapy catalyst industry that is seeking future accommodation in the town and wider area.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- BD1 Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011–2031 (May 2019)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/stevenage-borough-local-plan/stevenage-borough-local-plan.pdf>
- BD2 Stevenage Borough Local Development Scheme (October 2020)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/local-development-scheme/local-development-scheme-october-2020.pdf>
- BD3 Stevenage Future Town, Future Transport Strategy (October 2019)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/evidential-studies/transport-infrastructure/future-town-future-transport-strategy-2019.pdf>
- BD4 Letter from Rt. Hon. James Brokenshire MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to Stevenage Borough Council: Stevenage Borough Council's Local Plan (March 2019)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/holding-direction/the-secretary-of-states-letter.pdf>
- BD5 Stevenage Borough Statement of Community Involvement (November 2018)
<https://www.stevenage.gov.uk/documents/planning-policy/draft-statement-of-community-involvement/statement-of-community-involvement-2018.pdf>
- BD6 Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 4 (May 2018)
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/about-the-council/consultations/ltp4-local-transport-plan-4-complete.pdf>

APPENDICES

- A Stevenage Connection Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Report Draft (December 2020)

STEVENAGE CONNECTION

AREA ACTION PLAN

ISSUES + OPTIONS REPORT

DRAFT



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01 INTRODUCTION

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Stevenage's town centre is undergoing a process of renewal and regeneration. As part of this, the area around the station bounded by the railway tracks and Lytton Way has been identified as a key site for new development and change. This key gateway for the town has the potential for significant transformation, based on its well-connected position only 20 minutes from Kings' Cross. Such development could form a key part of the regeneration of the town centre.

This report is the first stage in the process of producing an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the station area. It outlines the key issues that affect the area identified as site TC4 in the Local Plan. It then presents a series of potential options that will form the basis for targeted consultation with stakeholders.

What is an AAP?

An Area Action Plan (AAP) is an optional development plan document which provides specific planning policy and guidance for a particular location or area of significant change. AAPs must be in general conformity with the Local Plan and the NPPF. The key stages of an AAP are summarised below:

- Publication of Issues and Options, which seek the views of stakeholders on Issues and Options for the future development of the area.
- Publication of Preferred Options, to set out the Council's preferred way forward for the area.
- Following consideration of responses to this consultation, the Submission Document will be prepared. This will be submitted to the Secretary of State.
- The fourth stage is the independent Examination of the submitted document. The purpose of this is to consider the soundness of the AAP and representations. A Planning Inspector will be appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct the examination.
- The Planning Inspector will produce a binding report that sets out the final version of the AAP. This will then be adopted by the Council and incorporated in the Local Development Framework.

Stages 1 to 3 will each be subject to a 6-week public consultation (in compliance with SBC's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI; 2018) which sets out statutory consultation requirements).

Why create an Area Action Plan (AAP)?

After reviewing Stevenage's Local Plan during the Hold Direction, MHCLG asked Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) to prepare an Area Action Plan (AAP) for Stevenage Station Gateway Area (identified in the Local Plan as Site TC4). This is a limited area within the wider Stevenage Central area.

The AAP can create new policy over and above the Local Plan and will require its own Sustainable Environmental Assessment at the Issues and Options Stage. Other mechanisms are available to provide appropriate planning and design guidance.





Figure 1: Stevenage town centre from the air

02 BACKGROUND

02 BACKGROUND

The town centre of Stevenage ('Stevenage Central') is undergoing an extensive process of regeneration, renewal and new development. This ambitious programme builds on Stevenage's heritage as a New Town and its success in attracting people and businesses. Only 20 minutes from London's Kings' Cross, it is exceptionally well-connected and offers similar potential for commercial and residential growth as other locations such as Reading, Croydon and Milton Keynes. The station area is thus crucial for the success of this plan. This section sets out the background studies, policies and activities that form the basis for intervention.

Stevenage Central Regeneration Framework

Published in 2016, the Stevenage Central Regeneration Framework forms the governing masterplan for the town centre, outlining the key objectives, opportunities and vision for regeneration. The core recommendations within the report formed the parameters and basis for the Rail Station Vision study (2017) and underlies the masterplan for the area known as 'SG1'. The Framework has informed the policies in the recently-adopted Local Plan.



Figure 2: Stevenage Central Regeneration Framework masterplan

Fitting within the Local Plan

Stevenage Borough Local Plan policy TC4 ("Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area") states:

Within the Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area, as defined on the Policies Map, planning permission will be granted for:

- a. An extended and regenerated train station;
- b. New bus station;
- c. High-density Use Class C3 residential units;
- d. New multi-storey or basement car parking;
- e. New Use Class B1 office premises;
- f. A new Use Class C1 hotel; and
- g. New Use Class A1 and Use Class A3 restaurant and cafe uses.

Applications should address the following design and land use principles:

- i. Major reconfiguration of Lytton Way between Fairlands Way and Six Hills Way;
- ii. Demolition of the Arts & Leisure Centre to facilitate better east-west integration and create new development sites in the environs of the train station
- iii. The provision of replacement sports and theatre facilities elsewhere within Stevenage Central
- iv. A significantly regenerated and enlarged dual-frontage train station of high quality, with associated facilities
- v. New public squares on the eastern and western frontages of the train station
- vi. High quality office buildings within a short walking distance of the train station
- vii. At least one multi-storey car park and cycle parking plus drop-off space
- viii. Establishment of an attractive east - west pedestrian route across the East Coast Main Line
- ix. High quality landmark gateway environment to create a positive image of Stevenage for all rail visitors

Within this policy context, there are a range of high-level policy objectives which align with the Local Plan and national policy direction for the AAP to respond to. These include:

- Sustainable travel considered throughout
- Green infrastructure in the public realm
- Climate change consideration in all development decisions
- Design of the highest architectural standards

The options proposed for the area included within the AAP will be strongly influenced by the masterplan for the SG1 development which lies to the east and within the town centre. Connections to this development and connections through into the town square and central area will form the emerging physical context within which the AAP sits.

Other Policy Documents

Future Town, Future Transport (2019) is SBC's transport plan responding to Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)'s Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). This brings forward modal shift and sustainable transport measures across the county.

The document contains a number of policy actions for the 'Stevenage Gateway' area (approximately concurrent with the AAP area). These are split across short term and medium term plans, and the AAP must respond to them.

Short term action plan – immediate actions:

- Relocation of the bus station to be adjacent to the railway station
- A cycling and walking infrastructure plan
- A cycle hire scheme with docking hubs at the railway station and across the town centre
- Rules to allow e-scooters to use cycleways
- Engagement with Network Rail over capacity and access requirements
- Short-term action plan – Part 2 (2021-5):
- Improvements to the station environment
- Intermodal interchange at the station including bike hire, a cycle hub with covered parking and maintenance facilities
- Demand management for car parking
- Medium-term action plan (beyond 2025):
- Underpass environment improvements
- Bus priority measures on key streets
- Developing proposals for commercial uses in the gateway area.

03 SETTING THE SCENE

03 SETTING THE CONTEXT

The Heart of the Town Centre?

The area around Stevenage railway station is a key location in the centre of the town. It forms the western edge of the traditional town centre 'box' as imagined by the New Town masterplan, and is the first place that many visitors and commuters see.

As Stevenage expands and regenerates in the future, the town centre will expand. The Stevenage Central Regeneration Framework envisages an expansion of the 'box' to encompass land west of the railway, extending towards the Airbus site and taking in intensification of the Leisure Park across the railway tracks. As a result, the station area will move to being at the heart of the town centre, a critical movement node east-west, and one of the best-connected places in the town.

The Local Plan identifies (Policy TC4) a proposal for a radically improved new Stevenage railway station, with National Rail having plans for a 5th platform, as part of a broader central area regeneration scheme. The Local Plan Inspector's Report suggested that the railway station be extended as well as regenerated. From wide engagement with businesses and developers there is an opportunity to significantly enhance this part of the town centre and to enhance east-west connectivity.

The area is thus a key strategic brownfield site opportunity, linking east - west movement. It is a key arrival point for business and visitors, and sits at the heart of the sustainable travel network. Effective use of the land is thus essential to create new employment capacity and jobs, as well as ensure it becomes an attractive and vibrant place in its own right, welcoming people to Stevenage.

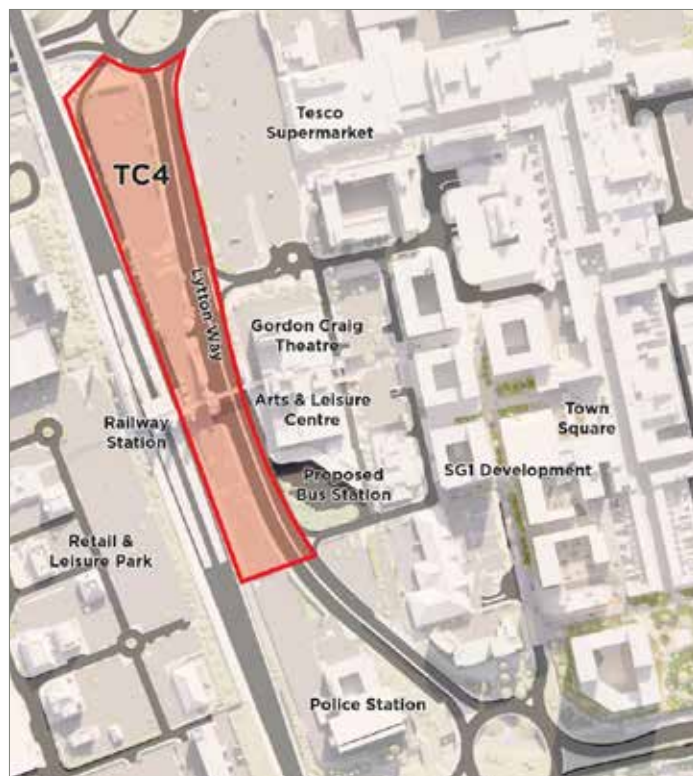


Figure 3: Site plan showing TC4 area and selected nearby locations

The Site

The selected Stevenage Station Gateway AAP area is tightly defined. It abuts the railway land/tracks and includes the dual carriageway of Lytton Way. The ambitious regeneration plans for Stevenage Central anticipated that Lytton Way would largely be redeveloped as part of a major reorganisation of the town's distributor road network.

Most of the site is currently occupied by surface level car parks which largely serve commuters using Stevenage Station. The constrained nature of the site limits both the volume of building which can be accommodated, the range of uses and how the buildings are organised on site.

The site, designated as TC4 in the Local Plan, is approximately 440m from north to south, and varies between 100m wide at the northern end, to 55m at the station entrance. The total site area is about 3ha. The site is oriented roughly north-south, and is situated to the west of the main part of Stevenage town centre.



Figure 4: Recent station area transformation precedents - clockwise from top left: Oxford, Reading, Sheffield, Slough, Utrecht (Netherlands), Wakefield Westgate

The Opportunity *What can a modern station and station area be?*

Many stations have historically been located at the edge of historic town centres – they were built at the urban edge in the 19th Century. On the far side of the tracks, industrial uses that needed good access to the rail network were often built, or there was marginal land around flood plains. This pattern was repeated in many of the New Towns built post-war, such as in Stevenage. This approach worked when most people lived and worked in the same town, using the station occasionally. In the modern era, intercity connectivity is essential to creating a vibrant, connected, knowledge-based economy such as that seen in Stevenage. Stations are now hubs of development, with pressures to create housing, office space, retail and other commercial space. Without a comprehensive masterplan, the fundamentals of the rail station – that of an accessible transport interchange – can be compromised.

Stations must:

- Be the centre of movement: efficient multi-modal interchanges between all modes of transport, with sustainable modes prioritised;
- Support inclusive growth: responding to the particular needs of their location – for example needs for affordable housing, better commercial space, or regeneration schemes;
- Be at the heart of healthy communities: by making it easy for people to choose active modes of travel at the core of a healthy network, and creating spaces that include nature and prioritise physical and mental health.

Stations are often severing points in the urban fabric – an edge. By turning the station into a public place with a wide and accessible pedestrian bridge, it becomes a link or node to focus around. As the gateway to a place, it forms an essential first impression for visitors, and serves as a reminder to regular users that their town is an attractive, thriving and people-focused place every time they use it.

In the context of Stevenage, the area around the station is a key location for economic competitiveness. Locations a similar time distance away from London terminals are seeing considerable commercial growth, such as Reading, Slough, Milton Keynes and Croydon. Stevenage is perfectly placed in terms of mobility, and already hosts major international companies. Only 20 minutes from the major Kings Cross development and the business area around Farringdon (where Thameslink and Crossrail will interchange), the opportunity to establish a significant business environment adjacent to the station is considerable.

Although the development opportunity is clear, the route towards it requires the creation of a more people-friendly place than currently exists. Creating an attractive, healthy, memorable and enjoyable place will provide the seeds for high quality mixed-use development to come forward and make the most of the station area, and contribute widely across the town.

The Policy & Political Context

Rail transport in the UK has seen enormous growth in recent decades, driven by a combination of increases in commuting due to house price rises, concentrations of jobs in hubs like the City of London, leisure travel and a demand for more sustainable modes of travel. The current COVID-19 pandemic is creating uncertainty about future patterns of rail travel (see below), it remains clear that demand for rapid, sustainable rail travel will be a feature of our medium and long-term mobility future.

Looking to the future, the Transport Secretary has laid out further plans to transform the country's transport infrastructure to help the country 'build out' of COVID-19, supporting the nation's economy, and delivering on the government's key agenda of levelling up the country.

The Government has recently favoured development around stations, in particular for disabled passengers and improving access where possible. The intention is for funding to be made available at a large number of train stations around the UK to make them more accessible. Initiatives will include incorporating accessible toilets and customer information screens, as well as new lifts. This forms a key element of levelling up access for disabled people to transport and opening up opportunities for all.

A range of recent publications set out government policy and best practice thinking which touch upon the themes and objectives to be developed within Stevenage station area.

Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge is a report from the DfT which sets out that in the future active and public transport will be the first choice of transport for most journeys. This will form the basis of the forthcoming transport strategy from the DfT. This is an ambitious and unprecedented document, and gives high-level support for Stevenage's transport strategy and sustainable mobility interventions around the railway station.

Tomorrow's Living Station, a report for Network Rail, envisages railways stations as more than just access points to the rail network, but thriving multi-modal interchanges and mixed-use places, integrated into their communities and responding to their needs.

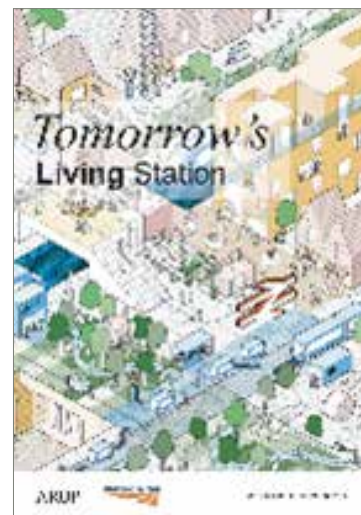
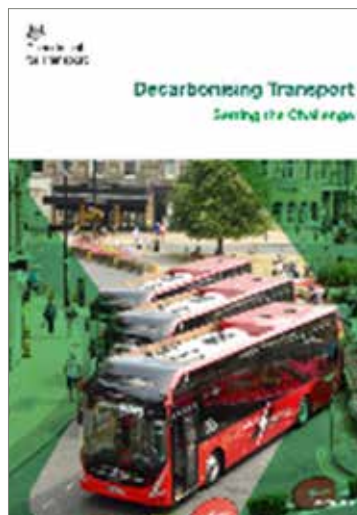
Our Principles of Good Design by Network Rail, and the Design Council's Think Station report outline core design principles for stations as modern multi-modal travel hubs. Responsiveness to local needs, local context and heritage are important, but good access and excellent mobility functionality are also emphasised.

Building Better, Building Beautiful is a recent report to MHCLG which will inform the upcoming Planning White Paper and revisions to the National Design Guide. It recommends good design and placemaking principles. Although primarily focused on residential developments, it is clear that mixed-use places with a focus on regeneration are essential to creating better towns and cities, based on a 'triangle' of housing, nature and infrastructure. Brownfield sites should be prioritised, and nature given a place in urban areas.

The High Street Report was the underpinnings of the High Street Task Force, within MHCLG. The report recommended a number of approaches to revitalising Britain's town centres for future resilience. These include a better balance of office, retail and residential space, increased town centre residential populations, and more creative provision of facilities in town centres.

MHCLG has supported a range of station-led development opportunities, such as those at York, Taunton and Swindon. The National Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2016-2021 highlights that the Homes and Communities Agency (now Homes England) will work with local authorities and Network Rail to bring forward land around stations for housing, commercial development and regeneration.

Recent court decisions on the climate change impact of infrastructure decisions (such as at Heathrow, and a pending case on the government's road expansion scheme), provide a concrete basis for prioritising sustainable transport over cars. Stevenage Borough Council has declared a climate emergency and vowed to reduce carbon emissions, and a recent study found that Stevenage is one of the worst 10 cities in the UK for air pollution, relative to its size and population.



The Impact of COVID-19

This report has been prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, which has seen significant disruption to the economy and people's lifestyles. It is clear that some of this disruption will drive lasting change in how we use and view the urban areas in which we live. Although it is too early to predict these lasting changes comprehensively, some principles of urban design have come to the fore in recent weeks and months.

In the future it is clear that new development must consider the importance of:

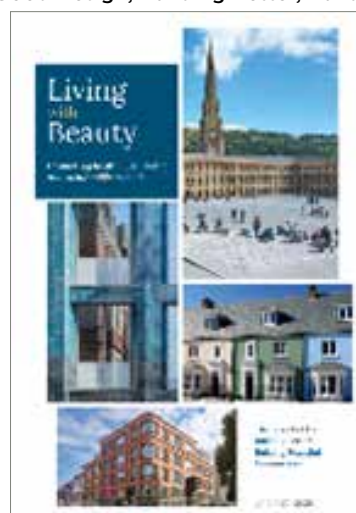
- Local services, shops, healthcare provision and social care
- Provision of space for pedestrians for walking, queueing and socialising
- Comprehensive active travel provision to enable us to get around safely
- Access to networks of open space and integration of nature into streets
- A focus on improving air quality
- Safe spaces for socialising, play and recreation
- Potential demand for larger offices to accommodate distanced desks
- Potential shift to more collaborative spaces including meeting rooms, break out spaces and more reliance on home working
- 'Local working' hubs with good digital connectivity

An important consideration for Stevenage relates to the nature of some of the town's high-tech bioscience and engineering industries. This means that a large number of workers still need to travel to Stevenage to access, for example, laboratory and workshop spaces.

Much media coverage has focused on short-term interventions that local authorities are making to ensure streets are safe for pedestrians and cyclists. These are vital safety measures, but consideration should be given to temporary measures that have other benefits and can be made improved and made permanent in the future. Stevenage already has cycling and walking infrastructure in place which can be positively utilised. In the context of Stevenage's station area, such measures include priority for active travel and improving conflict point safety, as well as increasing space allocated to pedestrians and people versus that allocated to private vehicles.

The impact of COVID-19 on rail travel is uncertain. It seems likely that we will see less peak-time travel in the future, reducing the pressure on rush-hour services as more people work from home or stagger their working hours. Rail demand is likely to return to comparable levels as the economy and situation return to normal in the medium to long term, but potentially spread throughout the day.

Reports (left to right): Decarbonising Transport; Tomorrow's Living Station; Our Principles of Good Design; Building Better, Building Beautiful; The High Street Report



04 ISSUES & CHALLENGES

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Our analysis has divided the issues within the TC4 station area boundary into three categories; experiential issues, functional issues and development issues. Although there is overlap between them, this forms a useful framework for understanding the main challenges to be addressed.

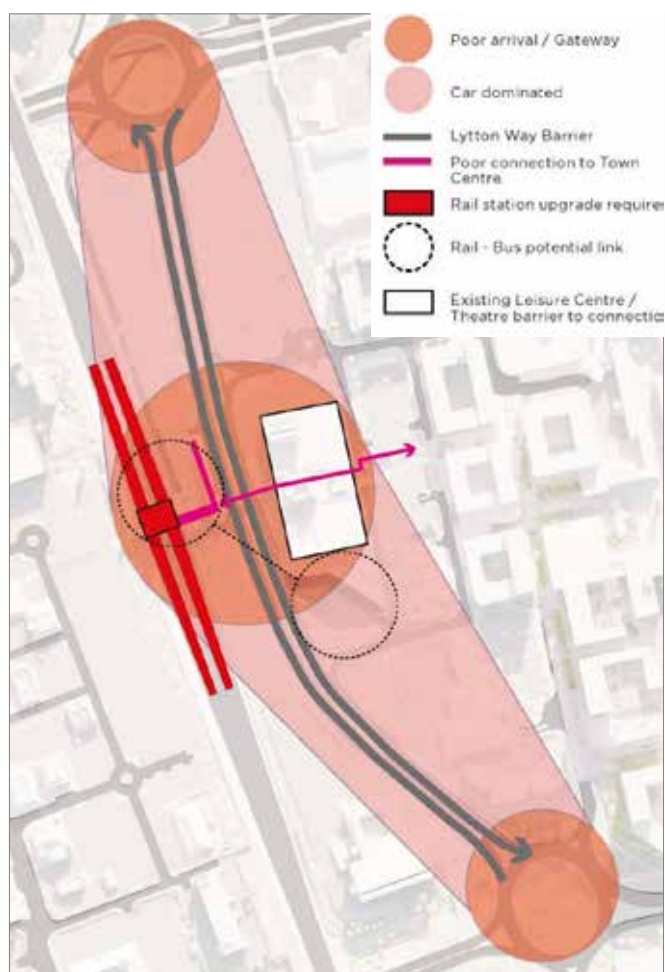


Figure 5: Issues and challenges in the station area

The Experience

The experience of arrival forms an important first impression of a place. Areas around railway stations have to work especially hard, due to their need to integrate considerable transport infrastructure and be highly functional places for a variety of user groups. However, this does not require them to be unattractive, and a great many station environs are beautiful, bustling and interesting places that give the visitor and local alike a representative impression of the town they have just arrived at.

Project for Public Spaces, a respected US non-profit organisation, has published research on 'what makes a great place'? The four key themes work together to create places and spaces that people enjoy and want to go back to. Fulfilling these themes will be an essential part of creating a better station area experience in Stevenage, unlocking development opportunities, better functionality, and a new part of the town centre.

Lytton Way - an 'Urban Motorway'

The overriding driver for this poor experience is the presence of Lytton Way, a wide dual carriageway mostly segregated from pedestrians that takes up a great deal of land. It does not function as an urban street that could host other uses and development along it to create an attractive and enjoyable place.

The downgrading and potential removal of Lytton Way for through traffic represents a major principle of the Stevenage Central Framework. A key focus of the Area Action Plan must be implementation strategies for a reduction in the scale of, and a change in character of Lytton Way to create a high quality, functional and successful environment.

The northern and southern entrances to the station area along Lytton Way are similarly poor, with large roundabouts and highway infrastructure creating an environment hostile to pedestrians. The cycling underpasses that run underneath the roundabouts are wide but lack overlooking and could be perceived as unsafe.



The area around Stevenage station is compromised by:

- Poor access and linkages for pedestrians and over-dominant car infrastructure
- Few uses and activities beyond the station and associated car parking
- Unattractive public realm and landscaping, giving little comfort and a poor image
- No opportunity for street life, connections between people or other sociability

This adds up to a poor arrival experience for anyone visiting Stevenage, a dis-inviting front door for the town and it results in a 'non-place'.

Figure 6: The attributes, intangibles and measurements for a great place (Project for Public Spaces)



Figure 7: View of Lytton Way from south



Figure 8: View of Lytton Way from north

Landscaping & Public Realm Quality

The AAP area suffers from a public realm that is car-dominated and uses predominantly tarmac and other highway surfacing materials. What landscaping is present is limited to buffer strips of grass, and towards the northern and southern ends of the area, some areas with trees. Street trees are present within the car parks but are surrounded by tarmac surfacing. As a result the public realm is a poor environment for anyone not in a car.

Monofunctional and Lacking Uses

At present the station area is a place of transit and only hosts the railway station as a use. Other than crossing the bridge to the retail park (which is amply provided with car parking), there is little other reason to be in the area other than the station. This results in little human activity on the streets, compounding safety issues, and a lack of interest and attraction.

The Arts & Leisure Centre complex presents a blank edge towards the station and does not contribute street activity towards the street. Uses adjacent to the northern and southern ends such as the supermarket and the police station are surrounded by surface car parking.

Functional Issues

Compounding the experiential issues associated with the station environment are a range of functional issues, where the station area could work better for a wide variety of users.

At its heart, a station and its immediate area must function as a transport interchange and mobility hub, smoothly and safely allowing users of all modes of transport to arrive, leave, interchange between modes and find their onward connections. The current station area could perform significantly better than it currently does.

Poor connectivity to the town centre

At present there are three legible pedestrian connections between the AAP area and the town centre – the overbridge through the Arts & Leisure

Centre, Danesgate and Swinsgate. The latter two are surface streets and cannot be reached from the station itself without crossing Lytton Way, which is not possible due to a lack of pedestrian crossings and a barrier in the centre of the dual carriageway. As a result the only real route is the bridge, which runs directly through the station. Although this is a direct route, it then drops into a surface car park which provides a poor entrance to the town. Other issues include barriers for cyclists from the town centre to the train station and the station lift is not DDA compliant, is badly maintained and causes issues for disabled people. The new Bus Interchange does seek to create an at-level crossing to help break the ring road and therefore a good opportunity. A clearer, active and attractive route into the town square from the station is something that should be enabled by the AAP.

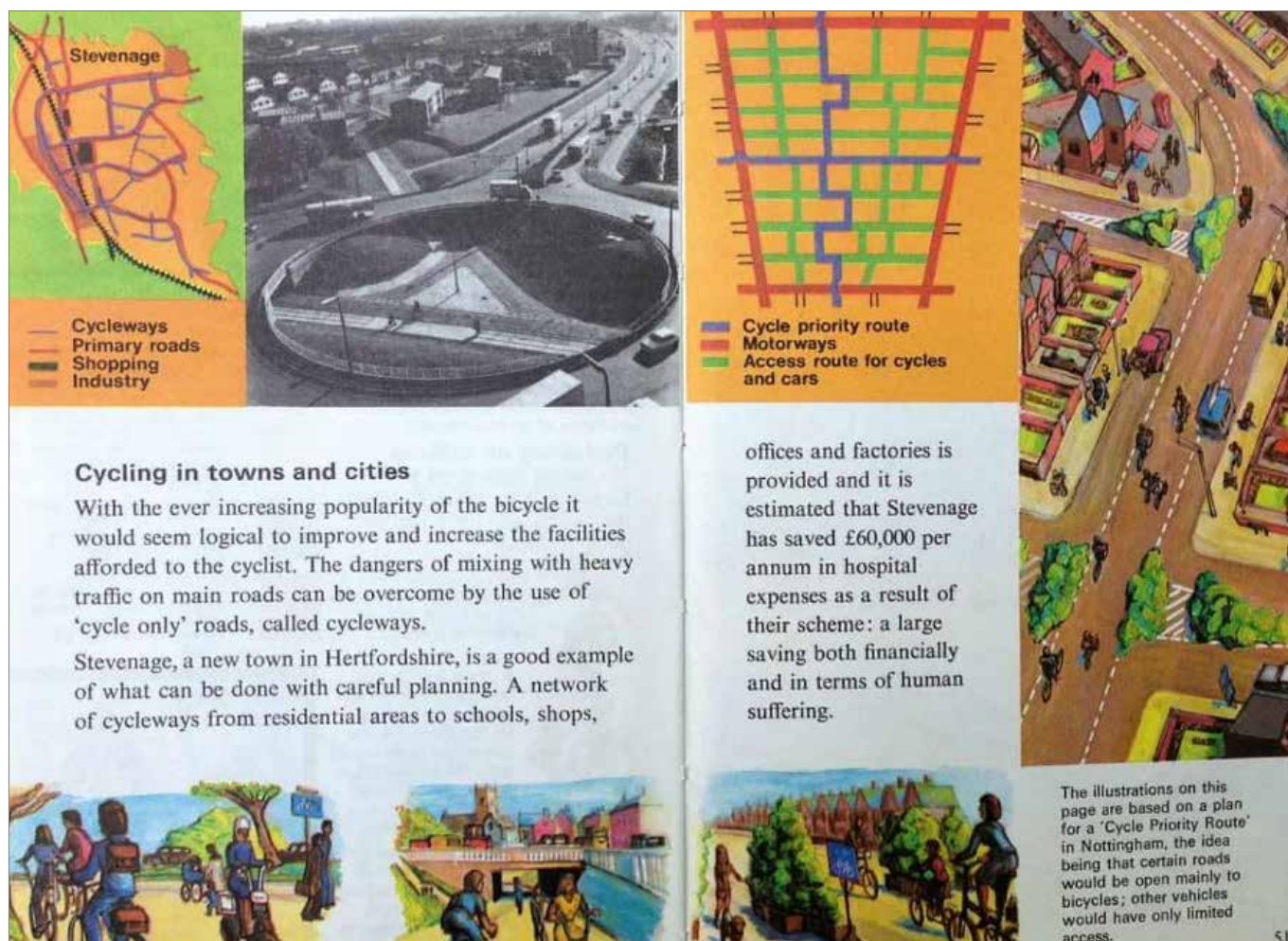


Figure 9: Ladybird book about cycling lauding Stevenage's planning
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A barrier to east-west movement

The station area is currently configured as an 'edge' to the town centre, with a single constrained pedestrian connection through the rail station towards the Leisure Park to the west. This constrained connection discourages movement across the railway tracks. Coupled with the poor quality of north-south pedestrian movement and barriers for cyclists through the AAP area, the land is poorly used due to this edge placement.

To realise the aims of the Central Regeneration Framework with the station area as a central node and place within the expanded town centre, a reconfiguration of movement through the area is required. Better connections east-to-west, with the intention of providing a clear pedestrian link all the way from the current town centre to Gunnells Wood Road, require a change to land use and road space allocation outside the station.

Little support for active modes

The station is connected to Stevenage's extensive segregated cycle path network, and hosts 194 bike parking spaces, which are well used. There is, however, limited space to expand the cycle provision due to site constraints. The Stevenage Cycle Strategy Action Plan calls for additional spaces at the station. Although there is CCTV, bicycle theft remains an issue, the current facilities are only partially covered, and are constricted in space, conflicting with pedestrian movements on pavements. To support Stevenage's ambitious cycle strategy, and build on the New Town legacy of Stevenage as a town built for the bicycle, modern, safe and secure cycle facilities must be provided so that station users can easily interchange between local cycle mobility and regional rail mobility.

Walking to and from the station is also more difficult than it needs to be. Footpaths are narrow, and the main route from the town centre runs across a narrow bridge through the Arts & Leisure Centre complex and above Lytton Way. Although this bridge runs down a ramp by the time it arrives in the town square, this does restrict accessibility and requires all users of the station area to climb a level.

It is vital to improve the station-area environment for active travel modes. As shown in Figure 10, accessibility analysis indicates that the majority of Stevenage is within a 15-minute cycling catchment of the station (around 85-90,000 people), and this catchment is increased with the use of electric bicycles. A significant fraction, approximately 45-50,000 people, are within 10 minutes bike ride.



Figure 10: Accessibility isochrones with population enclosed figures (2011) for cycling and e-bike modes

A station in need of an upgrade

Stevenage rail station is one of the three busiest stations in Hertfordshire (along with St Albans and Watford) and is a major stop on the East Coast Main Line. Built in the 1970s, the station buildings are no longer able to adequately cope with the level of passenger traffic through them. With the building of a new terminating platform, and the potential long-term for additional public through traffic using the station bridge to access development on the western side of the tracks, a new station building is necessary.

In 2017 Arup completed a study on different options for a new railway station, based on the parameters set in the Stevenage Central Framework. This reinforced the framework's core principles and the study forms the basis of an understanding for how a new station might interface with the surrounding area. The Arup study found that a new station built on an overbridge to the south of the existing station buildings would be the strongest option. This new axis would align with the Mace SG1 masterplan route into the town centre and the entrance to the new bus station.

Policy TC4 of the Stevenage Local Plan states that within the Station Gateway Major Opportunity Area, planning permission will be granted for an extended and regenerated train station. It is uncertain when a new station would be forthcoming, so it will be necessary for the AAP to include phasing options, which provide future-proofing for accommodating the existing station and the new station, as well as responding to and setting key parameters for a new station building.

Constricted space – except for cars

The area in front of the station is extremely constricted at ground level for any user other than vehicles. There is little pedestrian space for movement along Lytton Way, particularly outside the station where pavements become cramped and filled with street furniture. Pavements have been reallocated as parking space for bicycles, scooters and motorbikes, and also function as waiting areas for cramped bus stops.

Much pedestrian movement occurs on the first floor level, leaving ground level unoccupied except for essential use.

Contrasting this cramped environment for many users is the extensive space given over to vehicles, in carriageway space, slip lanes and car parking. This creates a very large and over-scaled space with underused land.



Figure 11: View of 'The Square' from Arup's Rail Station Vision Study



Figure 12: Public realm colonised by cramped motorbike parking



Figure 13: Walking, bike parking, bus stop and other street furniture in a small space

Safety Issues

A range of safety issues present themselves within the station area. Stations are used day and night, and the area surrounding them must perform the basic function of providing safety and reassurance at all hours. Poor overlooking and passive surveillance of the ground level leads to a perception of a lack of safety, particularly when dark. Cycle paths are also isolated and poorly overlooked. A lack of uses fronting the space other than the rail station, where dwell times are typically low as a place of transit, means there are generally few people about.

The dominance of road infrastructure, with high traffic speeds, no crossing points and barrier fencing down the central reservation creates road safety issues where pedestrians and cyclists are unable to safely navigate the environment.

Accessibility Issues

A single, non-Equalities Act-compliant lift is the only alternative to the stairs to get to concourse level from Lytton Way.

Development Issues

The station area should also be a key location for a range of land uses, particularly commercial space and high density residential buildings, building on the excellent sustainable mobility options. At present, however, the land around the station is used primarily for surface car parking. The key piece of land between Lytton Way and the railway tracks is too constricted in width to accommodate typical commercial or residential developments, and the street environment is too poor to support an attractive, walkable place within which to site new development.

The area around the station is a key location for economic competitiveness. Locations a similar time distance away from London terminals are seeing considerable commercial growth, such as Reading, Slough, Milton Keynes and Croydon. Stevenage is perfectly placed in terms of mobility, and already hosts major international companies. Only 20 minutes from the major Kings Cross development and the business area around Farringdon (where Thameslink and Crossrail will interchange), the opportunity to establish a significant business environment adjacent to the station is considerable.

As a result, this piece of land is valuable for the town and the wider region, and should be more intensively used than it currently is.

Immediately fronting the station is the existing Arts & Leisure Centre and Gordon Craig Theatre complex, with a high-level walkway running through. It is anticipated that this will remain for the foreseeable future, although the Arts & Leisure Centre part may be moved in the medium-term. As such provision should be made in any options for the area to work well with a fully retained or only half-retained building.

Figure 14: Station Hill development in Reading



Figure 15: Station Quarter, Slough

Figure 16: Ruskin Square, East Croydon

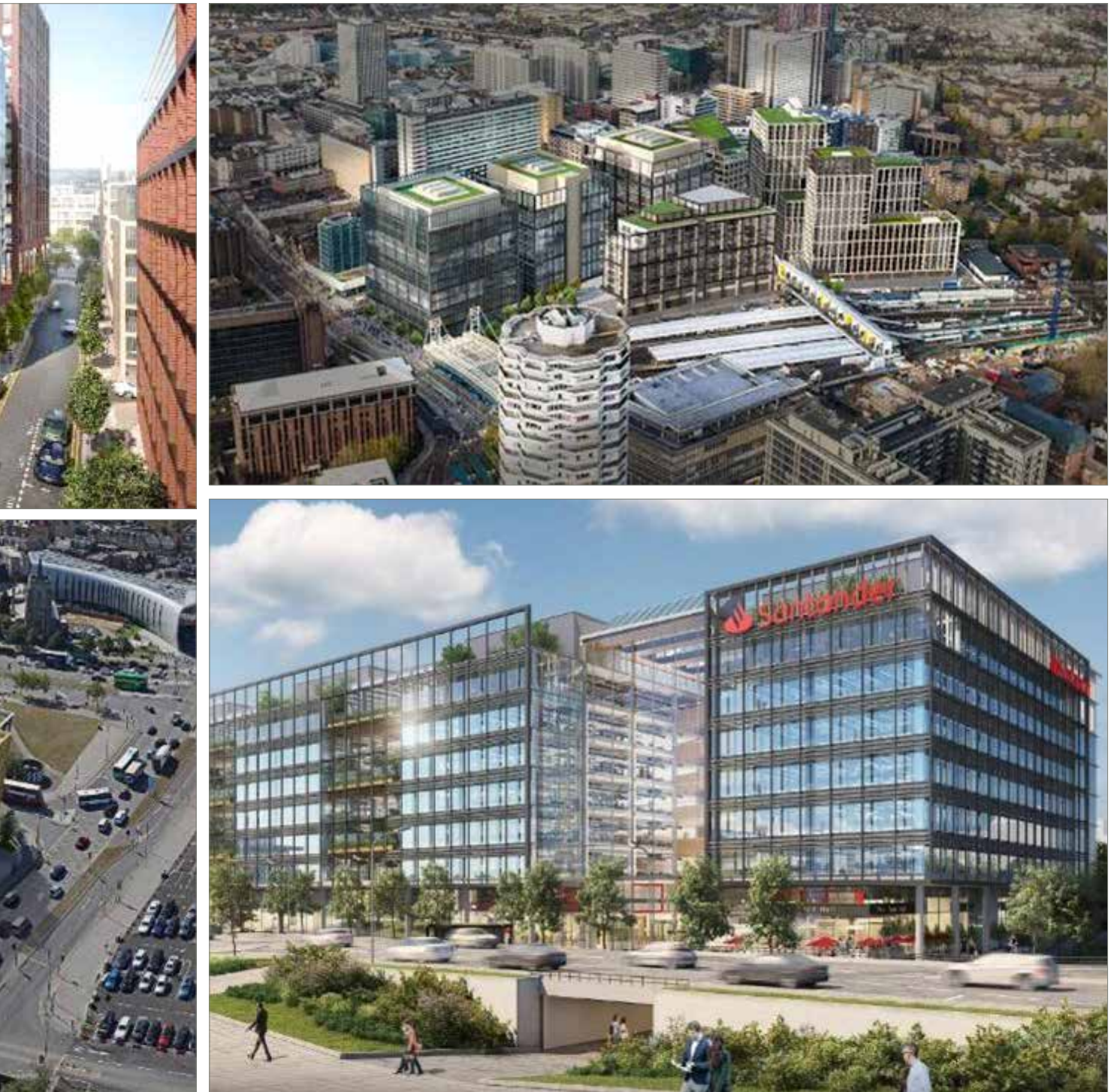


Figure 17: New Santander HQ adjacent to Milton Keynes rail station

Responding to existing work

A significant amount of previous planning and design work has gone on in Stevenage town centre, including the railway station AAP area. The AAP will build upon this work. Much of the previous work undertaken builds in core principles and creates underlying flexibility for future detailed plans to work within.

Stevenage Central Framework (DLA, 2016)

This work established the core principles of movement between the station and town centre, key development sites such as the station, and the principle of removing Lytton Way as a part of the ring road system. It also established the principle of more intensive development to the west of the railway tracks, using the station as a node.

Rail Station Vision (Arup, 2017)

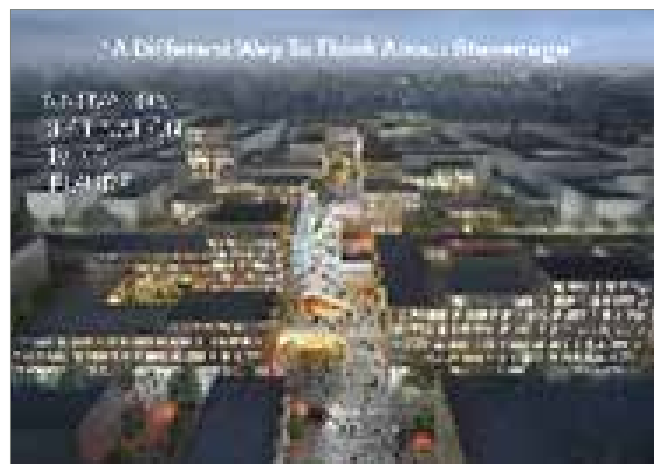
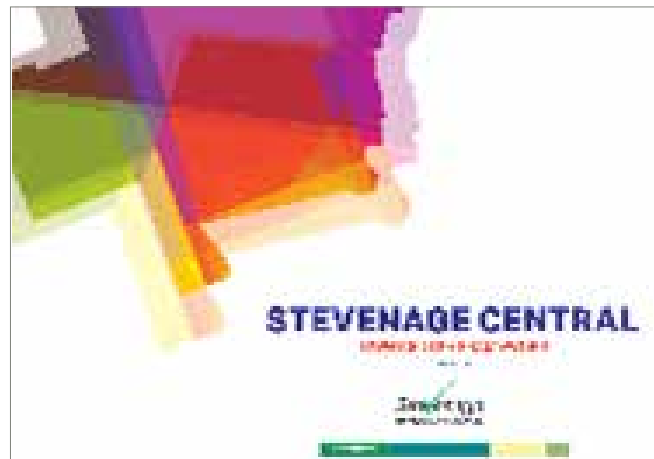
This study was developed by Arup, as Government advisors. It looked at, high-level, urban design options for a new station and how it would interface with the immediate surrounds. All options considered had their merits and there was positive engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. As such the parameters established are key to design options within the AAP area. The preferred option in the report is **The Square**, and this is the option worked up in detail. Other options in the report sought to reduce any day to day disruption for commuters and rail operators.

The design work establishes core parameters to respond to:

- Steps to access the bridge, with a lift to provide step-free access
- Stairways approx. 12m wide at top
- Lift accessed through passage next to retail space
- Bridge at +7m from existing ground level
- Space at +3.5m, which provides access into interior courts at first storey level
- Public right of way across bridge, with entrance and ticket line for station on the bridge above the tracks



Figure 18: Section of preferred option for new railway station



Although this is a long-term vision of how the station could be configured, in the short and medium-term, the design presents some issues for the AAP to respond to:

- The detailed design presented relies upon the removal of the existing Arts & Leisure Centre complex, to re-route the centreline of Lytton Way across that site. At present this is not considered feasible for SBC, so an alternative configuration must be found
- The taxi and drop-off areas ('kiss and ride') are located on the western side of the station. Although this is a long-term option, the AAP area does not include this land and must include taxi and drop-off movements within its boundaries in order to retain that function
- The steps of the bridge on the eastern side run towards the existing Arts & Leisure Centre and miss the opportunity to align with the routing past the bus station and into town that responds to the Mace SG1 masterplan (see below).

As such the rail station vision provides core principles and parameters to respond to, but is not at present able to form a detailed spatial plan for the centre of the AAP area immediately adjacent to the station. Further detail will be required on configuration of spaces, streets and different mobility modes in the AAP.

The AAP's spatial proposals will reserve a site for a potential new station or enhanced station entrance, following the parameters set out in Arup's work. Reserving a site in planning policy terms ensures that present-day development and proposals do not prejudice future developments to provide a new or enhanced station. Without this approach a considerable and needed improvement for the town could be prevented, and an opportunity lost.



Figure 19: Renders of proposed new station

SG1 Masterplan
(Mace, 2018)

The emerging SG1 masterplan (Mace, 2018), proposes the main station-to-town pedestrian route is placed one block to the south of that in the Framework. This aligns with the front of the Arts & Leisure Centre, past the proposed bus station, and then sets up the potential to align with a new railway station building built to the south of the existing station. It will be important to ensure that desire lines are observed between the Mace Boulevard, leading to the Town Square and towards the Station are as direct as possible and maintain visual connection as much as possible.



Figure 20: SG1 masterplan from Design & Access Statement (2019)

05 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

05 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

Existing Land Uses

At present the following land uses exist:

- Railway station and associated bridge, access and entrance buildings
- Existing cycleway
- Surface car parking for the station
- Lytton Way highways infrastructure
- Some buffer green space
- Adjacent to the TC4 area is:
- The Gordon Craig Theatre
- Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre
- Stevenage Police Station
- Tesco supermarket
- Stevenage Magistrates' Court

The new bus station (currently under construction) will fall within the AAP area directly to the south of the Arts & Leisure Centre on the existing car park.



New bus station adjacent to Arts & Leisure Centre

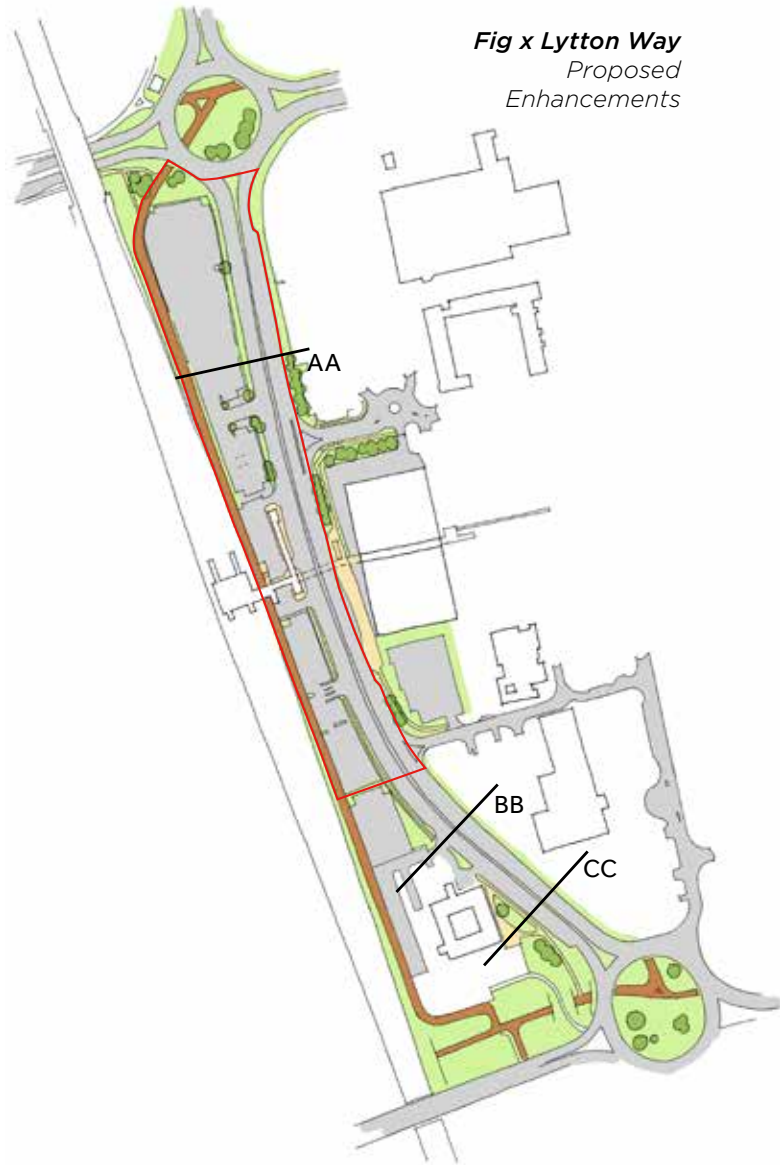


Fig x Lytton Way
Proposed
Enhancements



Existing Movement

- At present a range of different mobility modes cross the area, as shown in Figure XX.
- Pedestrians: an incomplete network of pedestrian links creates a fragmented environment that is difficult to navigate on foot
- Cyclists: the main cycle path runs north-to-south along the railway line edge and through the underpasses at the northern and southern ends of Lytton Way
- Buses: buses currently run north-to-south along Lytton Way and enter the central bus station along Danesgate. There is a bus stop outside the railway station which is constricted in waiting space and must be accessed via the footbridge. The new bus station will occupy space in front of the Arts & Leisure Centre and it is anticipated in the short term that the existing bus loop along Danesgate will be shortened to not include the old bus station
- Taxis and Drop Off: taxis drop off directly outside the station in a combined taxi and public drop-off area. This is very constricted and lacks much space for waiting taxis. It also encourages public drop-off to block the area due to lack of space.
- Parking: there is extensive surface car parking across the TC4 area and it forms the dominant land use. There are a total of 453 surface public car parking spaces within the boundary, along with additional space in a very constricted car park for station staff directly adjacent to the station.
- Servicing: service accesses to the station and neighbouring land uses come from Lytton Way.
- Although the New Town masterplanning approach promoted separation of traffic modes, there are a number of conflict points between cars and active modes, particularly at the station entrance. There are also issues where cars take priority over pedestrians and force more circuitous routes than necessary. Pedestrian flows are expected to change upon completion of the new bus station.

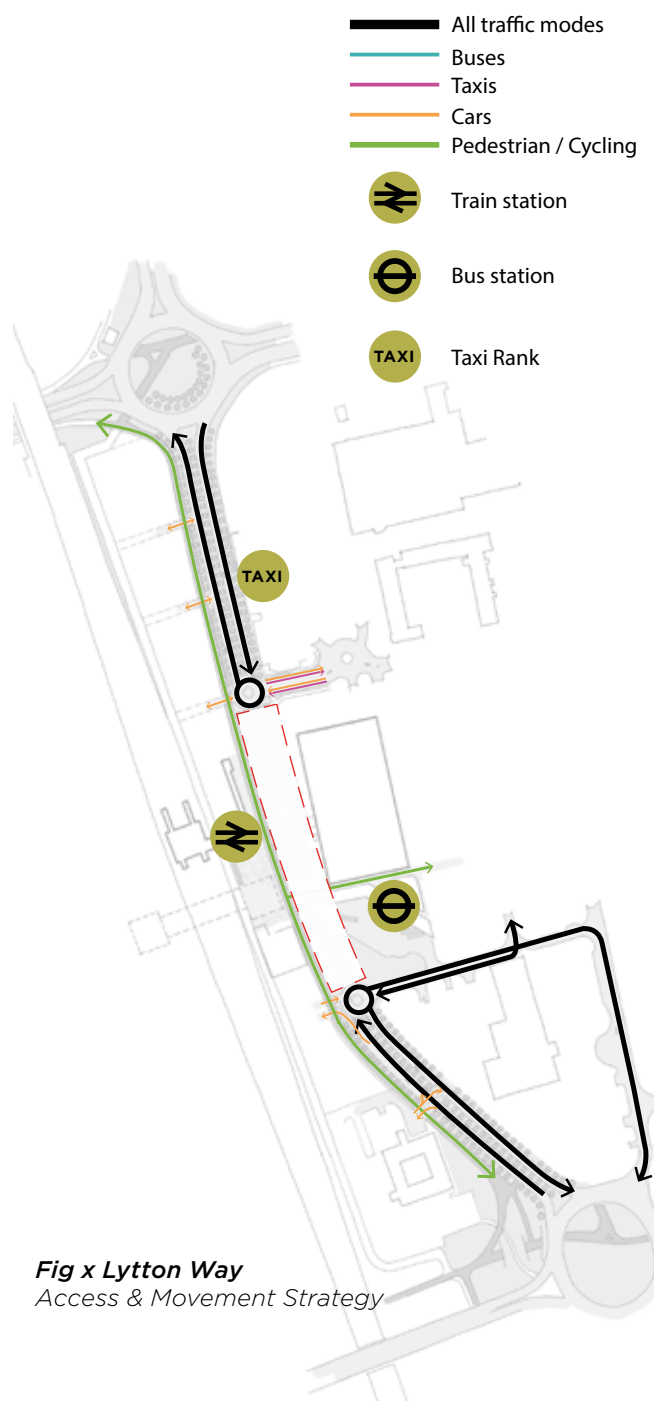


Fig x Lytton Way
Access & Movement Strategy

Existing Green Infrastructure

The site contains little green infrastructure (GI) at present, except for highway verges and verges within surface car parking. At the northern end, there is some landscaping and grass adjacent to the roundabout on Lytton Way. Within the car parks, there are some trees that break up the parking. The new bus station (currently under construction) provides some enhancement of GI with trees and grass at the southern edge.

06 EMERGING FRAMEWORK

06 EMERGING FRAMEWORK

Objectives

The baseline analysis presented in previous chapters point towards a series of complementary objectives to address the issues facing the station area. Interventions in the AAP area should deliver:

- **A new gateway and arrival experience:** the station area should create a sense of arrival in a distinctive and vibrant place. It should be welcoming, safe, legible and accessible to all.
- **Enhanced movement & access for all modes:** rationalisation of space currently given over to vehicles will increase space for walking and cycling, making movement and access better and easier for all, with good segregation to ensure safety. Effective transport interchange between sustainable modes should be facilitated by grouping of activities and modes.
- **Green infrastructure integrated throughout:** 'greening the grey', by converting surfaces to permeable green infrastructure and habitats provides relief from dense urban environments, enhances biodiversity, creates more pleasant microclimates, improves air quality and urban drainage, and contributes to attractive public realm and placemaking.
- **New mixed use development to unlock the economic opportunity:** Stevenage's location and connectivity create the perfect conditions for strong economic growth. The station area is the ideal place to locate new development to support this, with sustainable transport connections and under-used land. The AAP will support this with a new mix of uses designed to create a vibrant and successful place.

- **Creating a low-carbon urban village:** mixing new homes, employment, retail and other uses with strong placemaking and exceptional mobility has the potential to deliver on Stevenage's ambitious climate change targets, creating an exemplar development in the heart of the town. It must be flexible to accommodate changing lifestyles, encourage low car ownership rates, and including buildings that are adaptable.
- **Sustainability in mobility, built form and landscaping:** the station area has a significant part to play in creating supporting active travel and other low-carbon travel modes, as well as creating sustainable development opportunities. Development must be future-proofed for new technologies, with resilience and adaptability to new forms of micro-mobility such as e-scooters.
- **Celebrating the heritage of the town:** as one of the original New Towns, with a unique heritage and design, Stevenage's station area must reflect what makes the town special and use it to create a sense of place on arrival and departure.



Key principles

To deliver on these objectives, a set of design principles has been adopted that will be carried through the process of creating the AAP. These are:

- Enhance the station arrival experience to create a people-friendly space
- Improve step-free, disabled and accessible pedestrian links with town centre
- Improve links between rail and bus stations
- Turn Lytton Way into a 'town street'
- Create good access for all travel modes with high quality, attractive cycling facilities, and prioritising sustainable and active modes
- Make ground level the place where pedestrians move
- Consolidate surface car parking to make better use of land and enable development opportunities



- High quality public realm, green infrastructure and creating space and opportunities for landscaping through rationalisation of vehicle space
- Future proof for possible station upgrade, replacement of the Leisure Centre and improved links and development west of the rail station
- Design in flexibility to accommodate changing behaviours and new technology
- Celebrate the heritage of the town in the fabric, layout and design of the station gateway
- Creating a lasting legacy of high quality placemaking
- Putting people first, at the heart of the decision-making process

Options for Lytton Way

At the heart of the issues affecting Stevenage's station area is the design and function of Lytton Way. It severs the station from the town centre, provides a barrier and unpleasant environment for active travel modes and the public realm, uses land inefficiently so as to create unusable development parcels between it and the railway line, and undermines SBC and HCC's commitment to sustainable transportation.

The Town Centre Regeneration Framework pinpoints the downgrading and potential removal of Lytton Way to through traffic as a key plank of its strategy for good placemaking and regeneration of the town centre. This has been endorsed by the relevant stakeholders and will be carried forward by the AAP as the basis for policy in the area.

To unlock the potential of the AAP area, it is essential first to determine the preferred option for a redesign of Lytton Way. This chapter of the report presents the core enhancements proposed, a range of options for the key central area between Swingate and Danesgate, and then a series of themes that the reconfiguration of Lytton Way will enable.

Core Enhancements

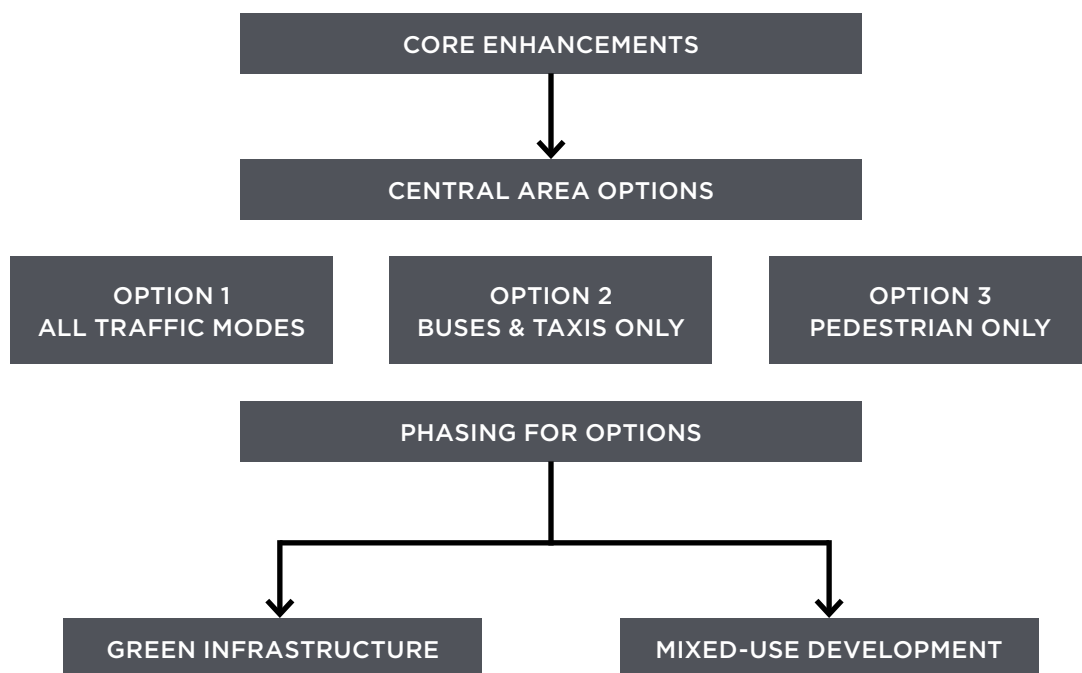
All proposed options for the reconfiguration of Lytton Way have a set of core enhancements, primarily in the northern and southern zones of the AAP area, north of Swingate and south of Danesgate. These apply to all options:

- A reduction in the width of Lytton Way, with the space reallocated to pedestrian or cycling movement, street trees and other landscaped green infrastructure. In these northern and southern areas Lytton Way will remain open to all modes, providing continued access for other parts of the town centre.
- An additional segregated cycleway adjacent to Lytton Way, away from the railway tracks. Making use of the improved street environment along Lytton Way, cycling along this route will become more attractive. Along with built form development along this route, this offers the advantages of creating an overlooked cycling route that will feel considerably safer to users than the current path adjacent to the tracks. It will add movement and vibrancy to the street and create visibility for all modes.
- Improved vehicle access to the police station, making use of the reduction in speeds and change in character of Lytton Way to offer a limited use right-turn access box.
- A large public square that creates a flexible entrance space from the existing station building, future-proofed for a new station or enhanced station entrance further to the south.
- Facilitation of the key East-West pedestrian 'boulevard' route running from west of the railway line through to the existing town centre, crossing at the railway station and the proposed public square in front. The enhancements proposed enable this connection to be made and provide the key spaces through which it will pass through within the AAP area.

- A 'cycle hub' located at the southern end of the station square, compatible with existing and potential new station buildings, that contains secure cycle parking, cycle hire schemes, bike maintenance facilities and the potential for a local transport information point to aid multi-modal interchange. Above the cycle hub on the ground floor would be development opportunities.
- Development plots made available by the consolidation of surface car parking into a multi-storey car park.

Sections AA, BB and CC demonstrate the re-allocation of land use and street space from underuse vehicle capacity towards active travel and green infrastructure, improving access for all modes while retaining existing functionality and providing a much improved street environment.

The following headings illustrate the core options available within the central area, defined as that south of Swingate but north of Danesgate.



CORE ENHANCEMENTS



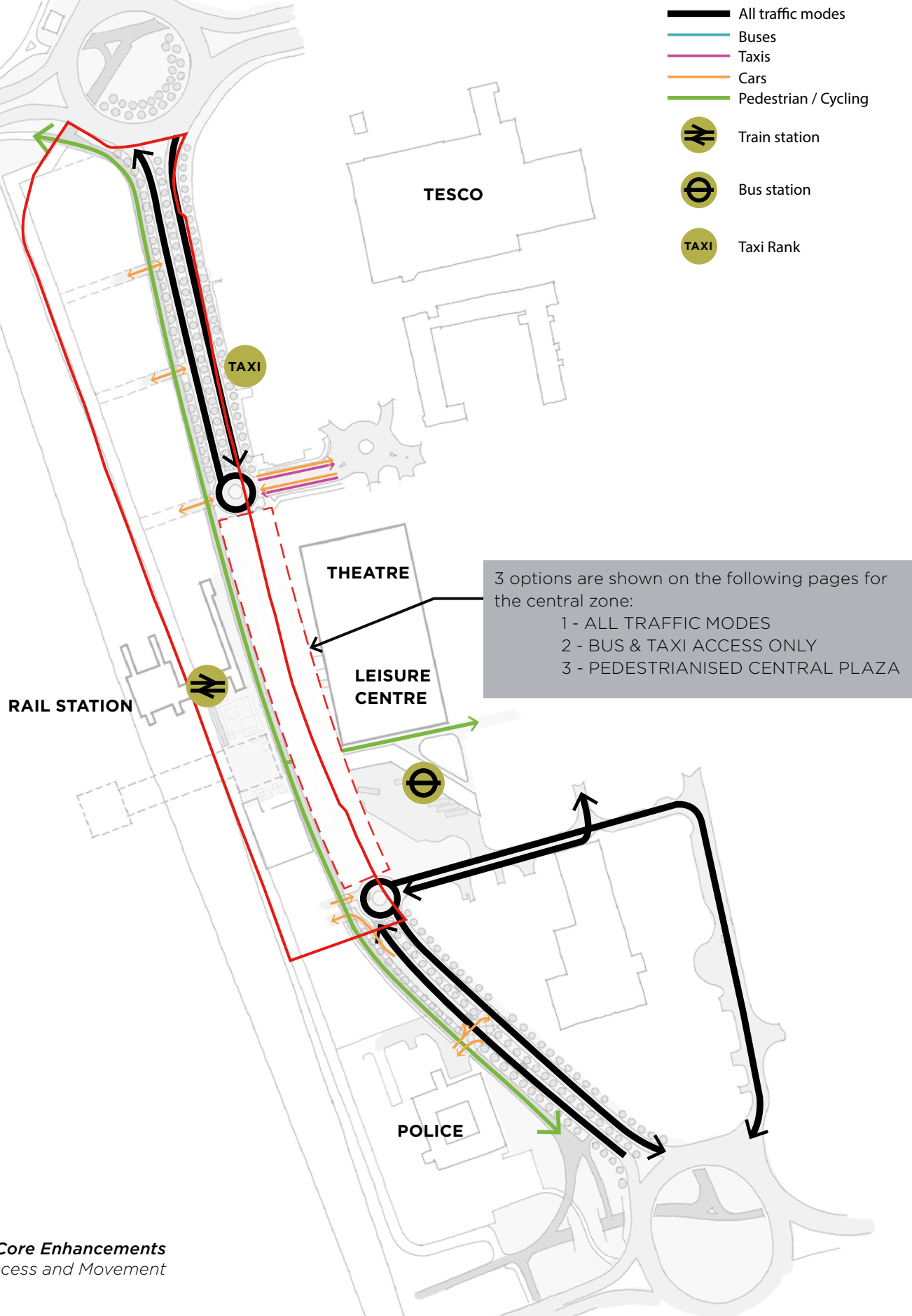


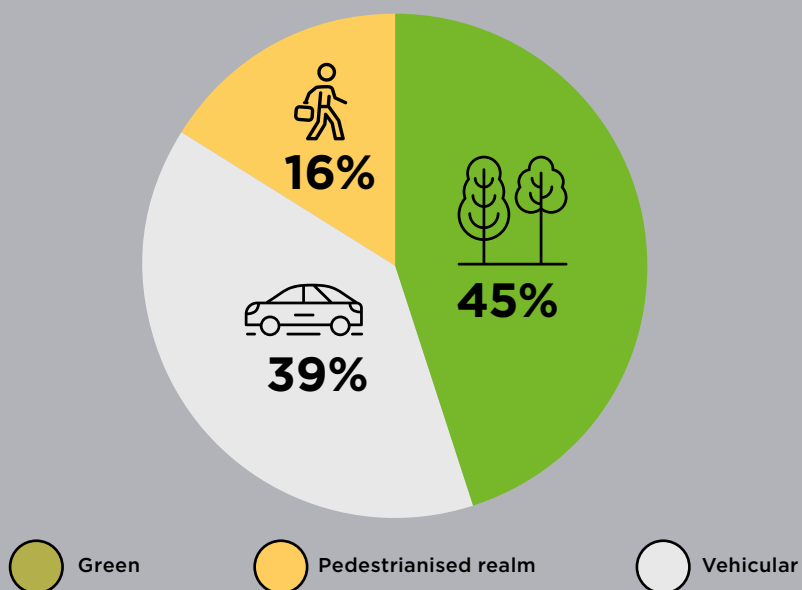
Fig x Core Enhancements
Access and Movement

SECTION AA

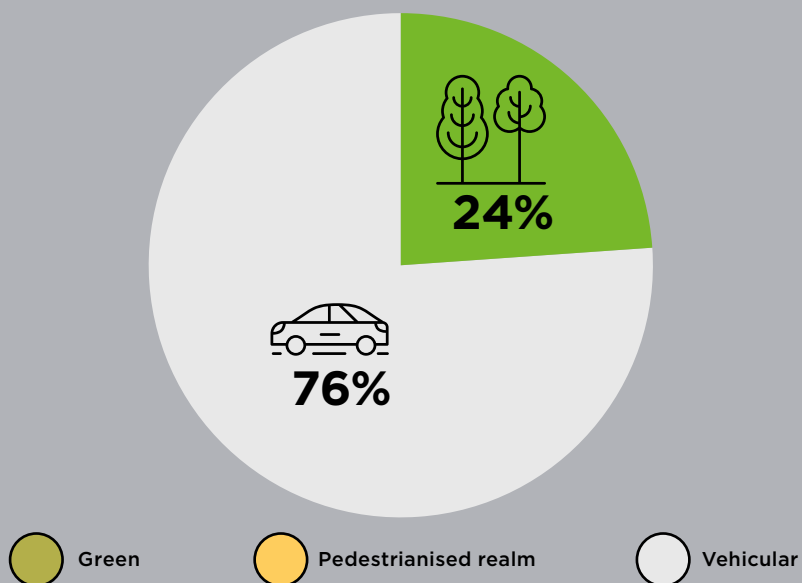
Illustrative sections showing the existing and proposed sectional profiles of Lytton Way.

The sections also include an analysis of land-use and activity by width, split into green space, pedestrian realm and vehicular realm. This is represented in the diagrams below showing the splits by percentage of the overall cross section.

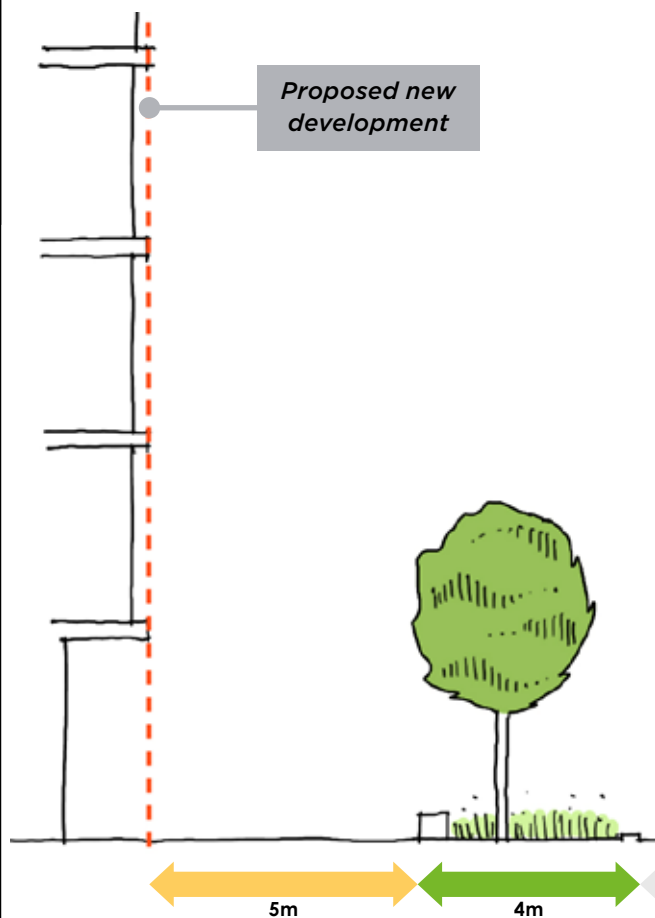
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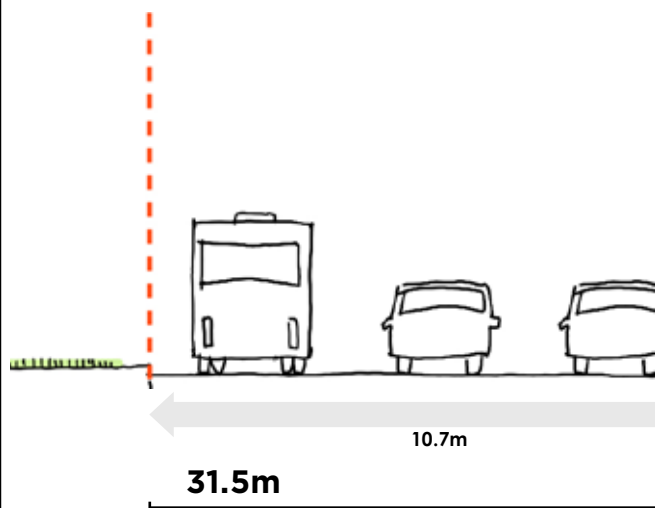
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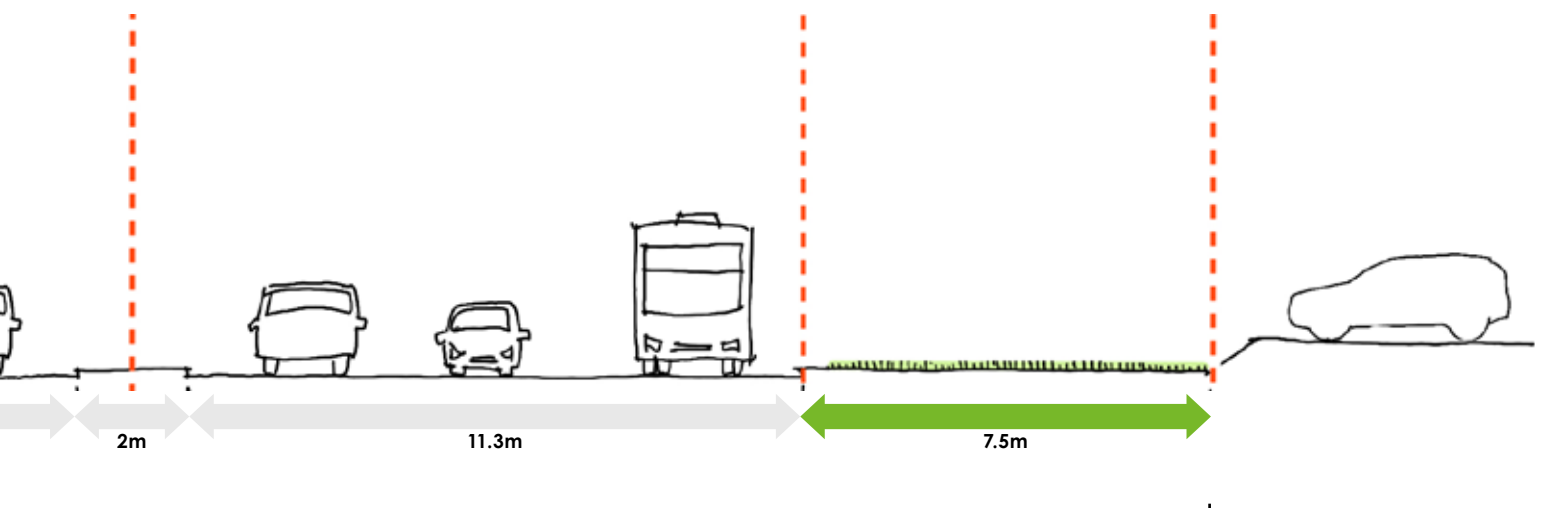
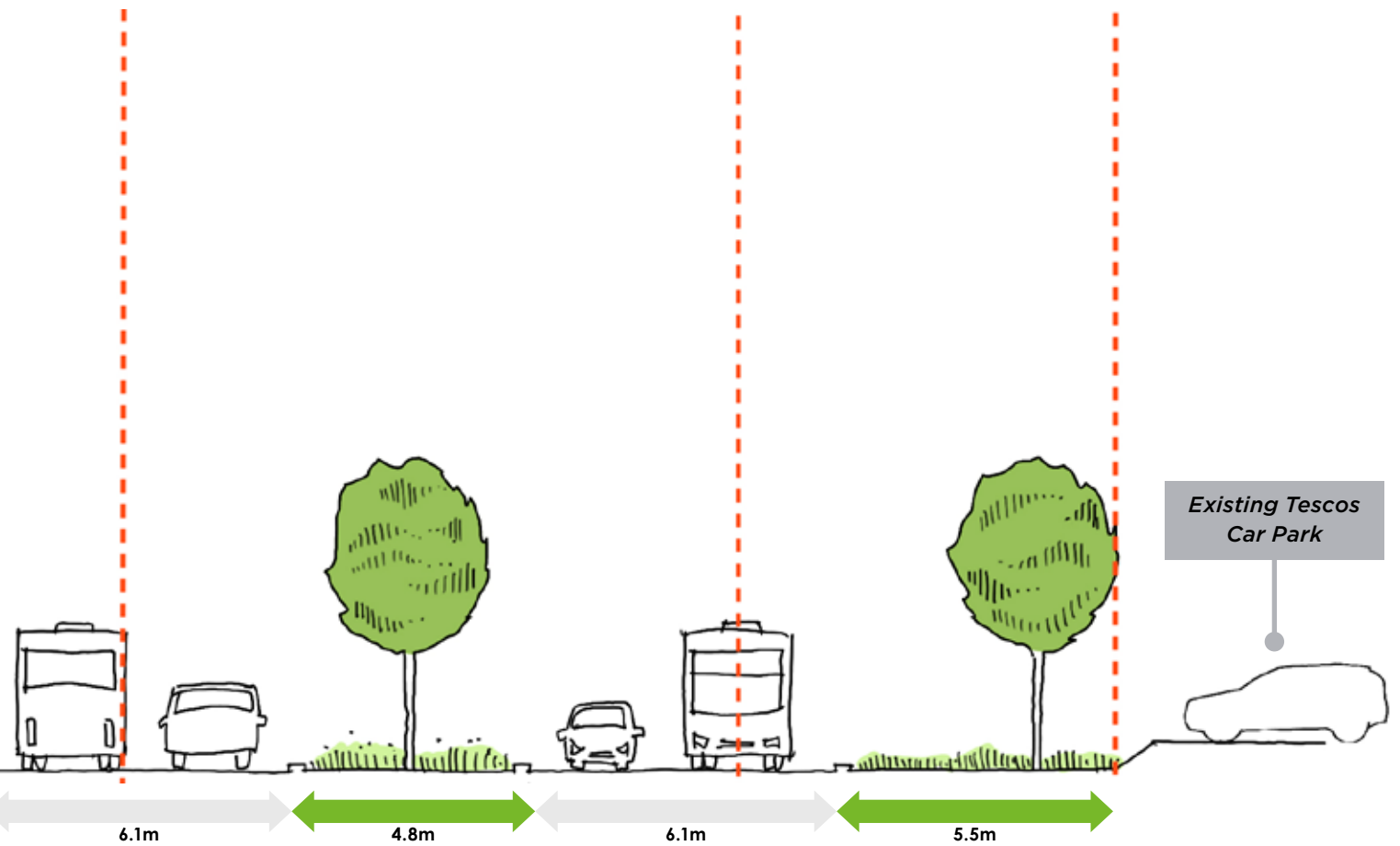


01 PROPOSED



02 EXISTING



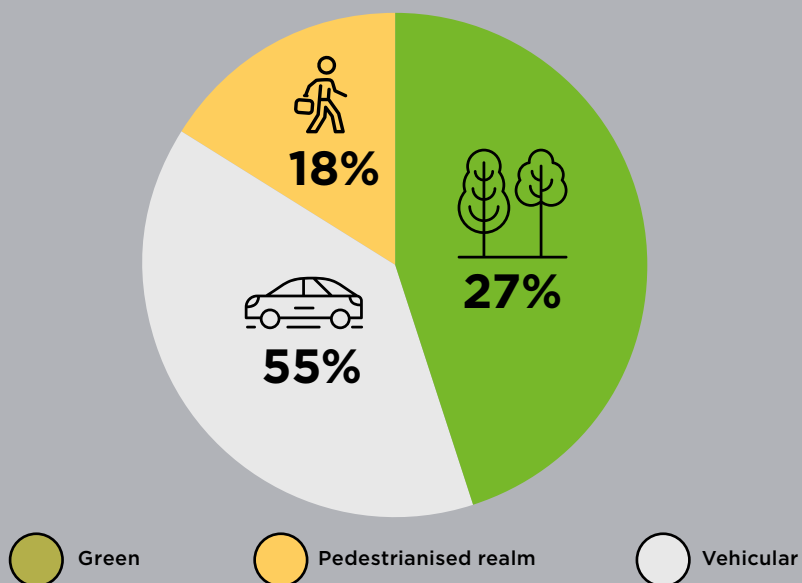


SECTION BB

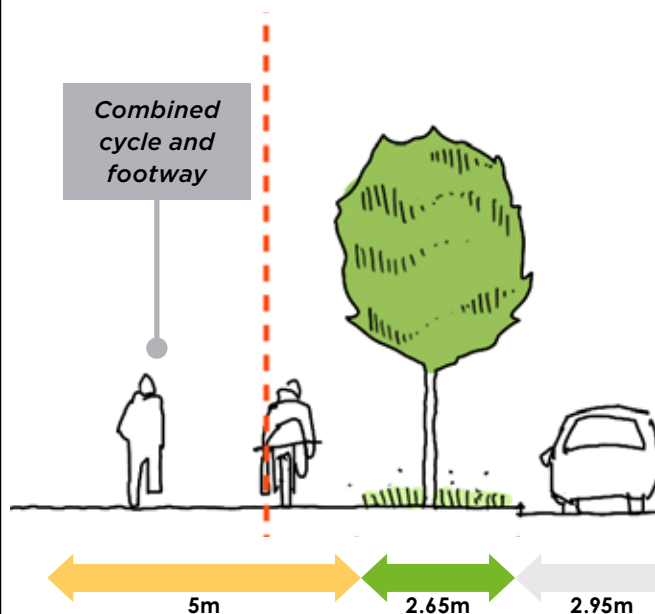
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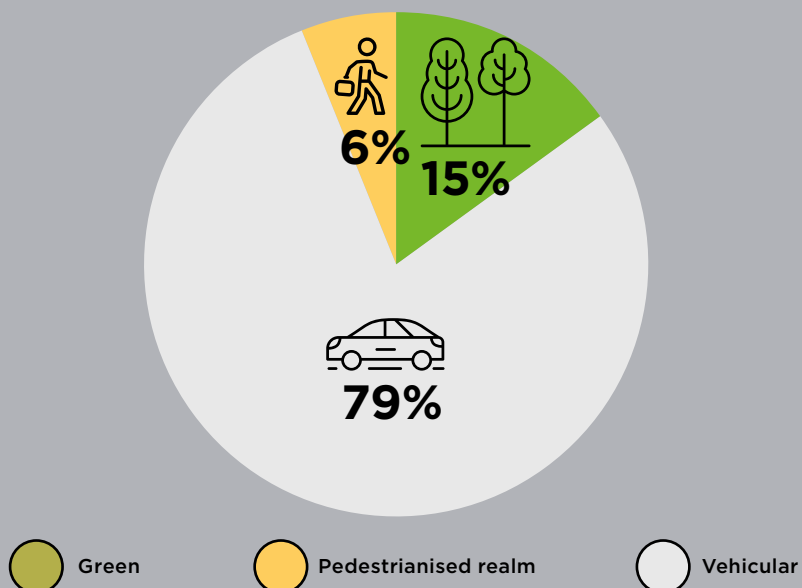
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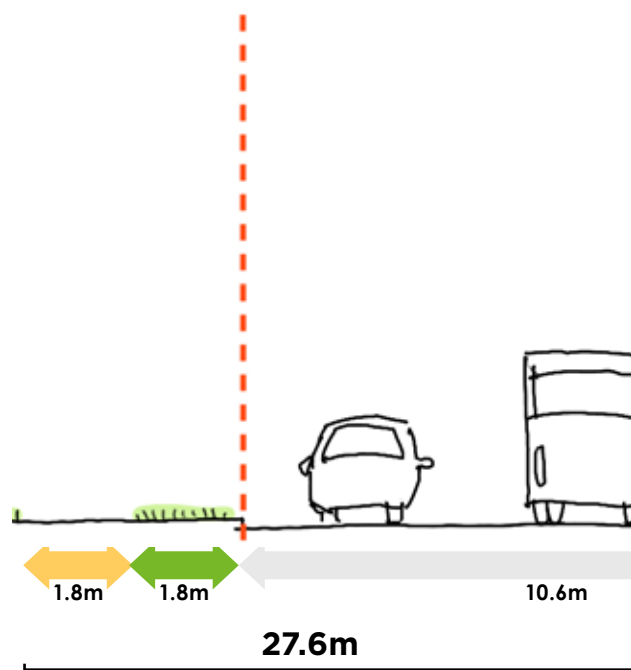
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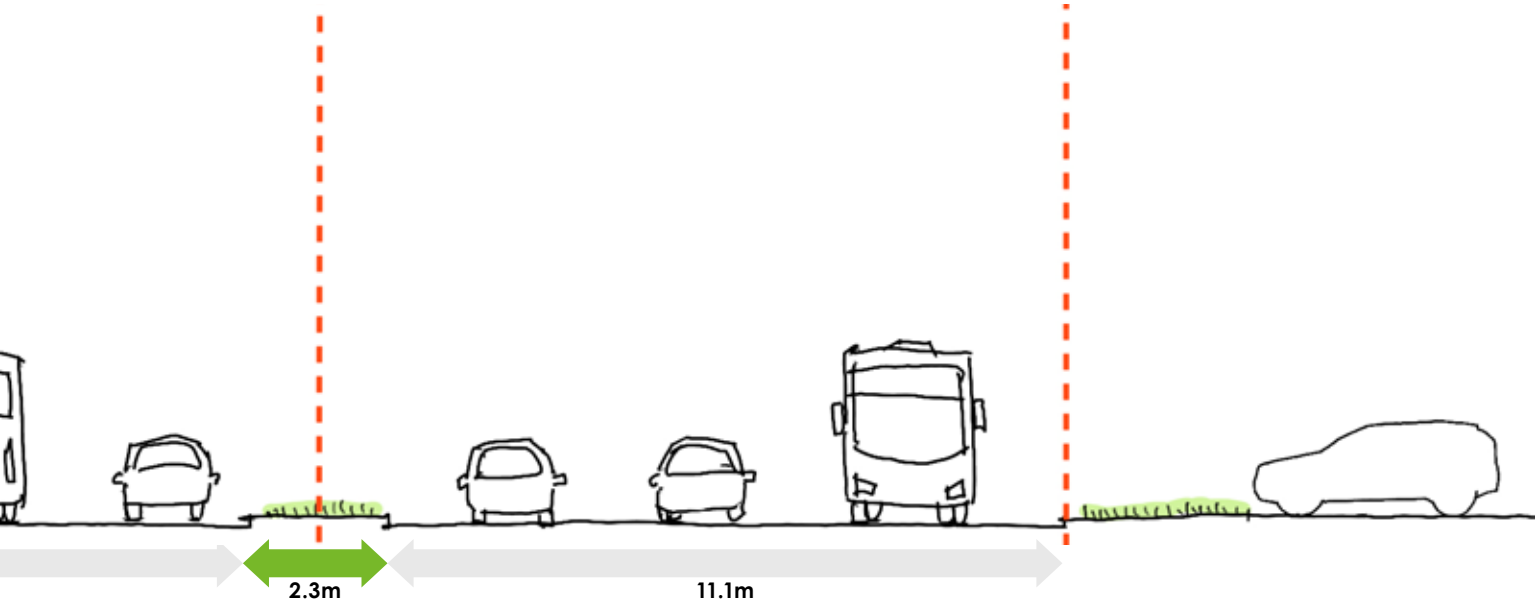
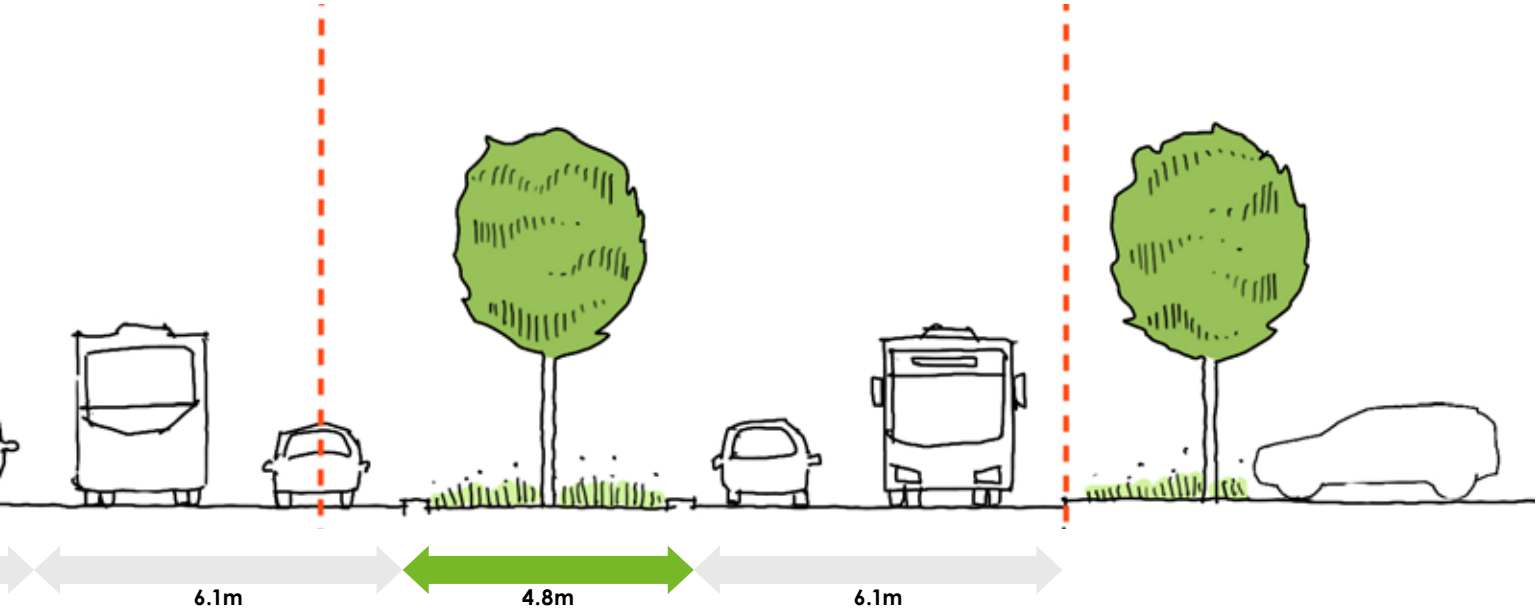


02 Existing overall percentage



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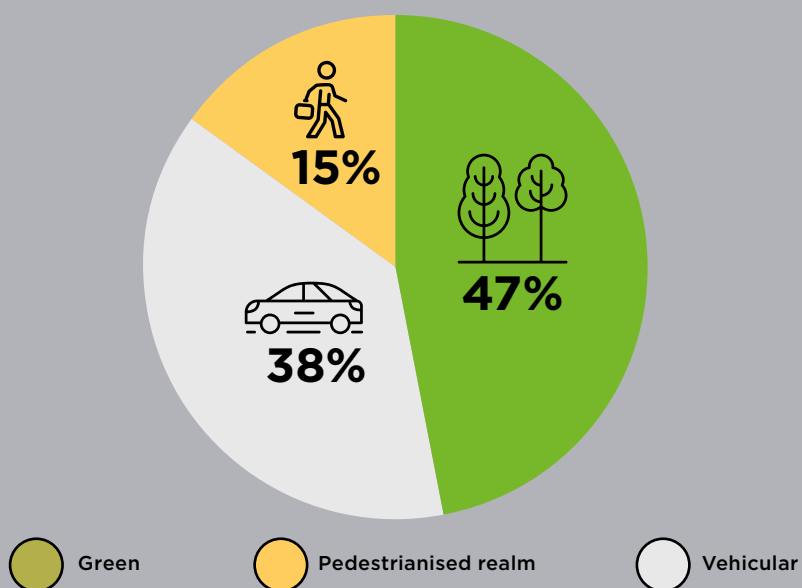


SECTION CC

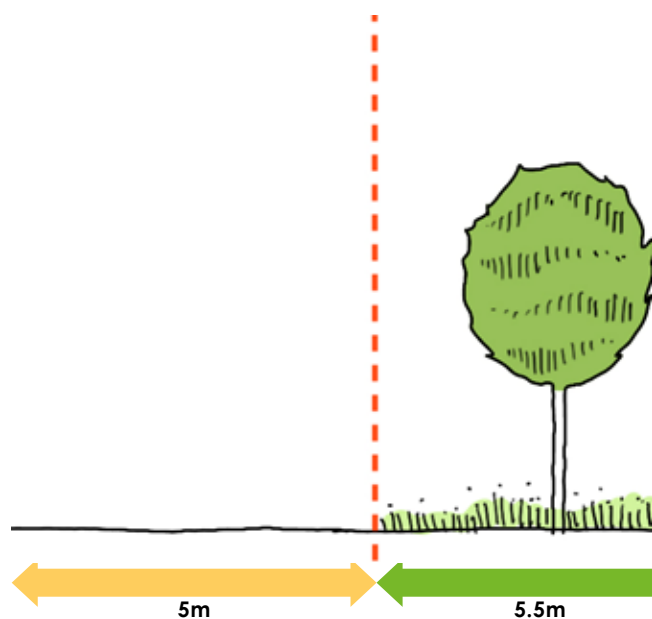
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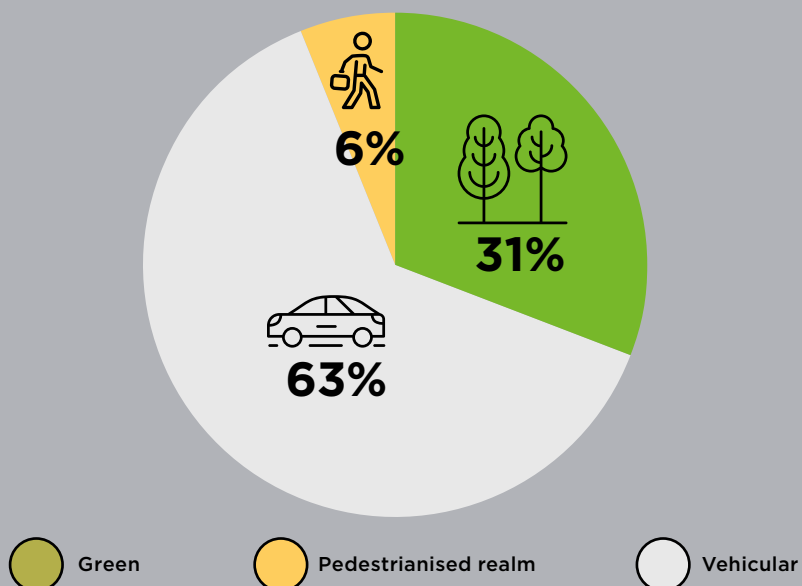
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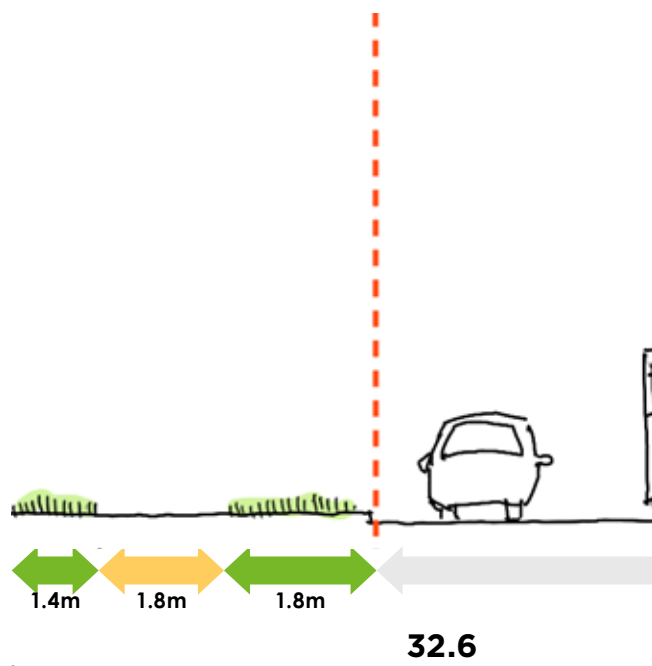
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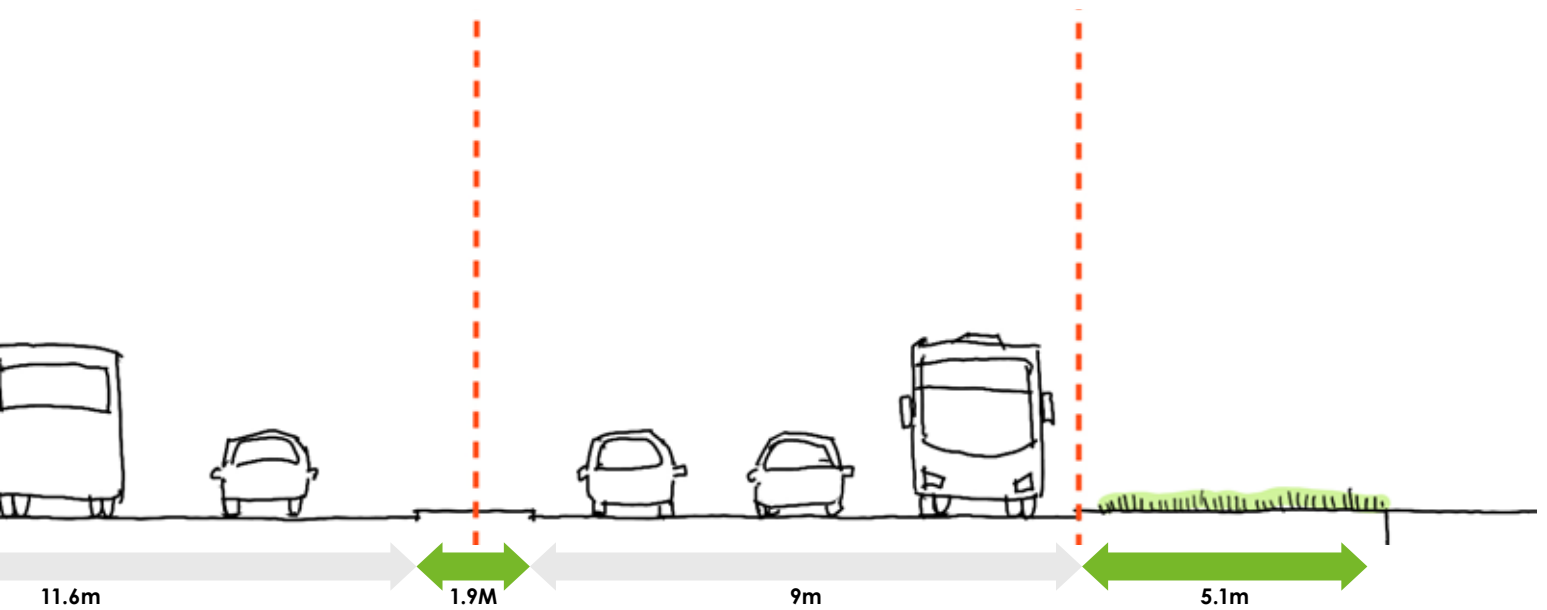
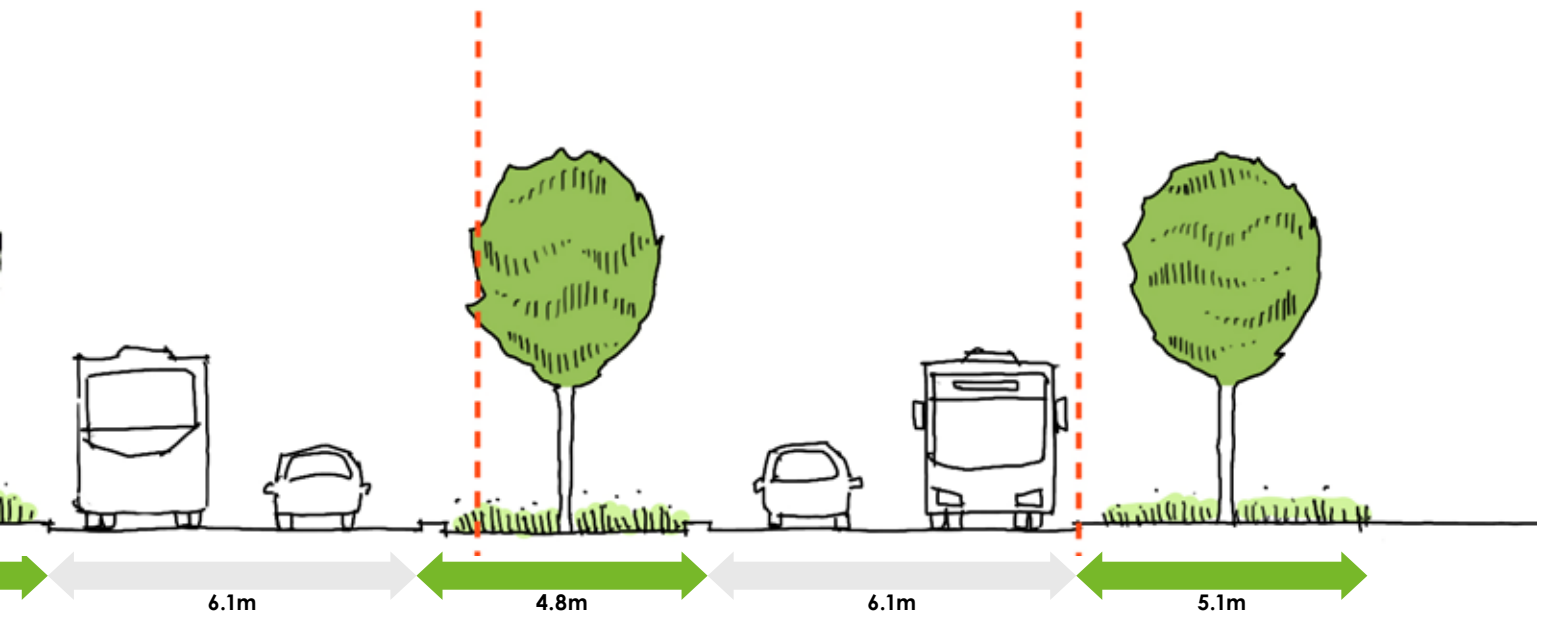


02 Existing overall percentage

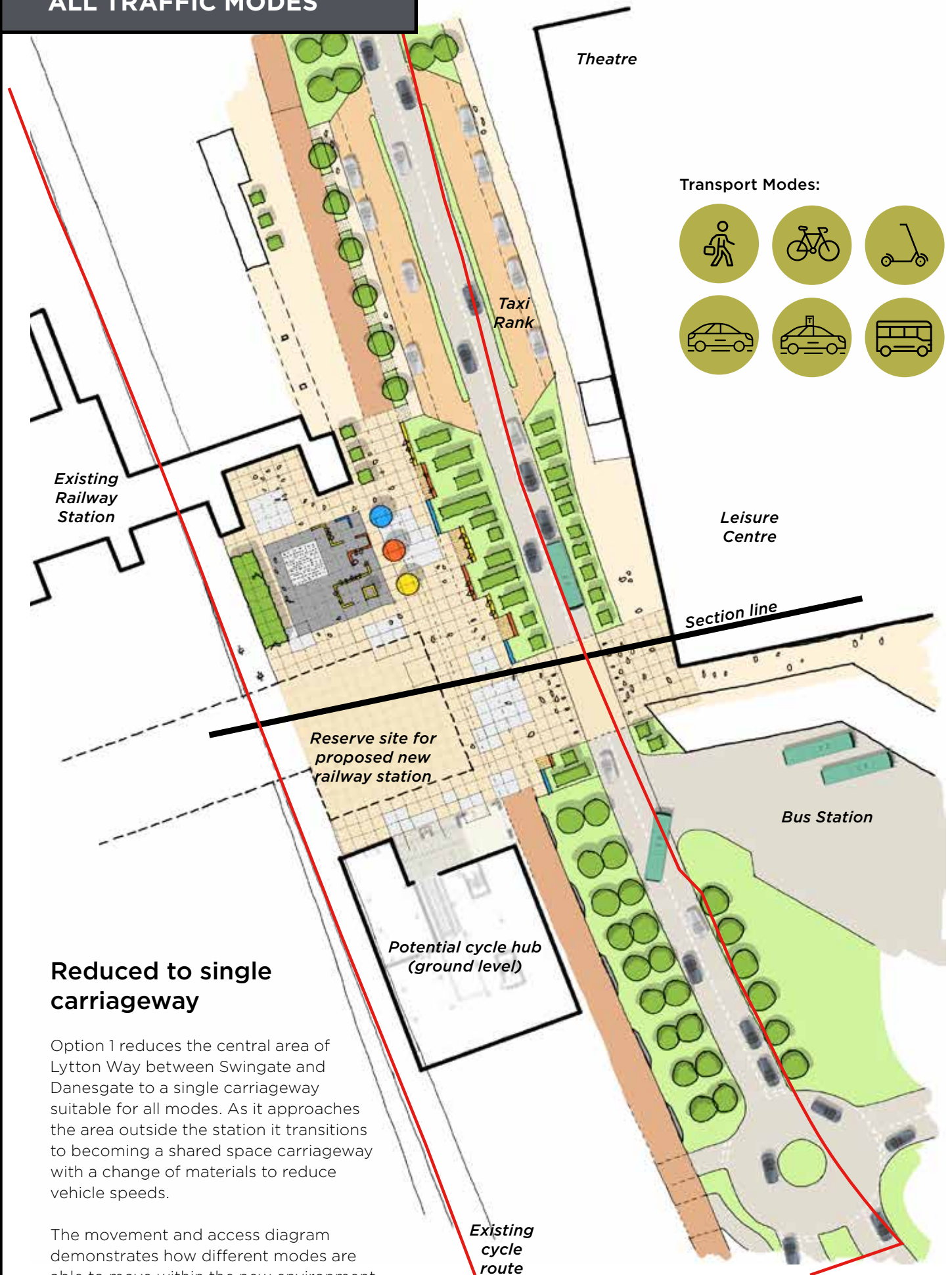


02 EXISTING





CENTRAL AREA OPTION 1 ALL TRAFFIC MODES



Reduced to single carriageway

Option 1 reduces the central area of Lytton Way between Swingate and Danesgate to a single carriageway suitable for all modes. As it approaches the area outside the station it transitions to becoming a shared space carriageway with a change of materials to reduce vehicle speeds.

The movement and access diagram demonstrates how different modes are able to move within the new environment.

Fig x Central Area Option 1
All Traffic Modes

Advantages

- Retains through access for all modes
- Significant improvement in space allocated for active modes
- No re-routing of bus routes required

Disadvantages

- Potential conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians
- Does not clearly prioritise sustainable travel modes

David Lock Associates
December 2020

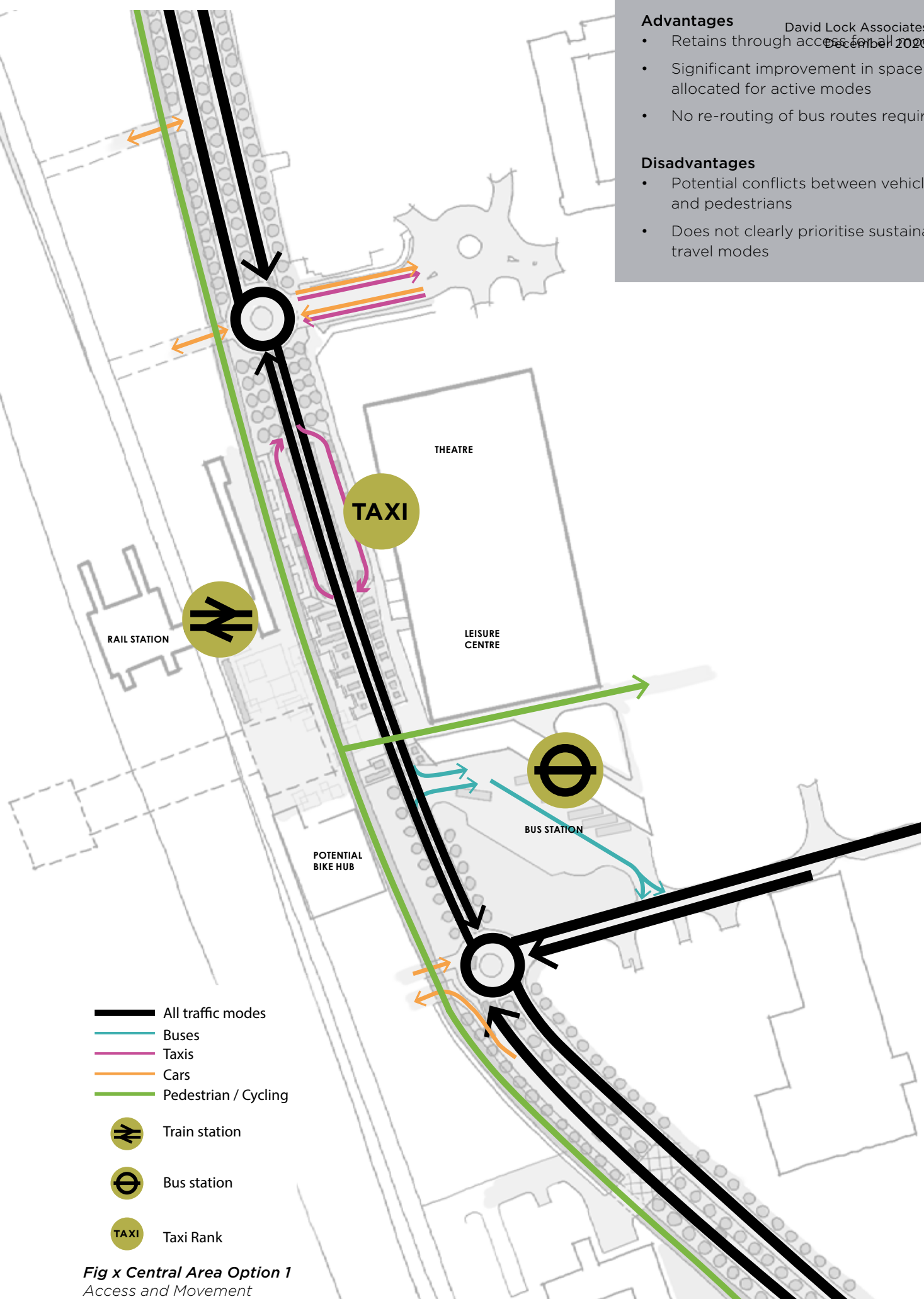


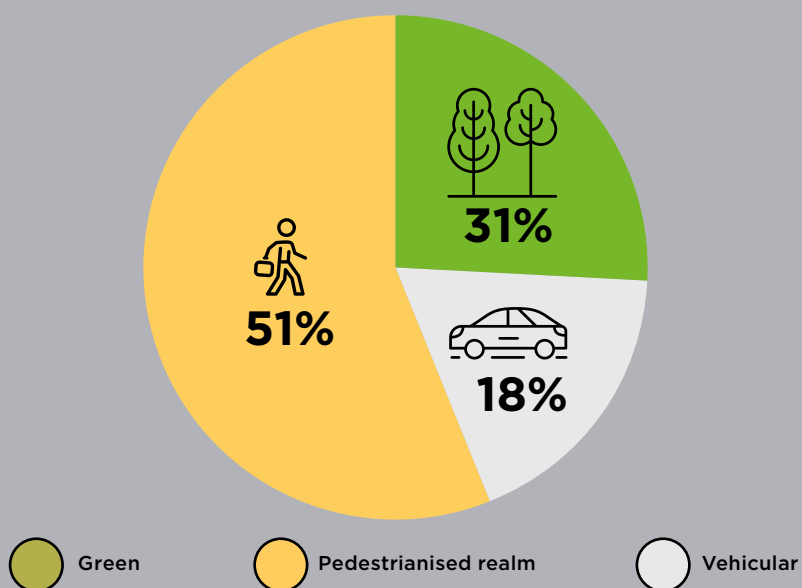
Fig x Central Area Option 1
Access and Movement

SECTION ALL TRAFFIC MODES

Illustrative sections showing the existing and proposed sectional profiles of Lytton Way.

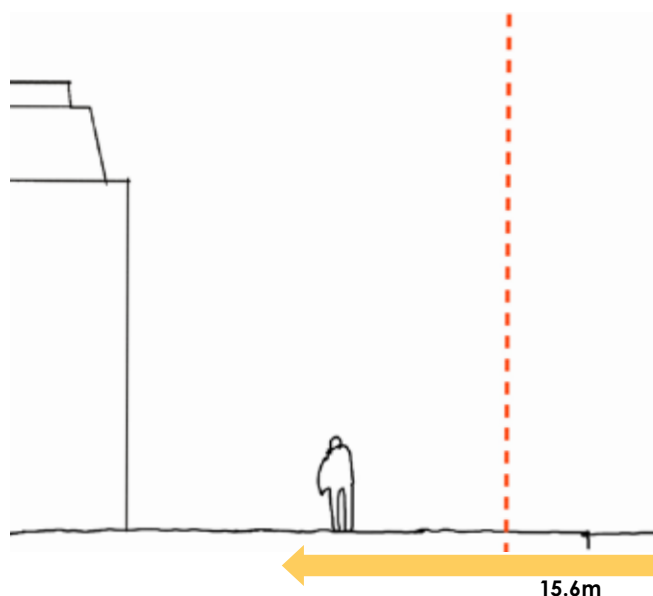
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01 Proposed overall percentage

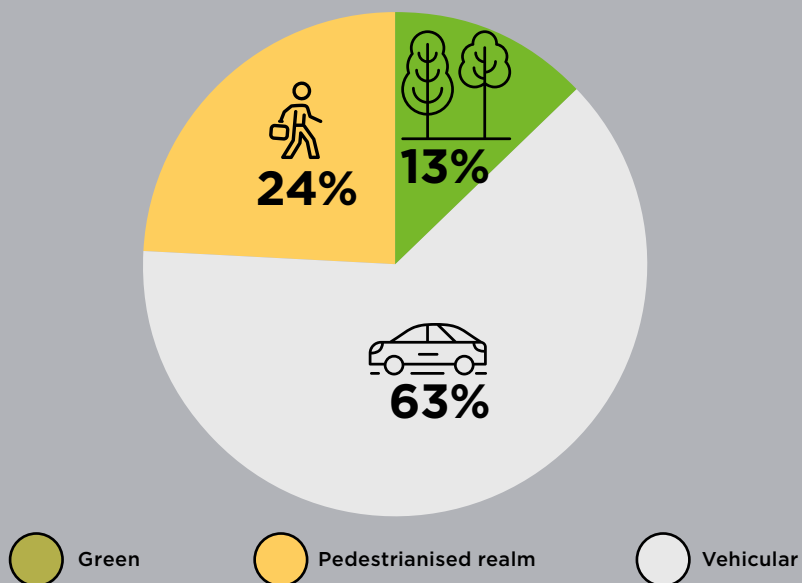


Frideswide Square, Oxford

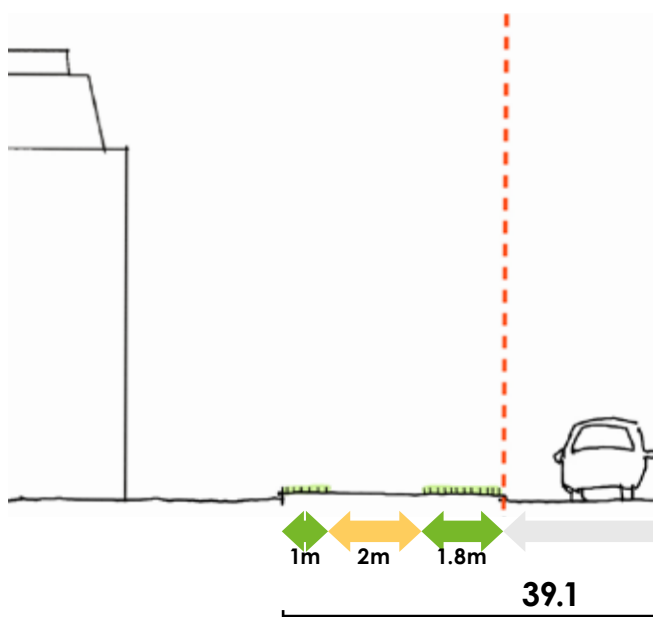
01 PROPOSED



02 Existing overall percentage



02 EXISTING

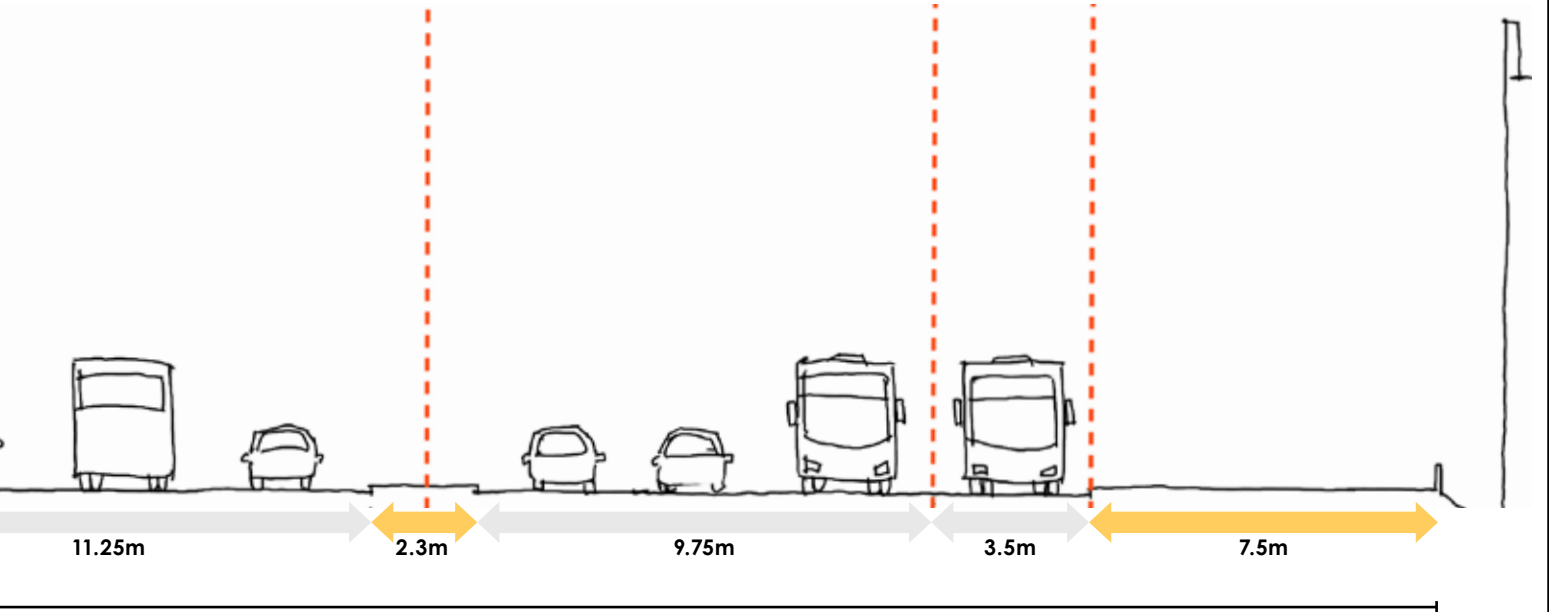
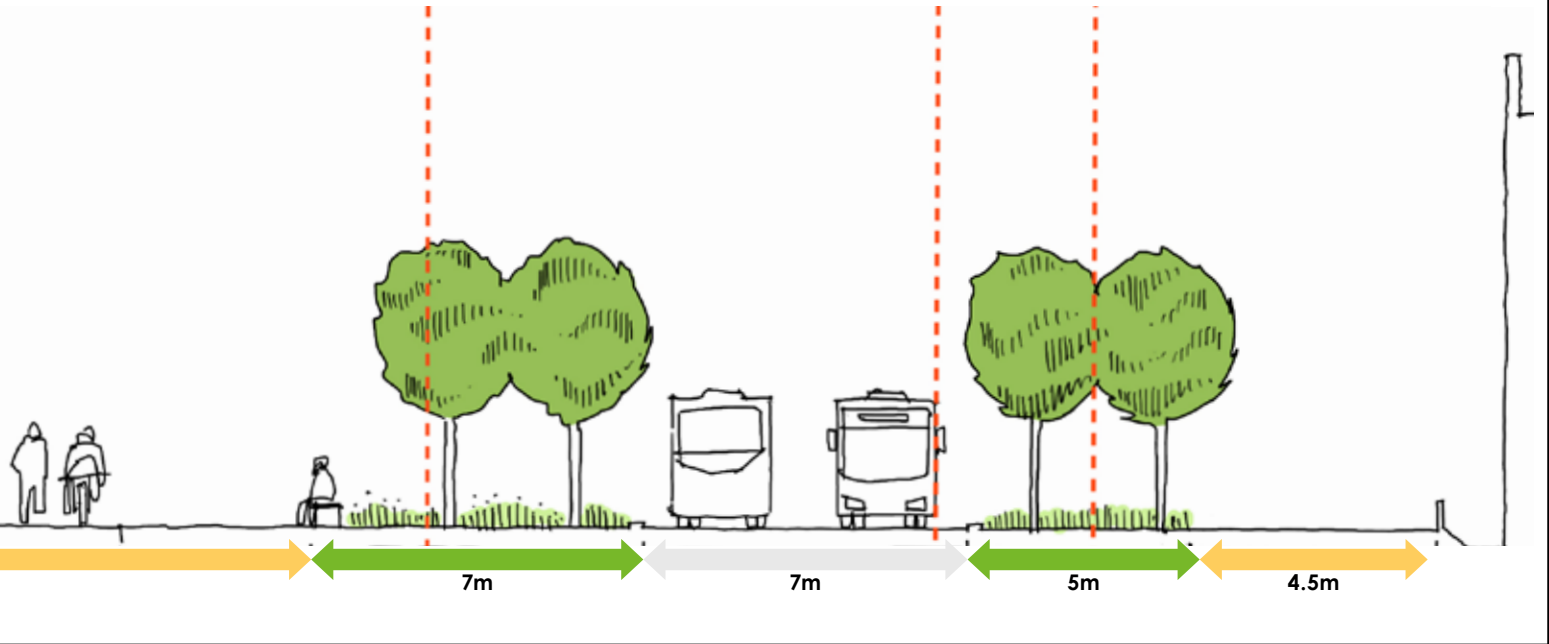




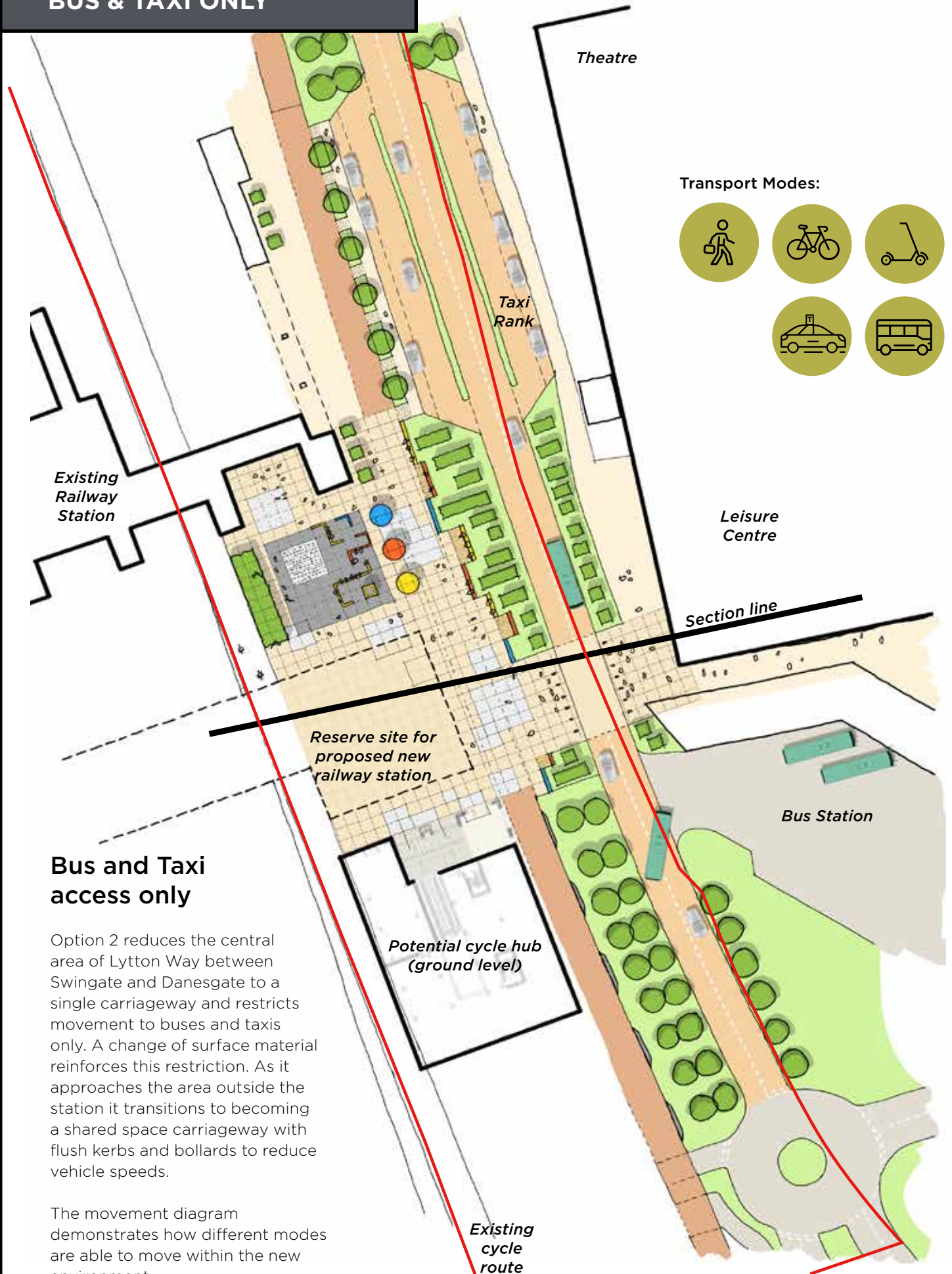
Bahnhofplatz, Aachen, Germany



Slough Railway Station



CENTRAL AREA OPTION 2 BUS & TAXI ONLY



Bus and Taxi access only

Option 2 reduces the central area of Lytton Way between Swingate and Danesgate to a single carriageway and restricts movement to buses and taxis only. A change of surface material reinforces this restriction. As it approaches the area outside the station it transitions to becoming a shared space carriageway with flush kerbs and bollards to reduce vehicle speeds.

The movement diagram demonstrates how different modes are able to move within the new environment.

Fig x Central Area Option 2
Bus & Taxi only

Advantages

- Reduction in vehicle traffic
- Pedestrian and cycling movement easier
- Reduction in noise outside station
- No re-routing of bus routes required
- Clear prioritisation of sustainable modes

Disadvantages

- Potential conflicts between buses, taxis and pedestrians, although risk much lower than Option 1
- Potentially significant change to traffic flows around Stevenage town centre

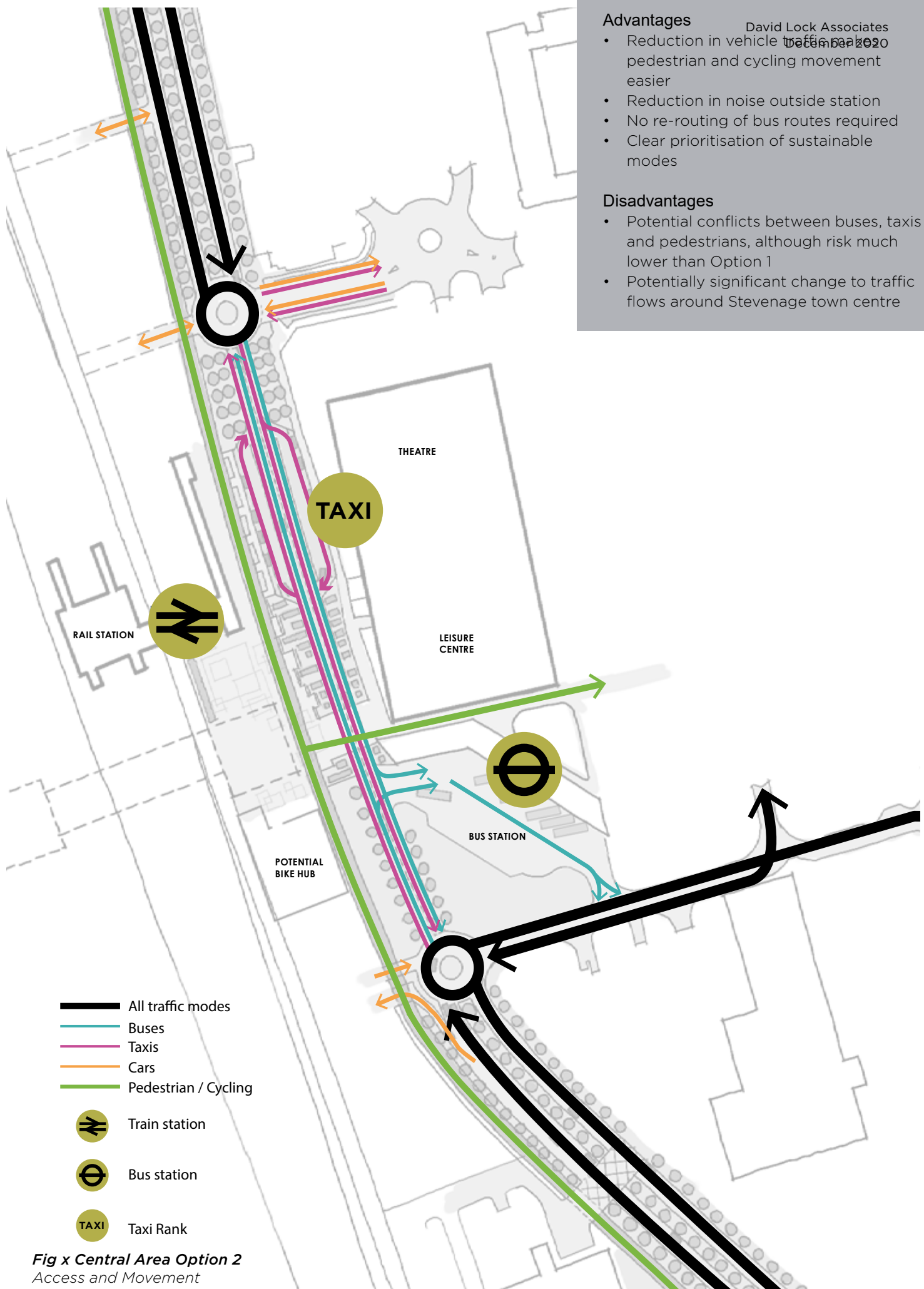


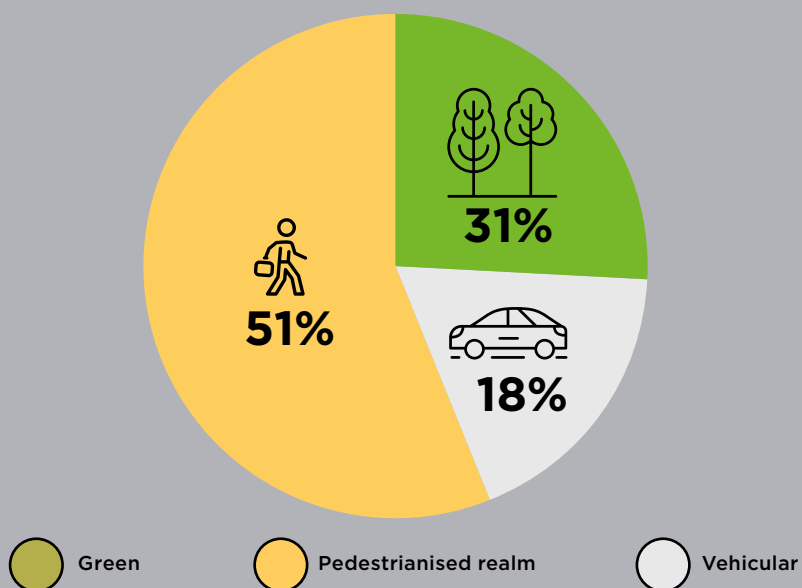
Fig x Central Area Option 2
Access and Movement

SECTION BUS & TAXI ONLY

Illustrative sections showing the existing and proposed sectional profiles of Lytton Way.

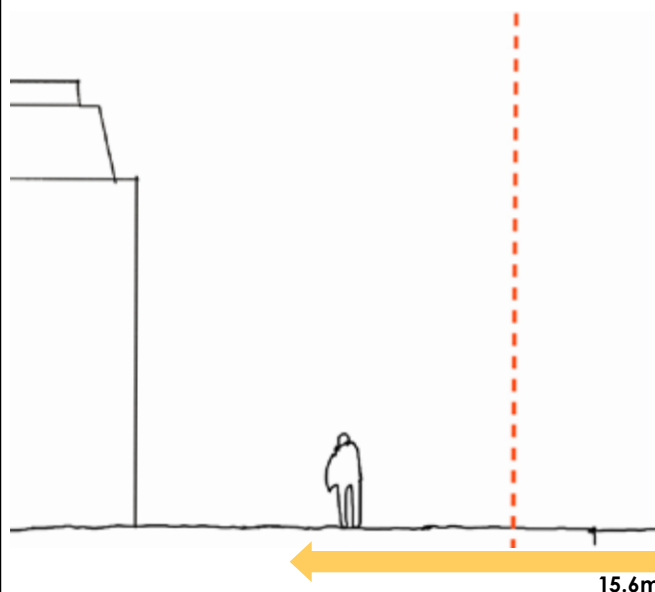
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01 Proposed overall percentage

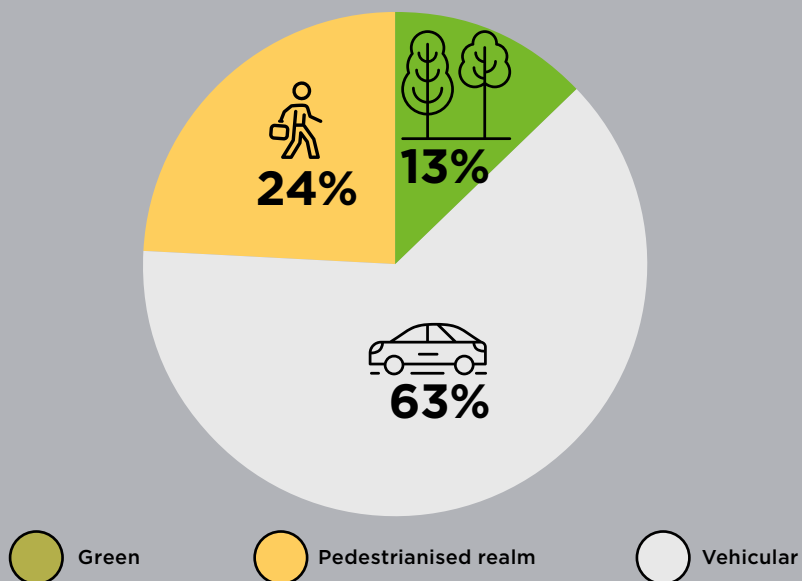


Station Square, Cambridge

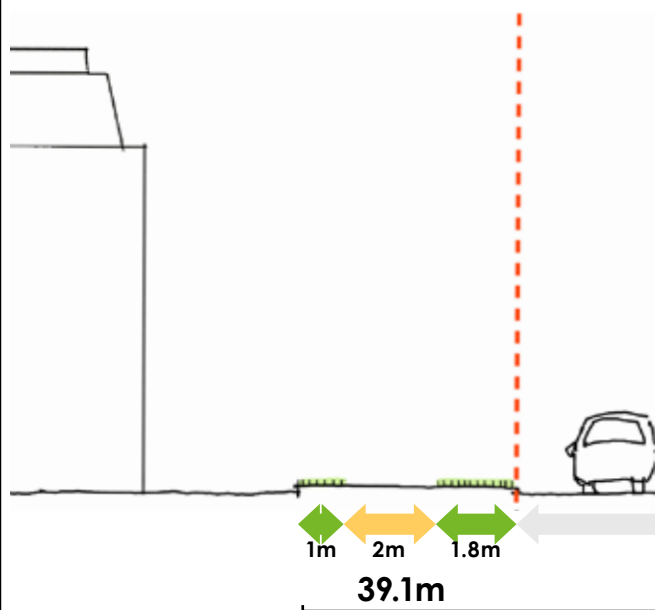
01 PROPOSED



02 Existing overall percentage

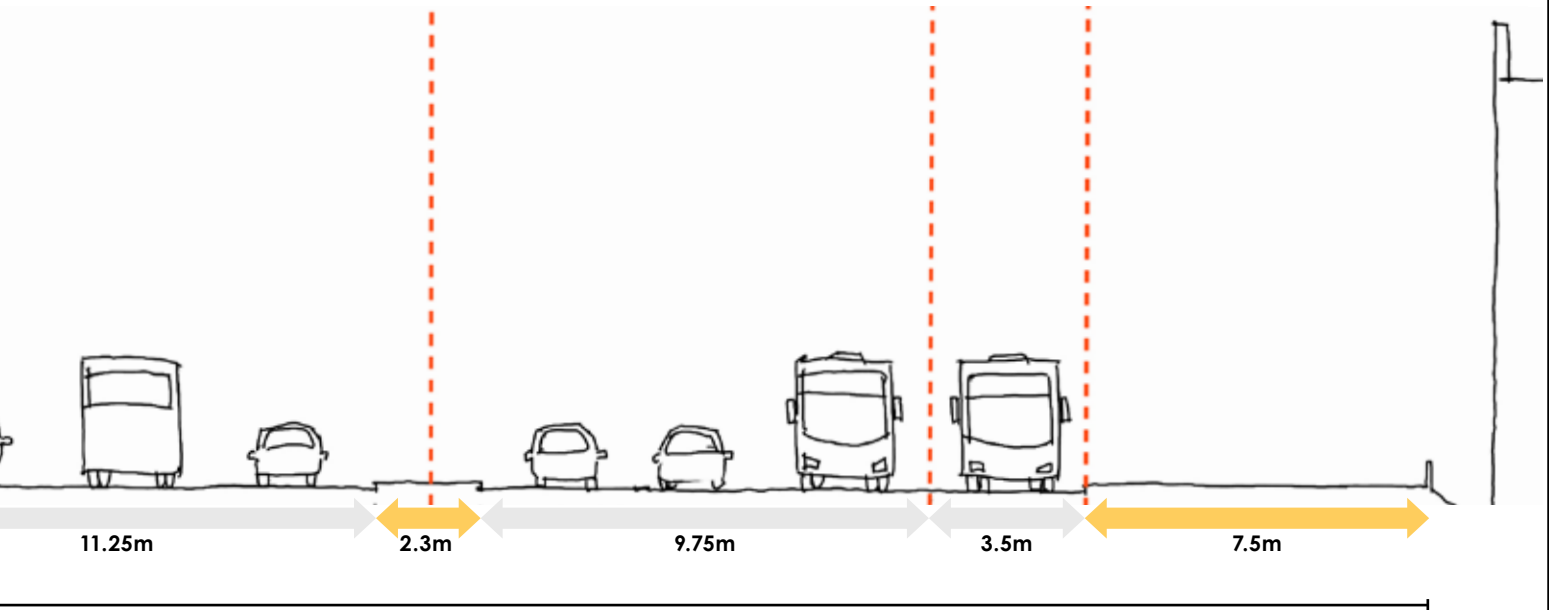
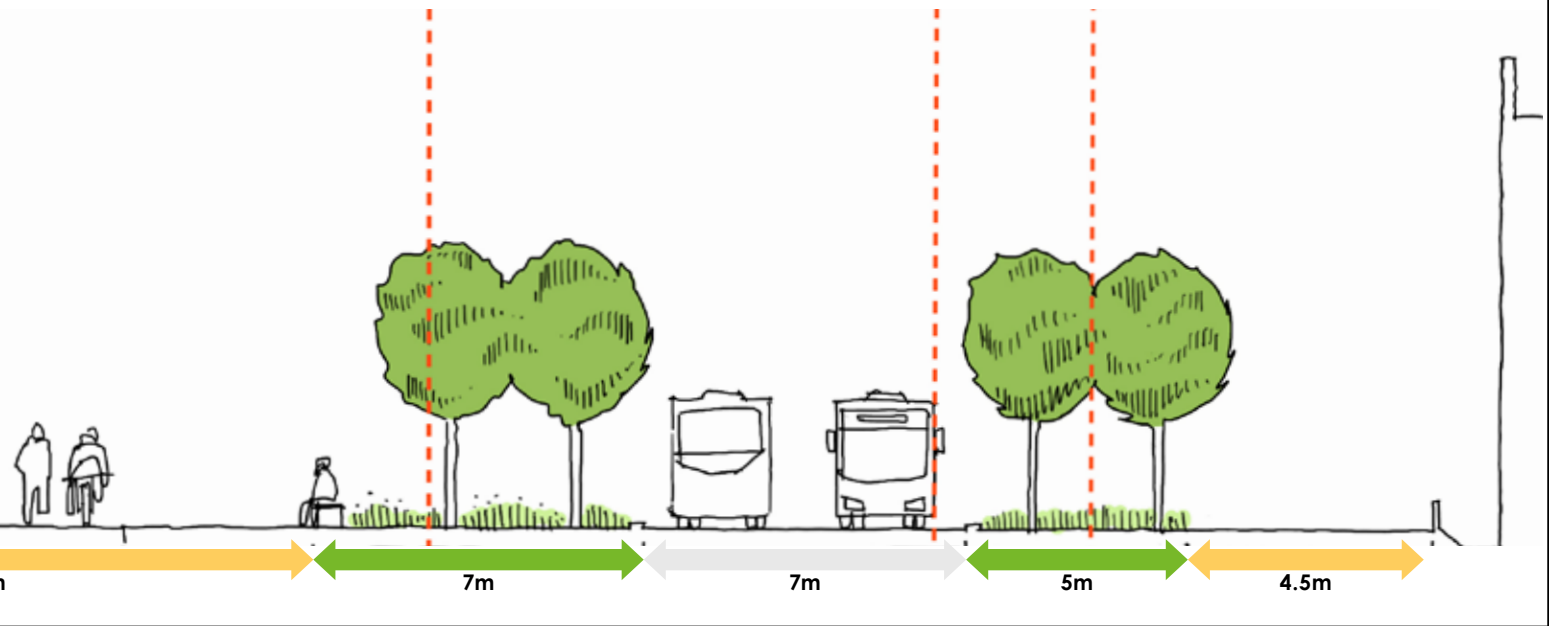


02 EXISTING





Station Square, Cambridge



CENTRAL AREA OPTION 3 PEDESTRIANISED PLAZA

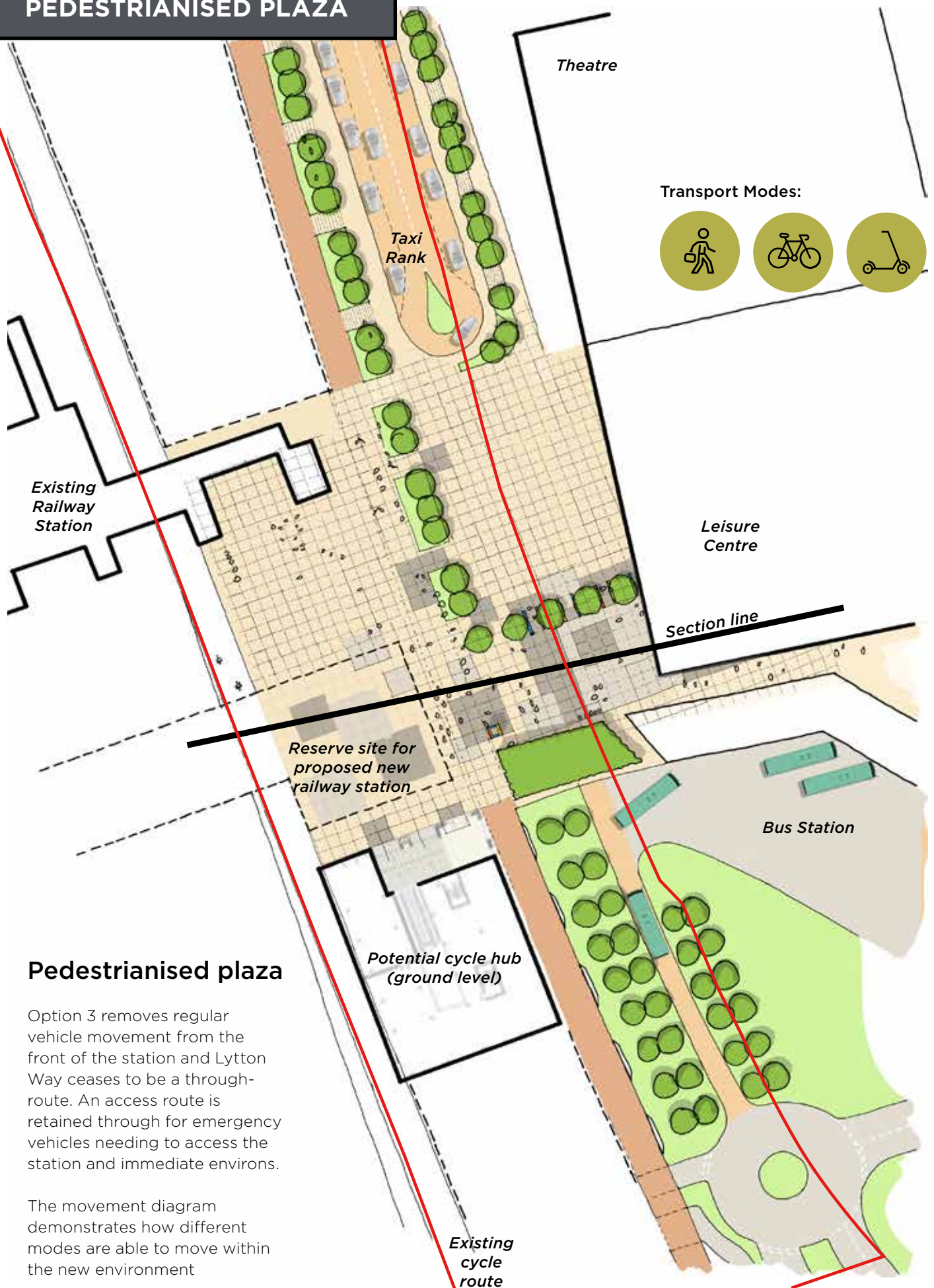
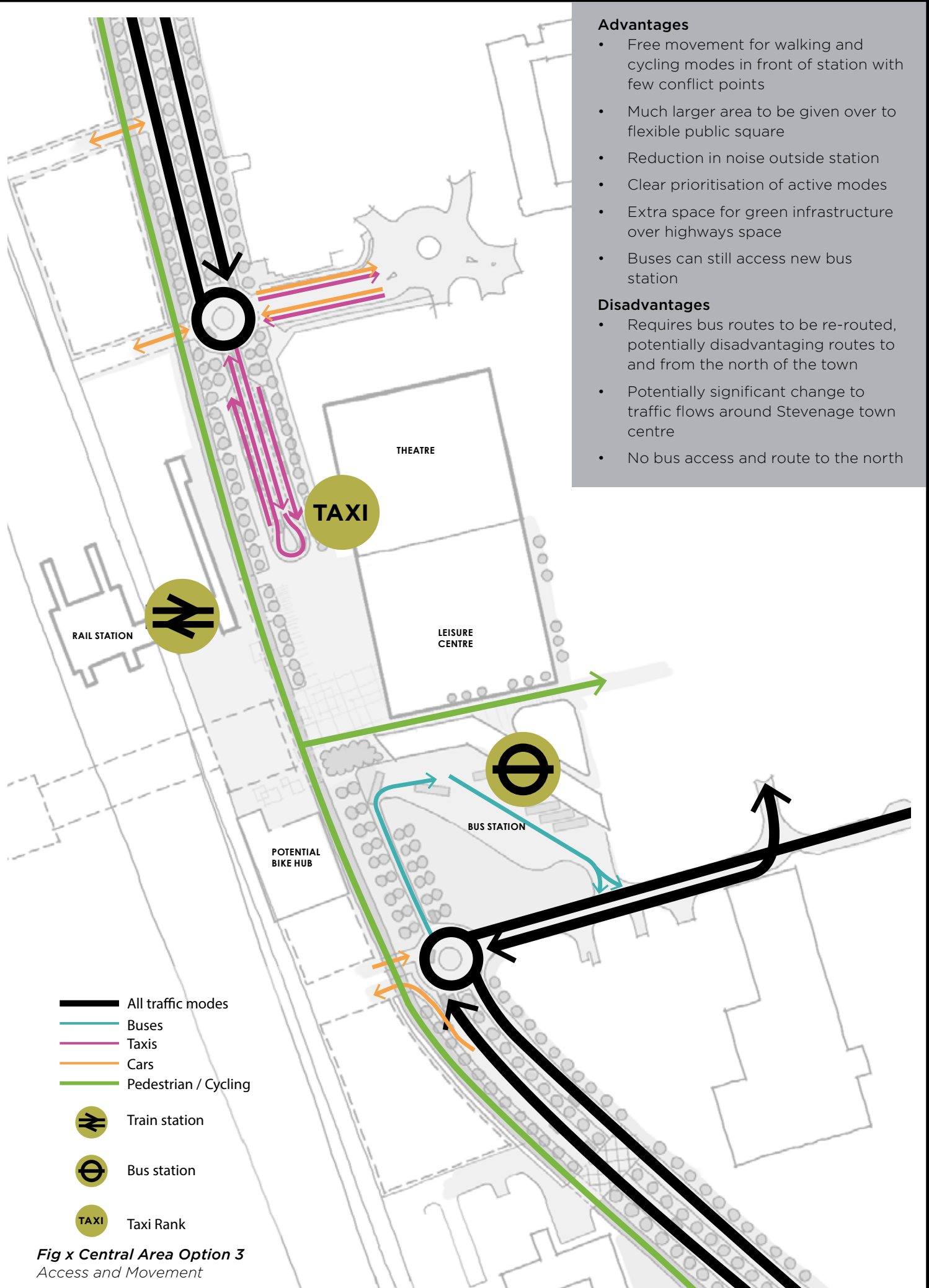


Fig x Central Area Option 3
Pedestrianised Plaza



SECTION PEDESTRIANISED PLAZA

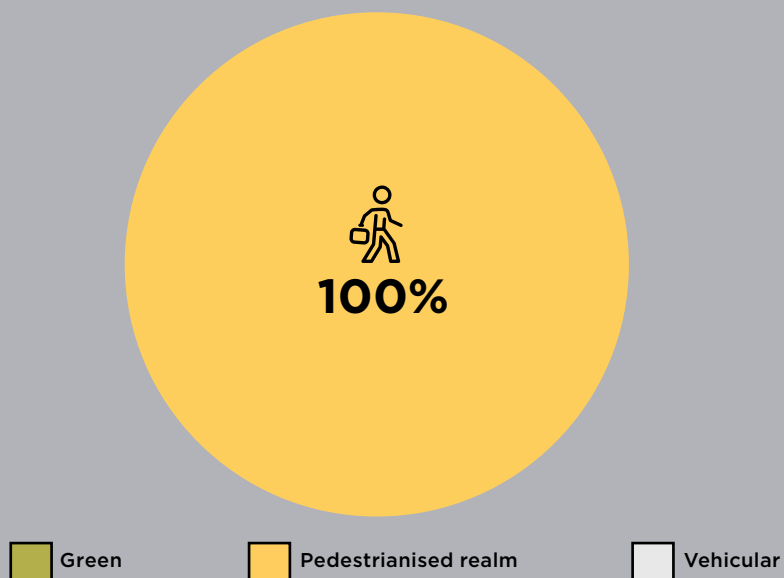
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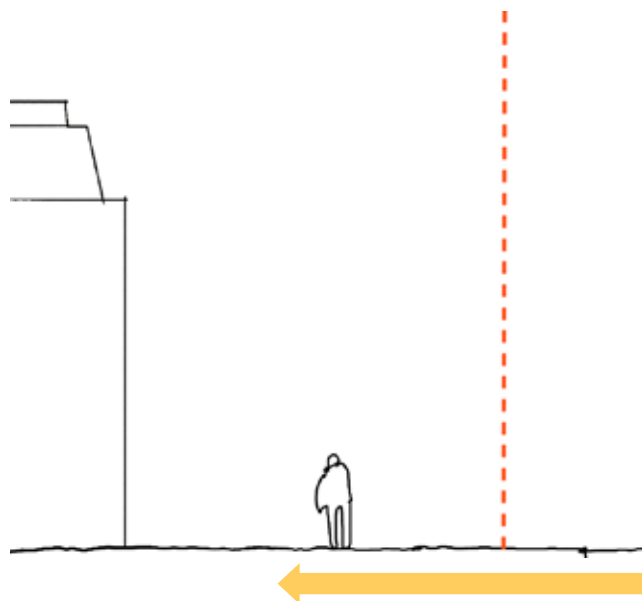


Station Hill, Reading

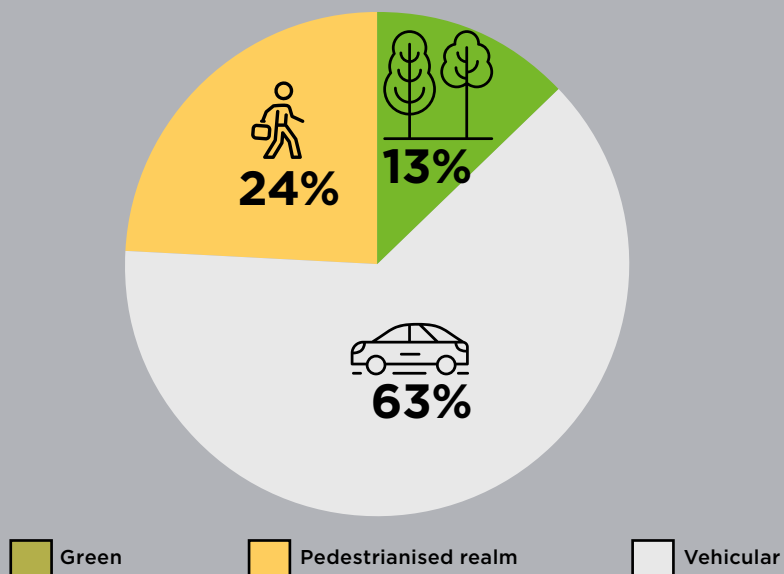
01 Proposed overall percentage



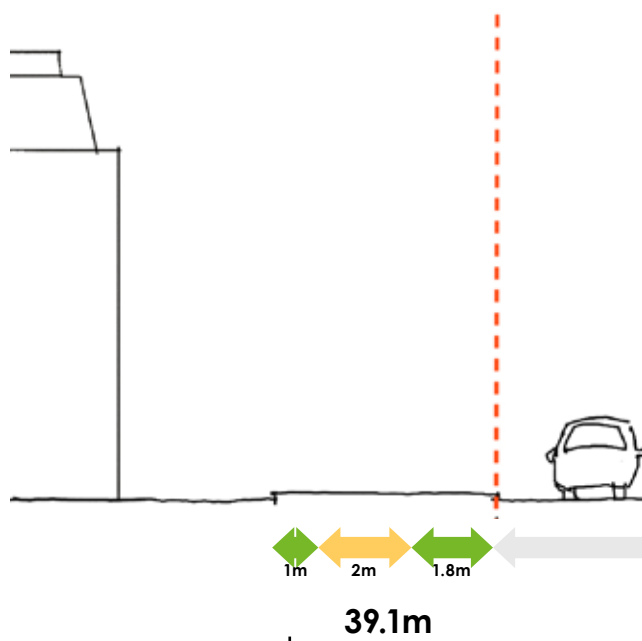
01 PROPOSED



02 Existing overall percentage



02 EXISTING

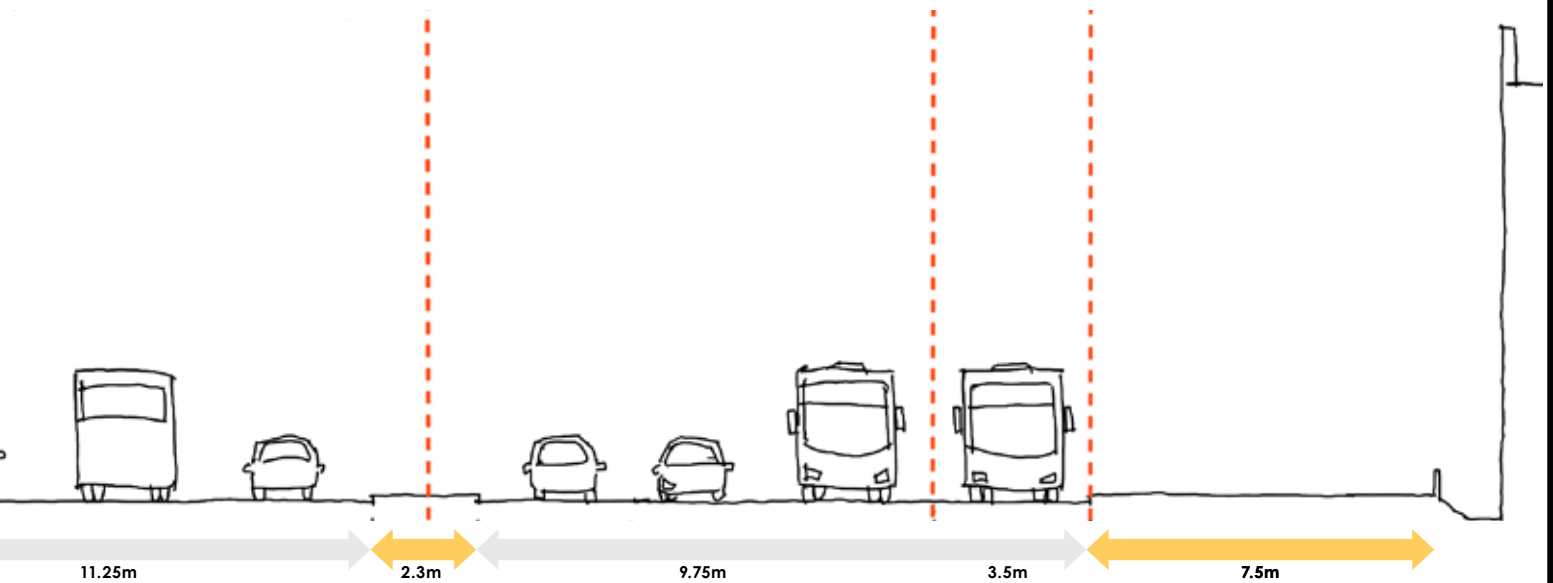
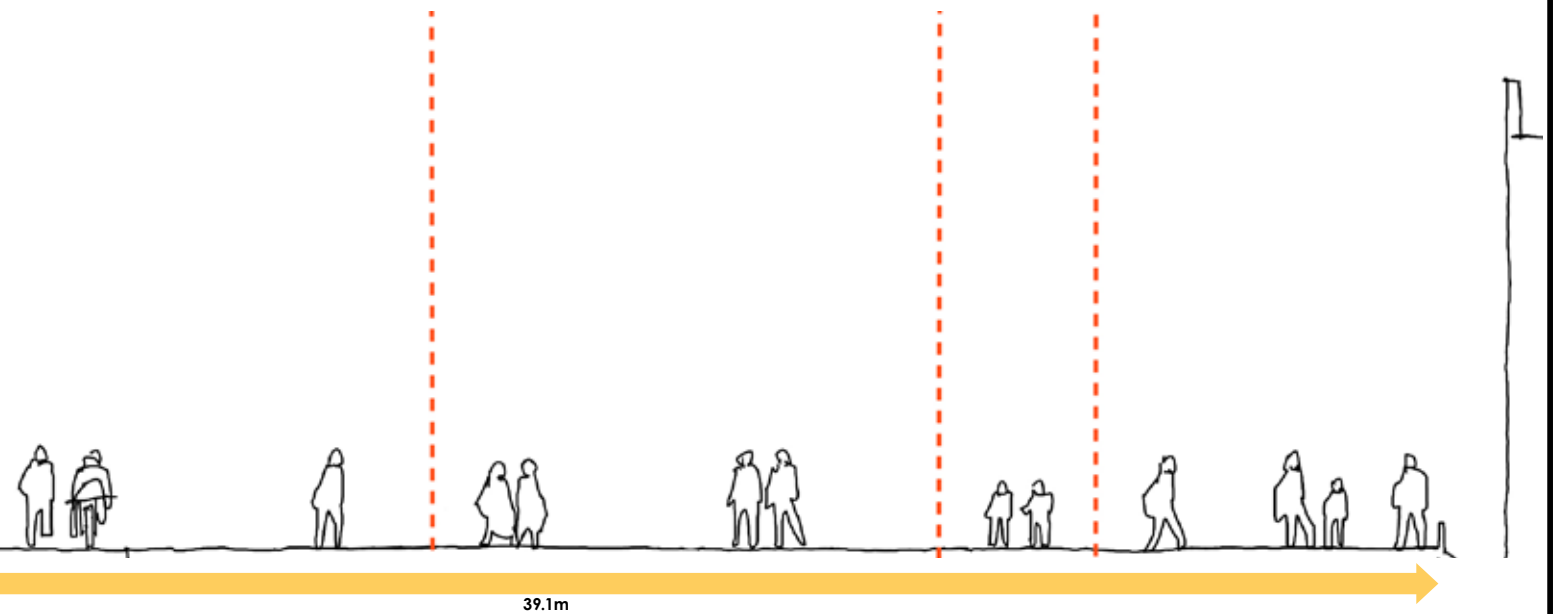




Station Hill, Reading



Utrecht, Netherlands



BIKE PATH OPTIONS

The existing bike path along the edge of the railway tracks has been identified earlier in this document as suffering from a lack of passive surveillance and perceived lack of safety and security. Its position constrains the width of potential development parcels that could otherwise back straight onto the railway tracks. Due to its location pushed to the edge, it appears as a back-of-house or service access and feels secondary to vehicles.

However, the bike path does provide a direct, uninterrupted and segregated bike route through the area, although it also functions as the only north-south pedestrian route.

This section proposes two potential options for improving bike access within the station area, building on its strengths while addressing weaknesses.



1. Looking north. Police station on right



2. Looking south with rail station ahead



3. Looking north as bicycle path drops down through cutting

Potential layout 1

This option retains the existing bicycle path and creates a new segregated path within the revised Lytton Way street profile. It is compatible with all three Central Area Options. The provision of a new bike hub facility can be accessed conveniently from both routes.

Provision of the new path within the enhanced streetscape of Lytton Way contributes to an activated public realm and the increased safety and security this provides. It elevates cycling to the street and makes it more visible as a mobility option.

The new path would be segregated from cyclists by use of a different surface colour and small kerb upstands, as recommended in LTN 1/20 (Cycle Infrastructure Design). The routing along the street would create some potential conflict points with pedestrians, and cars at the multi-storey car park entrance. These would need to be mitigated with clear markings and signage.

Retention of the existing path provides an alternative route for cyclists to follow that would not have conflict points, although a future redesign of the station building could alter its path at that point. However this duplication of routes reduces the efficiency of layout and consequently the area of developable land. It would require development parcels to provide active frontages or overlooking on both aspects, rather than simply backing onto the railway tracks. This would further constraint development options.

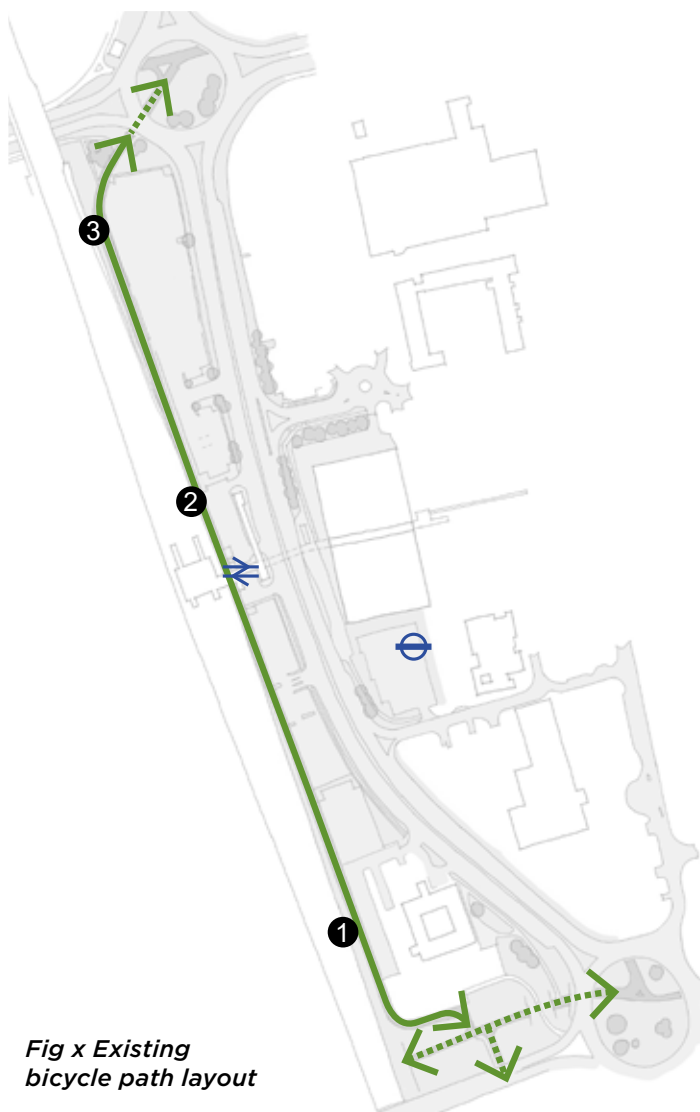


Fig x Existing bicycle path layout



Fig x Potential layout option 1

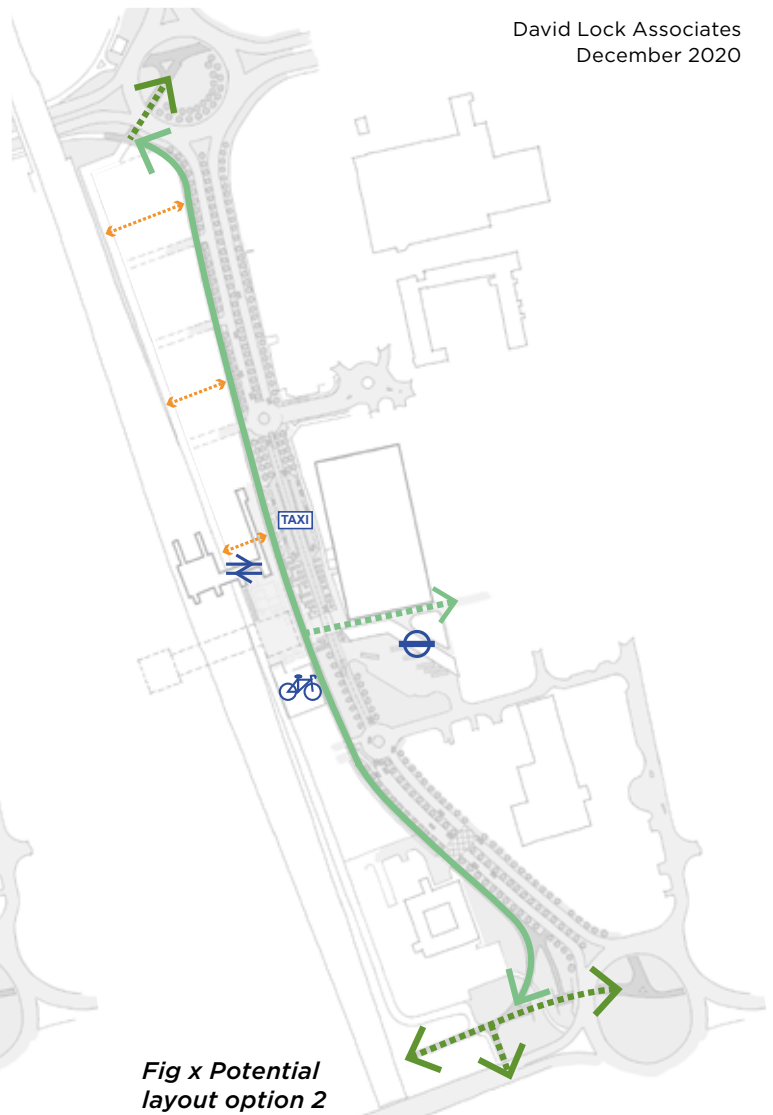


Fig x Potential layout option 2

Potential layout 2

This option removes the existing bicycle path but creates a new segregated path within the revised Lytton Way street profile. It is compatible with all three Central Area Options. The provision of a new bike hub facility can be accessed conveniently from the bike path.

Provision of the new path within the enhanced streetscape of Lytton Way contributes to an activated public realm and the increased safety and security this provides. It elevates cycling to the street and makes it more visible as a mobility option.

The new path would be segregated from cyclists by use of a different surface colour and small kerb upstands, as recommended in LTN 1/20 (Cycle Infrastructure Design). The routing along the street would create some potential conflict points with pedestrians, and cars at the multi-storey car park entrance. These would need to be mitigated with clear markings and signage.

Removal of the existing path creates a more efficient layout and increases the amount of developable land, and the flexibility of the development parcels as they

are deeper and could place servicing and inactive frontages adjacent to the railway tracks.



Frideswide Square, Oxford

PHASING AND TEMPORARY USE

To transform the station area towards one of these options requires a phasing strategy that considers:

- Timing of highway works
- Provision of active travel infrastructure
- Timing of relocation of key mobility uses such as taxi ranks and drop-off
- Relocation and consolidation of station surface car parking

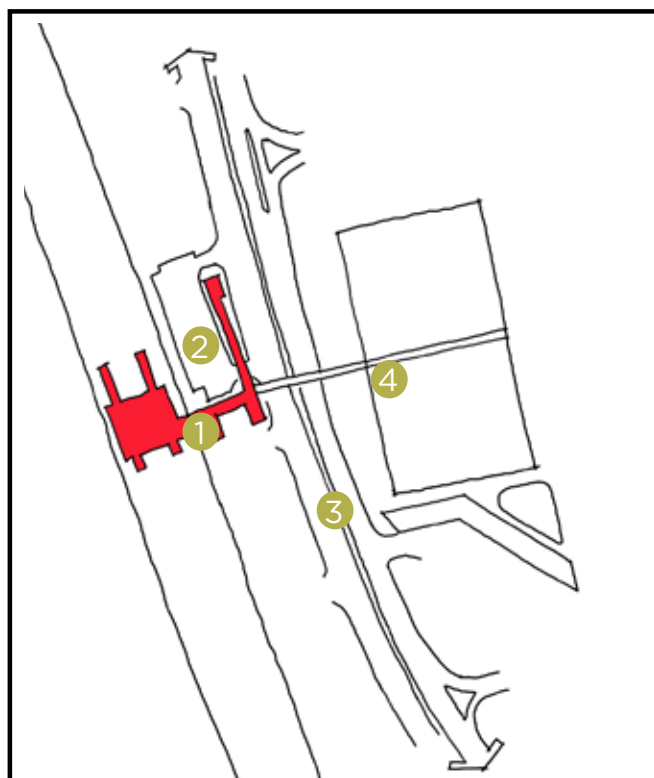
A potential phasing strategy that is robust and flexible enough to accommodate all three options is presented in figure XX. Phase 1 provides the temporary groundwork for Phase 2, which fully implements the options as presented in this report. Phase 3 considers

potential future developments and how they would interact with the options presented.

To enable this phased approach, a strategy employing temporary uses should be put in place. The phasing strategy clearly identifies locations suitable for such temporary uses, which can enliven the space around the station and establish the groundwork and footfall for permanent development in the future. This can provide reassurance to potential developers that a location is viable and visited, as well as creating a safer and more vibrant place during the process of transformation.

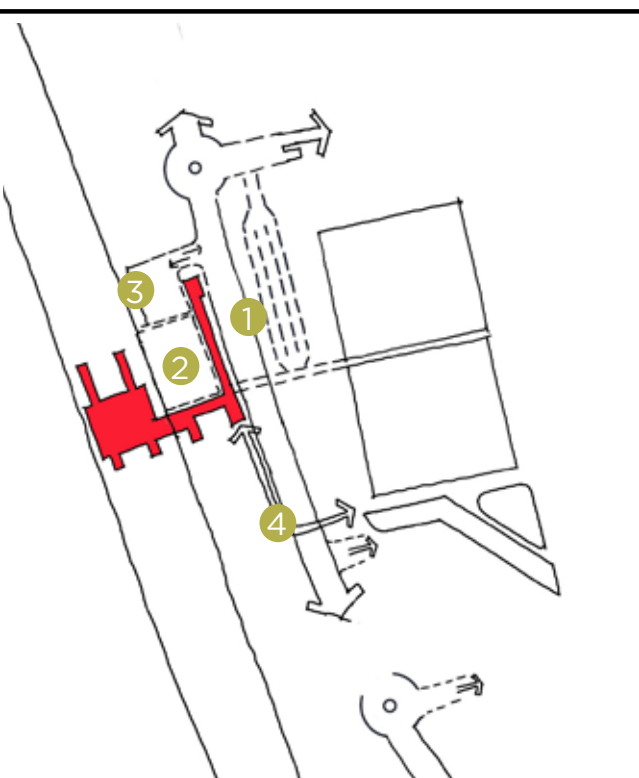
Precedent studies of temporary or 'meanwhile' uses are presented on the following pages.

Existing



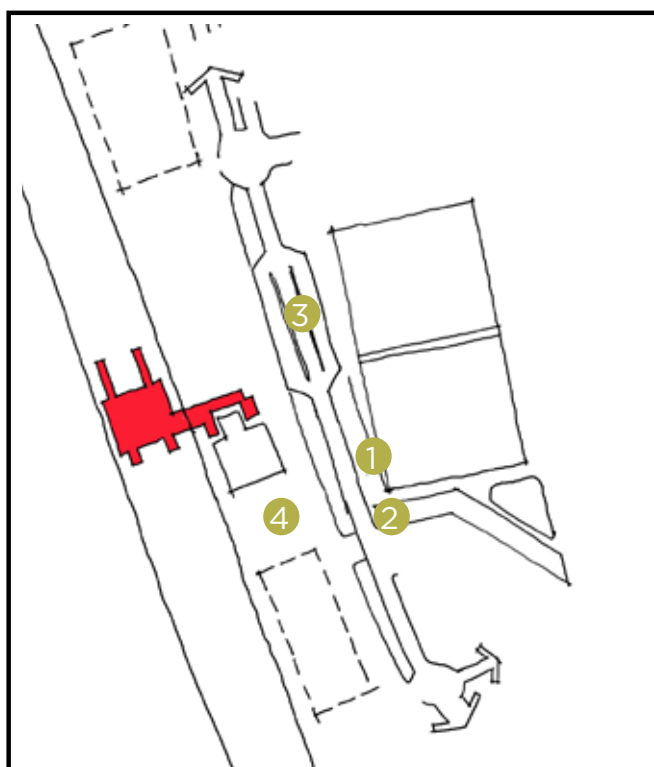
1. Train station
2. Taxi rank and station drop-off
3. Dual carriageway to Lytton Way
4. Sports Centre and bridge link to train station

Phase 1 - Temporary Uses



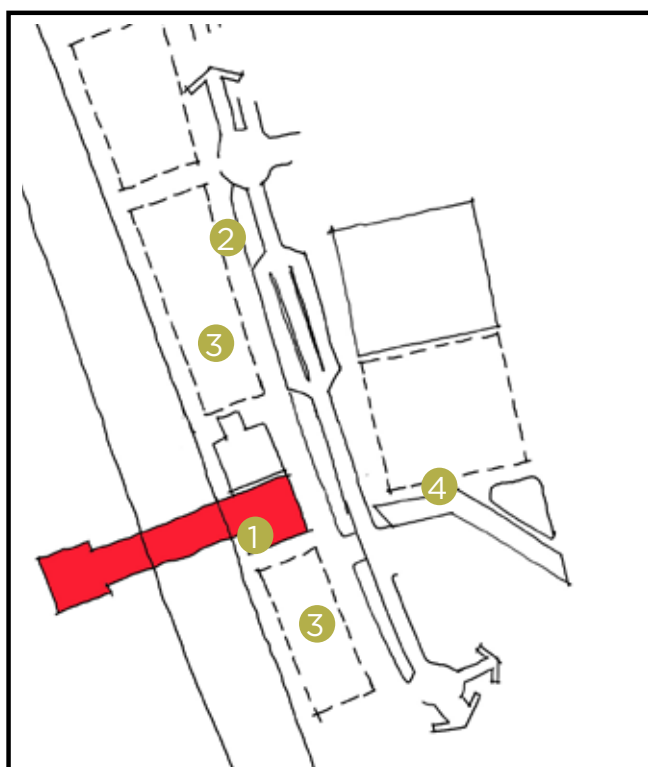
1. Condensing of north and south movements to the western carriageway to enable construction of taxi rank and new Lytton Way Boulevard and removal of pedestrian bridge
2. Temporary pedestrianisation of station drop-off area as 'meanwhile' traffic-free plaza
3. Condensing of taxi rank north of pedestrianised plaza
4. Temporary pedestrian walkway and crossing linking train station to bus station and town centre

Phase 2 - AAP Options



1. Opening of Lytton Way Boulevard along new alignment
2. Creation of a pedestrian super-crossing
3. New taxi rank constructed on-line of Lytton Way Boulevard
4. Creation of new permanent Station Square to south existing train station, future-proofed for new station building to its south

Phase 3 - Future Potential



1. Development of new train station building
2. Completion of Lytton Way Boulevard (shared cycle and footway)
3. Potential development of adjacent parcels
4. Potential redevelopment of the sports centre

PRECEDENT STUDIES 'MEANWHILE USES'

Selection of images of precedent projects to illustrating temporary or 'meanwhile' uses and activation of urban spaces.

The examples include a range of opportunities for planting, exhibitions, seating, play and cafes. installation and removal is typically quick and straight forwards requiring minimal invasive construction / demolition.



Deptford project: re-purposed train carriage as cafe and community meeting point





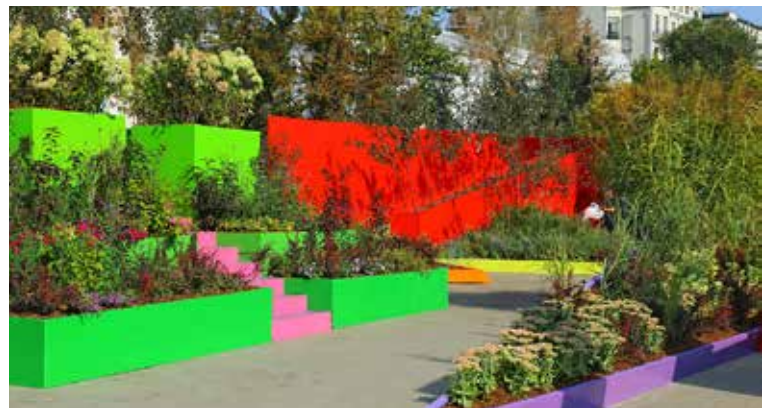
Kalvebod Waves, copenhagen (JDS Architects)



TEMPORARY INTERACTIVE ART / PLAY INSTALLATION



Southbank Centre, London



Moscow City day: City without borders
Temporary play & interactive sculpture (Studio Fink)



Barbican, City of London



TEMPORARY GREENING THE GREY

Hammersmith Grove (project centre)

GREENING THE GREY

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION

Stevenage, as the UK's original New Town, was designed to ensure that green open space was accessible to all and integrated within the urban built environment. The station area should reflect this heritage and deliver it as part of a vibrant, rich and interesting urban place. The reconfiguration of Lytton Way outlined in this report, along with all of the Central Area Options, deliver opportunities to re-integrate natural habitats and planted landscaping throughout the environment.

Such a strategy provides relief from hard landscaped environments, gives space for biodiversity, improves microclimates with the cooling or shading effects

of trees and plants, offers sustainable surface water management and enhances the experience and appearance of the environment. Above all, new green infrastructure around the station will create a great gateway experience that reflects the green character of the rest of the town.

Opportunities to include green infrastructure exist throughout the proposed options. These include:

- Street trees
- Planted landscaping
- Sustainable drainage features
- Green roofs and walls on new development

CASE STUDY:

SHEFFIELD

One of the most successful urban schemes to incorporate significant new green infrastructure and biodiversity improvements has been the 'Greening the Grey' scheme in Sheffield. Although the scheme covers a wider area than just the station area, it has created significant change throughout the city centre. The scheme has transformed streets that previously only featured hard landscaping materials into habitat-rich spaces, with seating and significantly improved streetscapes. Vehicle space has been reduced and the planting offers separation between transport infrastructure and pedestrians.

A key function of the areas of planting are the collection and storage of rainwater enabled by the increased area of permeable surface. These help to reduce the quantum and slow the flow of stormwater into the City's sewer system.

The planting palette has been selected for its low maintenance requirements. All planting requires a degree of maintenance but this can be minimised through the selection and specification of the right species. Species have also been selected for their aesthetic qualities to create an enhanced streetscape and also for their ecological value as a food source for insects and birds.



USING DEVELOPMENT TO MAKE A PLACE

The reconfiguration of mobility along Lytton Way enables a range of development opportunities to come forward on land previously used for car parking or transport infrastructure.

Opportunities for investment and development are important to identify within this key location. Beyond this, the design of developments should support the creation of the station area as a functional, vibrant, interesting and useful place for the town – a destination as well as a transit point towards other places.

As well as drawing upon the land uses outlined in Policy TC4, this report also draws upon other documents including the SBC Arts & Culture Strategy to define potential uses that could animate and occupy space around the station.

Key principles that have been adopted include:

- Surface car parking for the railway station can be consolidated into either multi-storey car parks (MSCP) or within basements without losing parking capacity but releasing significant land
- Vertical mixed-use within buildings is possible, particularly with commercial uses such as offices and retail sharing the same building
- Maximisation of active frontages and ground-floor opportunities along the streets, particularly around the new station square environment
- Flexibility of space provided is essential to enable the area to grow and adapt as it is developed. Temporary uses and occupation of space can help bridge the gap between today and the future place.

Flexibility

The recent change to the Use Classes Order (UCO) to subsume use classes A1, A2, A3 and B1 into a single class E (subject to some exemptions), presents both issues and opportunities from a planning policy perspective in this location.

At a policy stage it will be less possible for SBC to restrict or specify particular land uses, especially on the ground floor, without more detailed planning policy or restrictions in place. However, this may not be required as the purpose of the use class change is to encourage flexibility to move between different uses as local conditions require. This could present an opportunity for a more adaptive place that can change uses quickly as the area develops over time. From the point of view of the preparation of the AAP, suggested or anticipated uses will still be included in plans for development options, as the space and servicing requirements for retail are considerably different from those of offices.

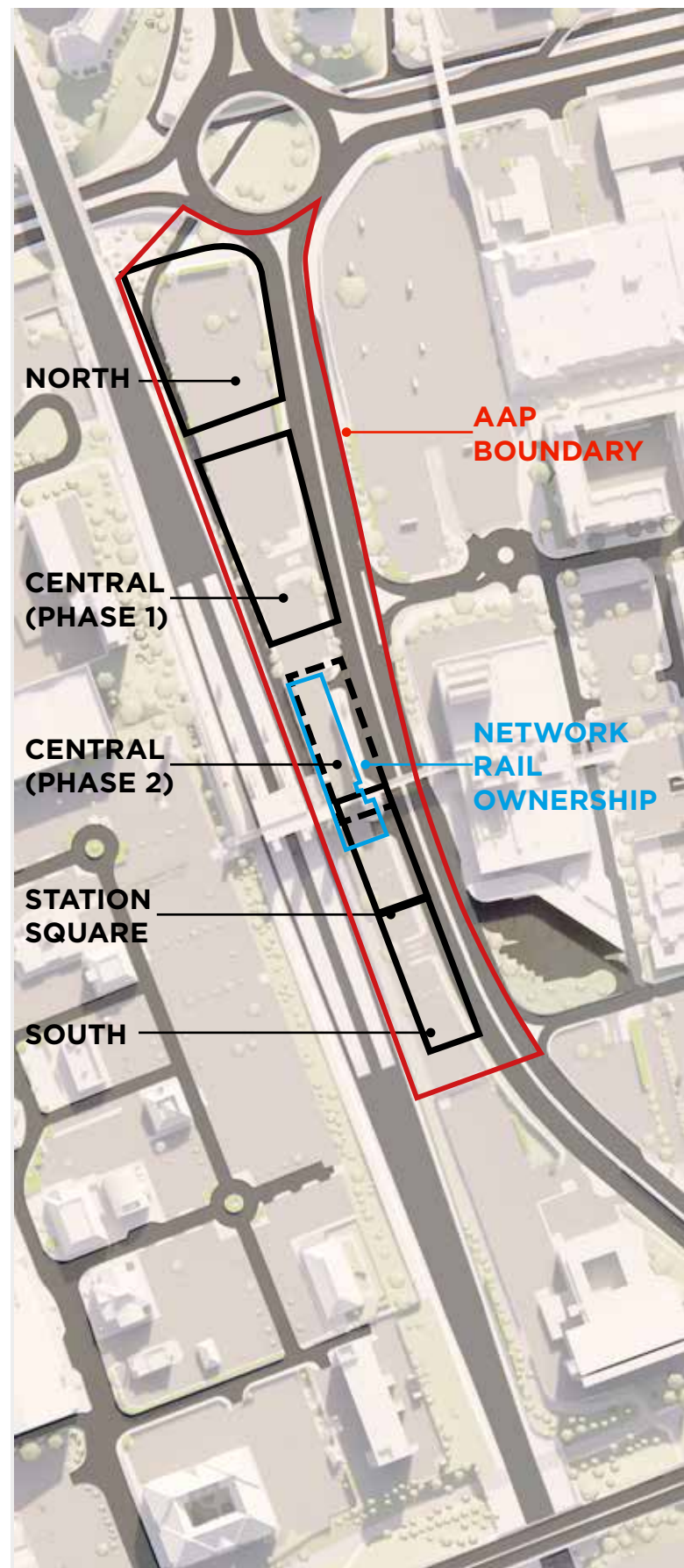
Development Parcels

Four main development parcels have been identified:

- **North:** made up of the existing surface car parks north of the railway station. This land is currently largely in the ownership of SBC and would have the potential to be developed in an early phase.
- **Central [Phase 1]:** made up of the existing surface car parks north of the railway station. This land is currently largely in the ownership of SBC and would have the potential to be developed in an early phase.
- **Central [Phase 2]:** made up of the existing station drop-off areas and immediate surrounds of the existing station, to the north of the proposed square present in all of the Central Area Options. This land is primarily in the ownership of Network Rail, and would only be able to come forward for development after a new railway station building was constructed further to the south, adjacent to the proposed public [station] square.
- **Station Square:** made of the existing surface car parks south of the railway station within the AAP boundary. This land is also currently in the ownership of SBC. This in effect becomes a reserve site, futureproofing the potential to deliver a new rail station should funding become available. As such its delivery is in determinable.
- **South:** made of the existing surface car parks south of the railway station within the AAP boundary. This land is also currently in the ownership of SBC and would have the potential to be developed in an early phase.

For the most efficient use of land, and to deliver the comprehensive objectives of the regeneration policy, proposals for these development parcels should respond to the AAP's Core Enhancements and mobility options, presented earlier in this chapter. At present, plot widths are compromised by the need to provide pedestrian movement along Lytton Way within curtilage. Redistribution of vehicle space.

Isolated, uncoordinated development proposals that do not effectively respond to the AAP have the potential to compromise effective placemaking efforts and reduce the overall development gains that could be delivered through a comprehensive approach.

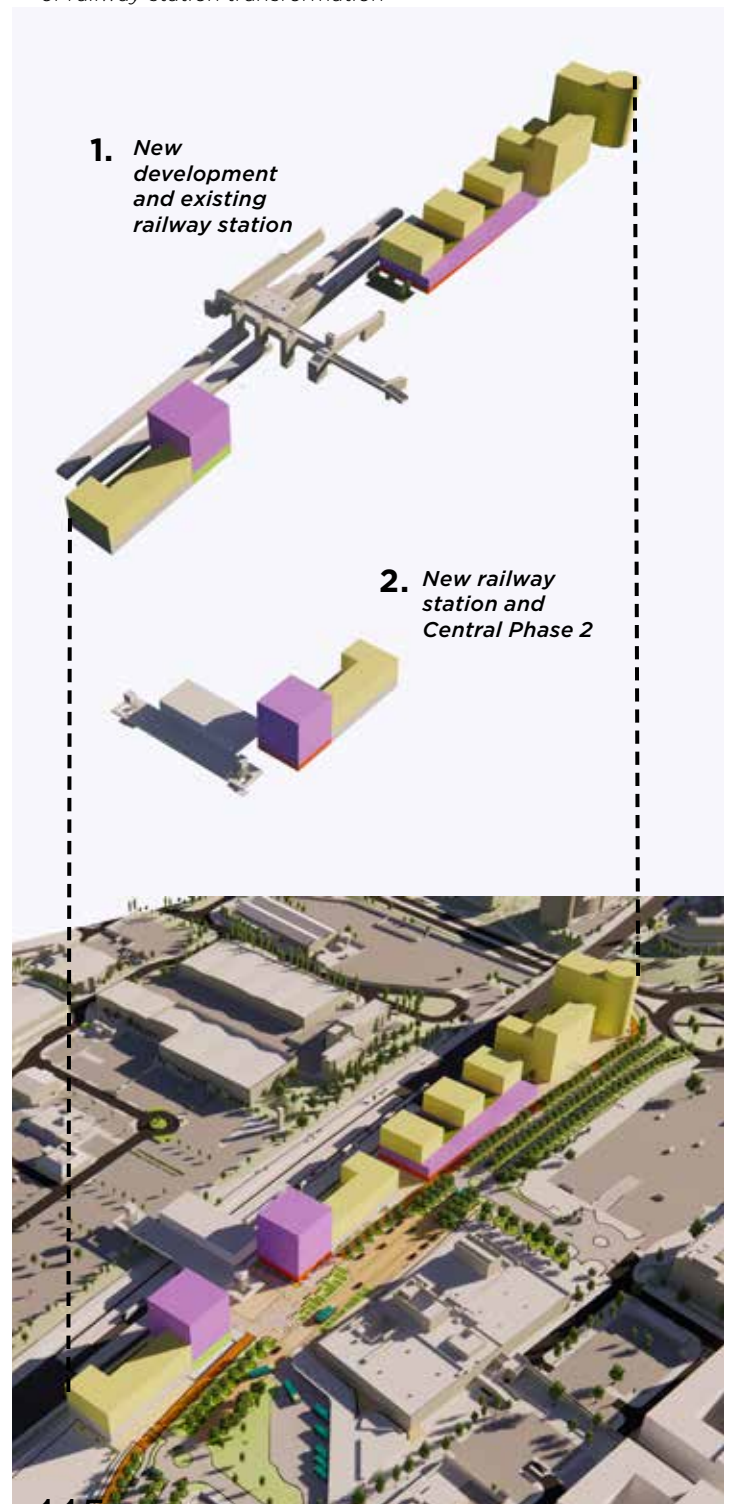




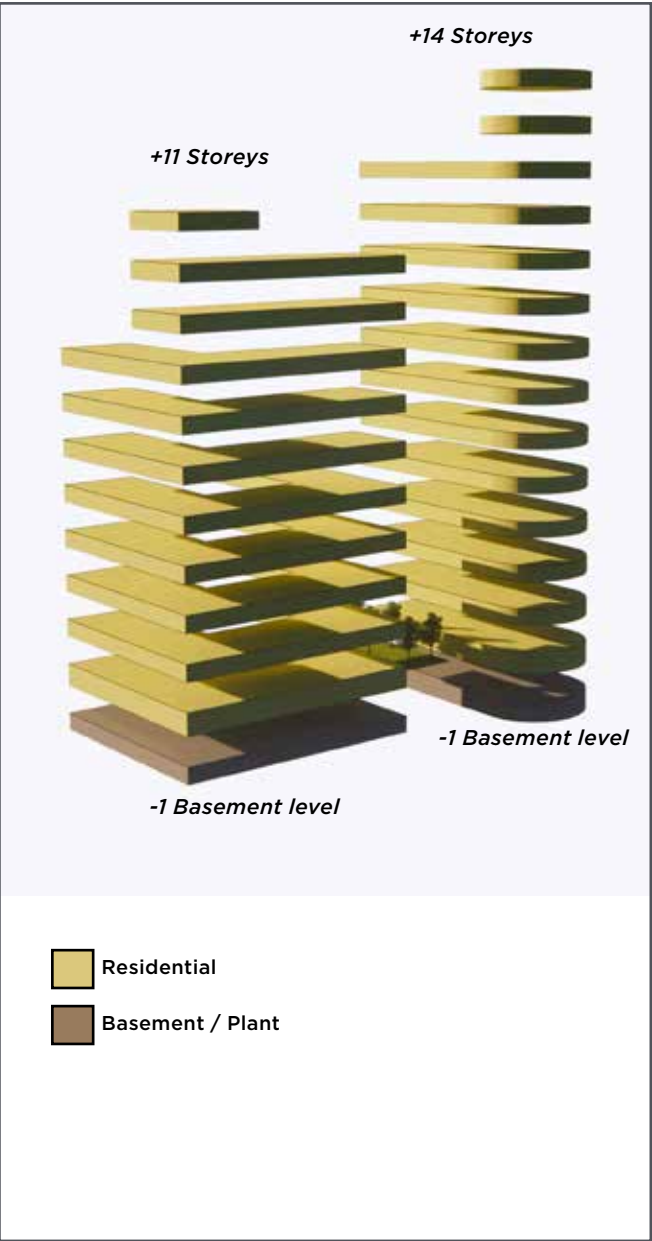
Plan of station area showing new railway station in place

Each development parcel has the potential to support a mix of uses that contribute towards the components of placemaking, as identified in chapter 4. Accompanying the description of the potential uses are some illustrations showing how development in the various locations could be designed. These are illustrative and seek to explore key urban design principles.

Perspective showing potential sequencing of railway station transformation



- North:** this parcel offers an opportunity to create a landmark development which could predominantly be residential-led. This is a prominent gateway site and given the lack of adjoining development and the need to create a gateway development, storey heights should be a minimum of 6 storeys and could rise to over 10 storeys, dependent upon the configuration of the buildings. A basement storey of surface car parking, to retain a proportion of commuter parking provision, as well as an element of development parking will be required as part of this development parcel with due consideration given to safe access and egress for vehicles accessing Lytton Boulevard.



Development Option 1 exploded levels diagram



North parcel plan location



Development Option 1

The images below show how a variety of building forms could be developed for the Northern site, and in particular buildings heights can be adjusted to create a fitting gateway development.



Development Option 1

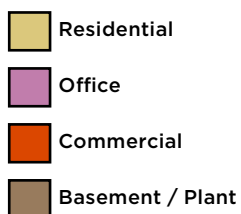
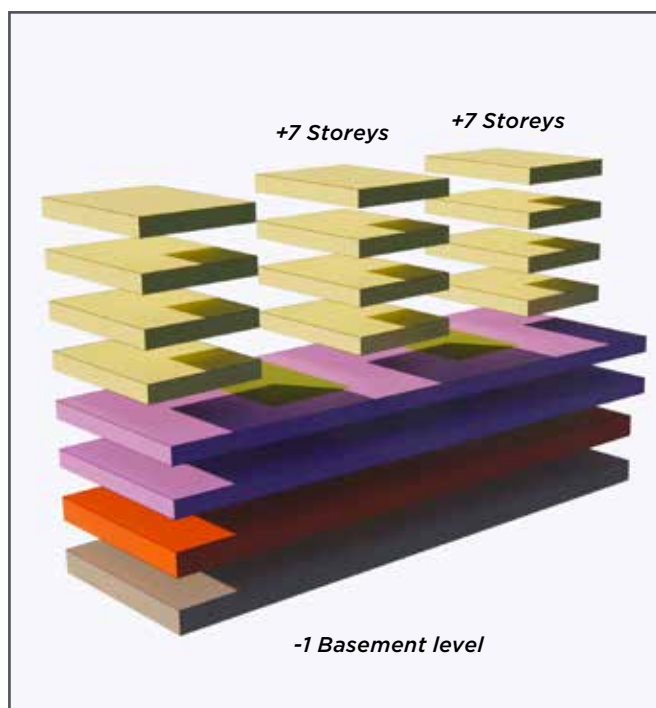


Development Option 2



Development Option 3

- Central [Phase 1]:** this parcel offers the opportunity to locate a wide variety of uses including a hotel, office space, residential with an active ground floor. Given the lack of adjoining development, storey heights should be a minimum of 6 storeys and could rise to over 10 storeys, dependent upon the configuration of the buildings. A basement storey of surface car parking, to retain commuter parking provision, as well as an element of development parking will be required as part of this development parcel with due consideration given to safe access and egress for vehicles accessing Lytton Boulevard.



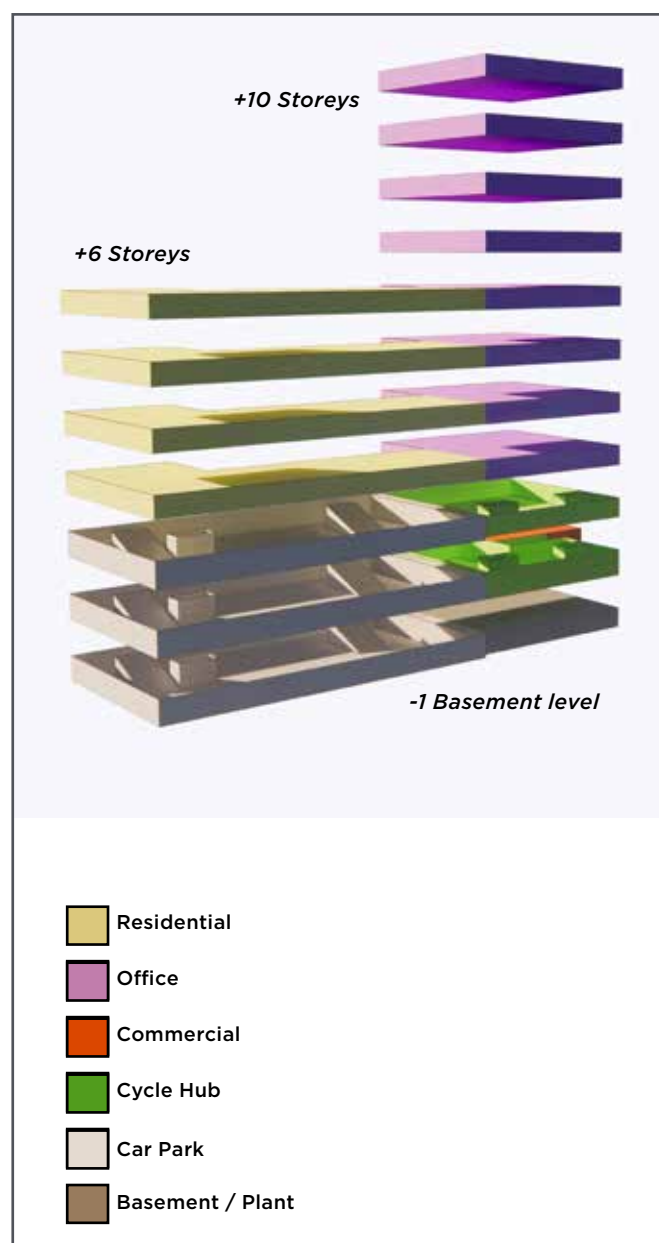
Central Phase 1 plan location



Central Phase 1

Central Phase 1 exploded levels diagram

- **South:** this parcel offers the best opportunity to consolidate station parking into a multi-storey car park, accessed from the south. Such a car park could provide a platform on which to locate residential development above. The northern end of the parcel would be an ideal location for a high-quality cycle hub, such as that seen in Cambridge or in Dutch cities, providing accessible and secure bike parking and maintenance directly adjacent to the existing and proposed new railway station, as well as the bus station. Offices could be located above the cycle hub, with storey heights determined by market demand and consideration for sunlight into the new public space to the north.



South exploded levels diagram

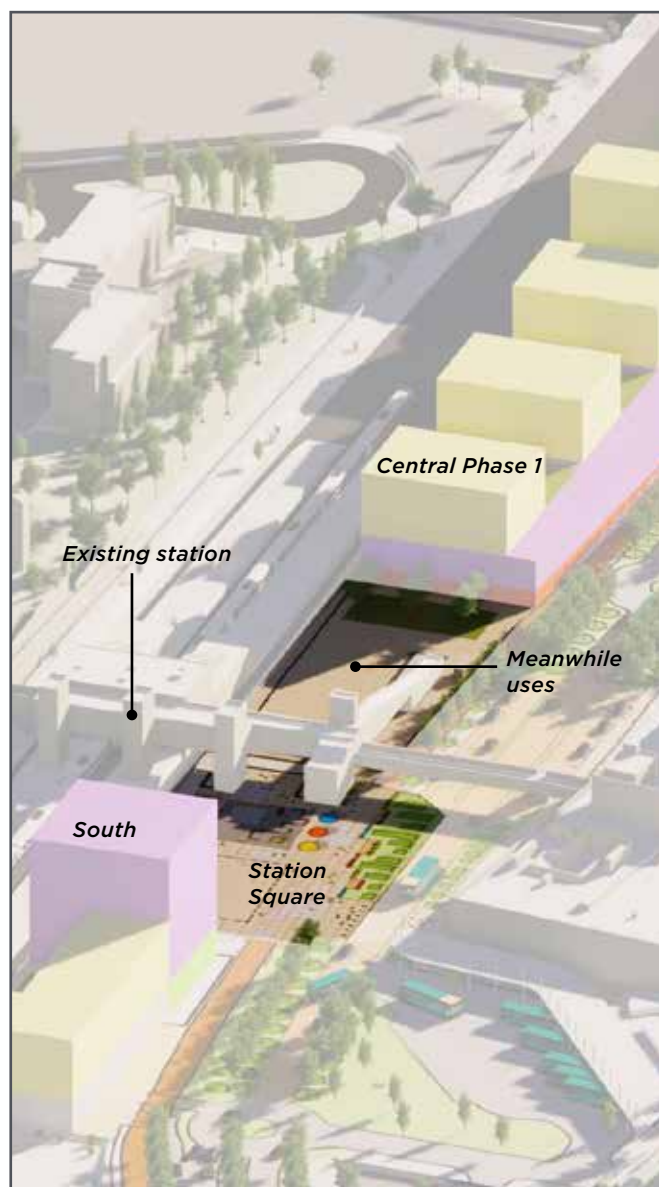


South plan location

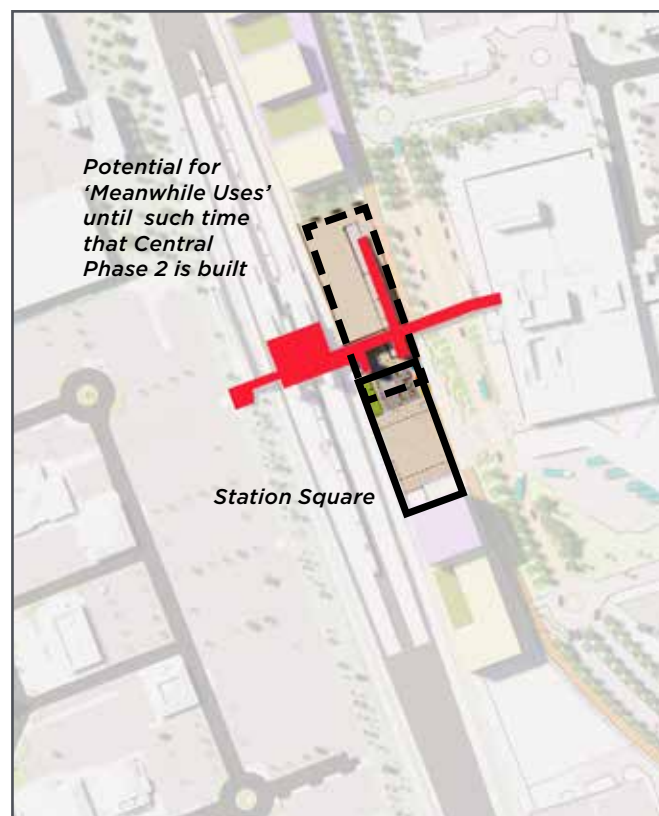


South development

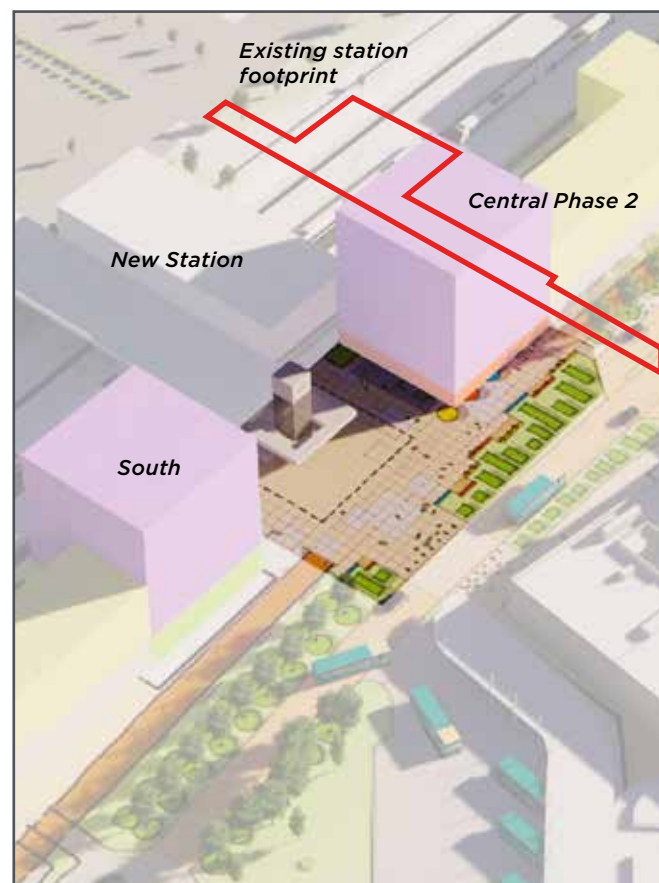
- Station Square:** Whilst this is designated as a longer-term development site, primarily being occupied by a new rail station building it will also form part of the public realm that will define the arrival into Stevenage. Until such time that the rail station is built the site will perform an important role in being the arrival and departure space for Stevenage. As such this should be a well designed space that will be of high quality and act as an extension of the regeneration of the town centre. The design of the space will need to be designed so that it can accommodate a new [rail station] building in part of the space. The design of the space is also a perfect opportunity to support Meanwhile uses that can evolve and change over time. This could also play a role in supporting SBC's Arts and Cultural Strategy.



Plan showing Station Square and 'meanwhile uses' area prior to moving the railway station

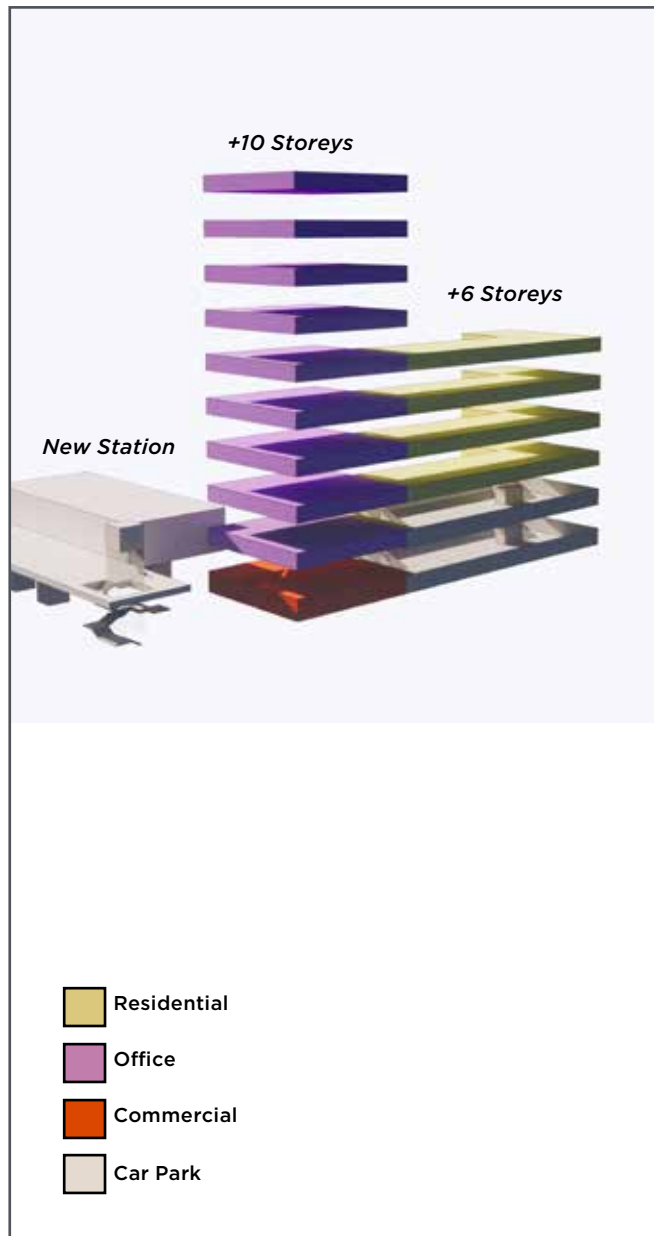


Station Square plan location



Plan showing new railway station in situ with completion of Central Phase 2 development phase

- **Central [Phase 2]:** this is a longer-term development option that will frame the new public space after a potential new station building is constructed [it would be built largely on the area occupied by the existing rail station]. As such it will have intensive mixed-use, including a vibrant ground floor with retail, café's and other active uses. Above this office uses would successfully capitalise on the highly accessible location. As it is located to the north of the public square, a landmark or feature tower would be appropriate.



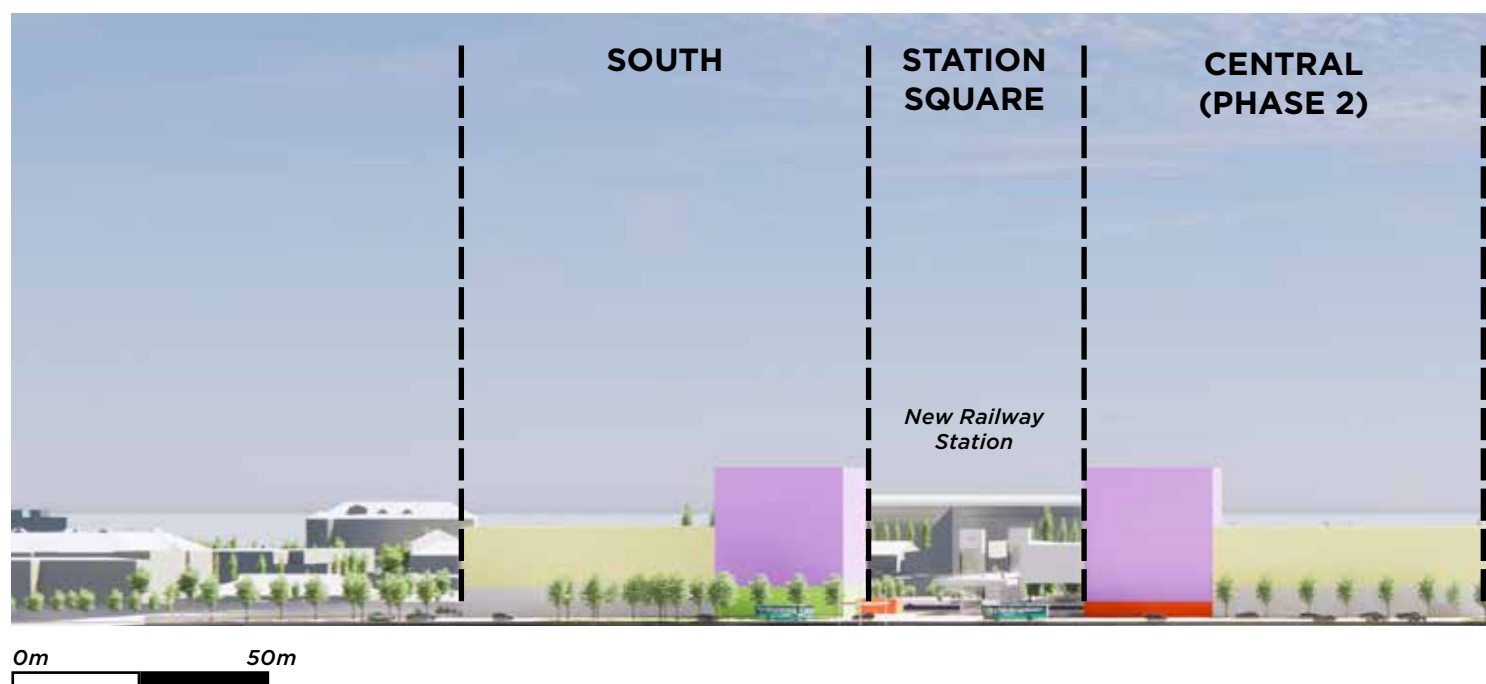
Central Phase 2 exploded levels diagram



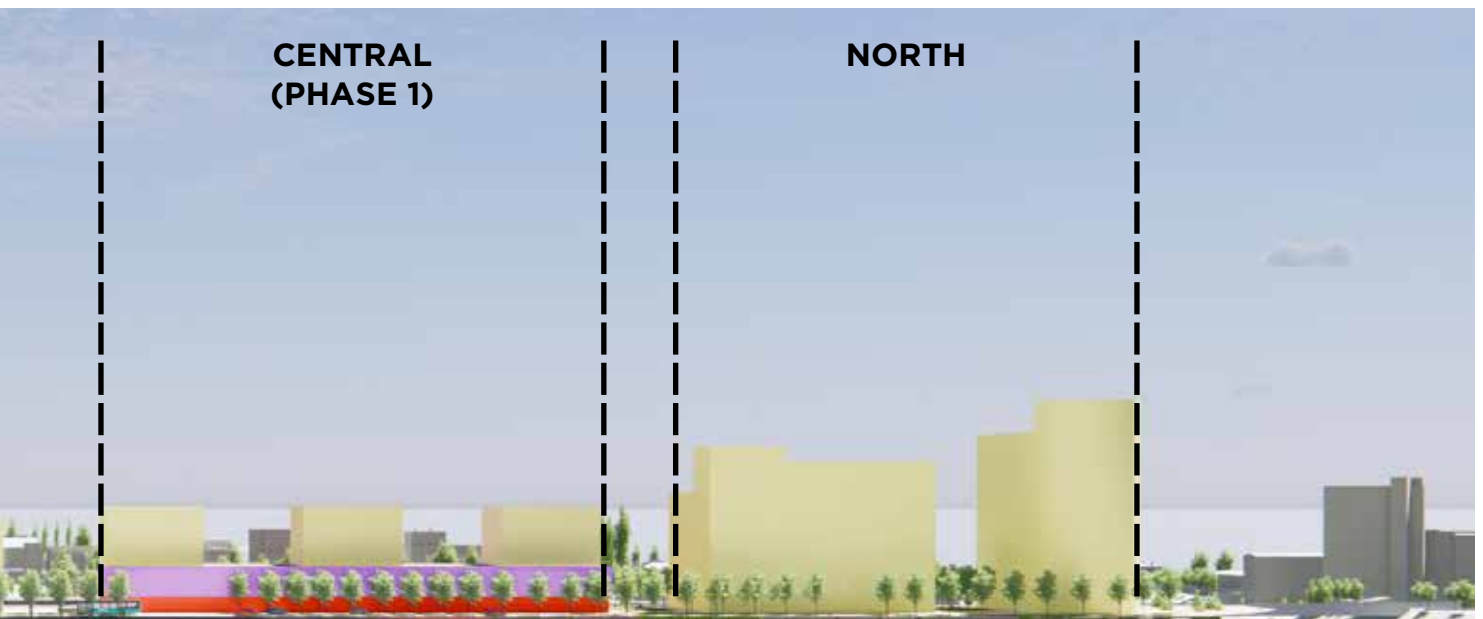
Central Phase 2 plan location



Central Phase 2 development



Perspective view of station area 1



Perspective view of station area 2

Parking Consolidation

The surface car parks adjacent to the railway station provide around 450 parking spaces, and are typically well-used. Consolidation of the existing surface parking will be an essential component of delivering the objectives of the AAP.

Key considerations that should be followed when developing car parking proposals:

- Development phasing should ensure that the first existing surface car park brought forward for development should provide sufficient parking that either replaces the parking displaced, or a comprehensive multi-storey car park (MSCP) that replaces all station car parking that will be displaced across North, Central and South development parcels in due course.
- MSCPs require a significant vehicle access, ideally onto a roundabout or controlled junction, and should be considered carefully in conjunction with the circulation proposals presented earlier in this document.
- MSCPs should be screened by single-aspect development or ground-floor uses to preserve the streetscape and active frontage
- Assuming two double rows of car parking, each at 16m wide, a 4 storey multi-storey car park of length 70m would provide full replacement of the existing station parking places. This is approximately two-thirds of the length of the Station South car park, demonstrating the efficiency of multi-storey parking.
- New development such as residential uses and offices may require additional car parking provision, but this should be limited due to the excellent sustainable transport accessibility of the location. Basement parking is likely to be appropriate for these uses.

Two potential locations for a new comprehensive MSCP are proposed:

- Station North car park – within Central (phase 1) parcel
- Station South car park – within South parcel





Advantages and disadvantages against the delivery of the objectives of the AAP, along with commentary, are listed in the table below.

	Station North - Central (phase 1) parcel	Station South - South parcel
ADVANTAGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables northern half of Lytton Way to be 'town street' with continuous active frontages and no major vehicle accesses across pedestrian and cycling routes Fits better with character of southern end of Lytton Way – transport, police station and similar uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close to proposed new station entrance Close to new bus station Access adjacent to potential new roundabout (as proposed in Core Enhancements) Efficient in plot width More direct access from A1(M) junction for commuters Enables northern half of Lytton Way to be 'town street' with continuous active frontages and no major vehicle accesses across pedestrian and cycling routes Fits better with character of southern end of Lytton Way – transport, police station and similar uses
DISADVANTAGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distant from proposed new station entrance Distant from new bus station Less efficient in terms of plot width Breaks continuous active frontage from Station Square northwards to North parcel, with major vehicle access across pedestrian and cycling routes Less direct access from A1(M) junction for commuters Compromises ability to locate A1 offices on this key site, with potential impacts on overall GDV in AAP area Does not contribute to potential 'town street' character potential Further from existing railway station entrance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further from existing railway station entrance
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wider circulation proposals presented in the AAP should be considered when siting an MSCP 'Sleeving' of MSCP with ground floor uses would be required to not compromise quality of street Wider circulation proposals presented in the AAP should be considered when siting an MSCP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wider circulation proposals presented in the AAP should be considered when siting an MSCP

07 CONCLUSION AND FEEDBACK

07 CONCLUSIONS AND FEEDBACK

This report outlines the core issues that are present within the station area as well as the background policy and wider context that affects its development. This is an early stage of the preparation of an AAP, and initial options that focus on mobility are presented for feedback from targeted stakeholders.

Stakeholder Feedback

This report will be circulated to key stakeholders who operate within and around the area covered by the AAP. It seeks targeted feedback from these stakeholders on the following topics set out in Chapter 6:

- The Enhancements for All Options
- Each of the Central Area Options (1, 2 and 3), with a particular focus on issues and opportunities raised by the different mobility options
- The Bike Path Options (1 and 2)
- Phasing approaches

In addition to these, this stage of the process seeks informal thoughts and feedback on opportunities for and the form of Temporary Uses, Green Infrastructure and potential Development Options.

The next stage of the process of preparation of the AAP will be a formal public consultation on more developed options that have been influenced by feedback from this report.



Planning & Development Committee Report Cover:

Report name: Parking Strategy Consultation

Officer(s) presenting: Robert Woodisse / Phil Howard

Reason for it being before Planning & Development Committee:

To take comments on the consultation approach for the draft Parking Strategy 2021-2031

Other briefings:

The Executive in December 2020 agreed that the draft Parking Strategy could go to public consultation in 2021 and asked for the consultation period to be extended from one month to two months. The consultation would include the Council's website, social media, the Chronicle along with a questionnaire.

Scrutiny Committee later that month asked that councillors be engaged in the consultation process to get their ideas and asked for the proposed consultation plan to be shared with them to ensure as comprehensive a consultation as possible.

Supporting documents include the draft Parking Strategy, the draft questionnaire questions and the proposed consultation plan.

Likely next steps:

To finalise the consultation plan taking into account Members comments

To carry out consultation in line with the consultation plan

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Meeting Executive
Portfolio Area Economy and Transport
Date 9 December 2020



STEVENAGE PARKING STRATEGY 2021-2031: PUBLIC CONSULTATION

KEY DECISION

Author Philip Howard | 2296
Lead Officer Zayd Al-Jawad | 2257
Contact Officer Philip Howard | 2296

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Members with an explanation of the reasons for reviewing the adopted Stevenage Parking Strategy (adopted in 2004)
- 1.2 To provide Members with an overview of the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 (Appendix A).
- 1.3 To seek Members' approval to carry out public consultation on the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the content of the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 be noted.
- 2.2 That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director: Planning and Regulation, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport, to make minor amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of the draft Strategy prior to its consultation.

- 2.3 That the Executive approve publishing the Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 for consultation early in 2021.

3 BACKGROUND

Stevenage Parking Strategy (2004)

- 3.1 Councils that operate Civil Parking Enforcement, such as SBC, are expected to have a Parking Strategy. This is a document that sets out how they will work to manage parking in line with local objectives and circumstances, taking into account planning policies and transport powers and considering the needs of different road users. It guides the creation, amendment and enforcement of parking controls and should be consistent with the area's Transport Strategy.
- 3.2 The Council's current Parking Strategy dates back to 2004. Since it was adopted many of the problems it set out to deal with have been resolved, whilst the Agency Agreement powers delegated from HCC that SBC uses to pursue it have changed with many functions returning to the County Council.
- 3.3 The 2004 Strategy sets out at length the parking issues that were faced when it was adopted and the approaches then required to deal with them. Given the changes that have taken place since its relevance has decreased, it is out of step with relevant policy developments and many new considerations such as provision for electric vehicles are not included at all.

Policy Background

- 3.4 There have been significant changes since 2004, including the adoption in 2019 of both the Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan 4 and Future Town, Future Transport, SBC's new Transport Strategy. Future Town, Future Transport set out that a new Parking Strategy should be produced (see box overleaf).
- 3.5 In addition, the Council declared a Climate Change Emergency in 2019 and approved the new Climate Change Strategy in September 2020. These policy documents all support more sustainable forms of transport and aim to achieve a modal shift in transportation away from privately-owned vehicles.
- 3.6 During the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031's preparation, the Covid-19 pandemic has underlined the benefits of non-car modes of transport for public health in terms of both physical fitness and air quality. This seen widespread public support, with YouGov reporting that four out of five people they surveyed in the UK support action "to curb air pollution by reserving more public space for walking, cycling and public transport" .
- 3.7 Stevenage aspires to be a Sustainable Travel Town, and to embrace the principles championed by Living Streets to create spaces for people. A Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan has been developed to help guide and drive improvements for pedestrians and cyclists, and a Parking Strategy that is more supportive of non-car modes will positively contribute to this aspiration.
- 3.8 With all these in mind, the Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 proposes approaches that would support modal shift away from the private motor car to

more active and sustainable modes of transport, while recognising that for some users/trips it will still be the most logical/appropriate way to travel and seeking to provide for this too (in particular for blue badge holders). It also seeks to ensure that Co-operative Council approaches will help to shape SBC's management of parking.

Parking Strategy, SBC

9.60 An update to the 2004 Parking Strategy will be produced, setting out how public parking will be managed across Stevenage. This will be a key tool in managing overall demand for the private car in Stevenage and should tie in with the other projects set out in this strategy to seek a modal shift in transportation habits. This could involve reducing the dominance of on-street car parking in Stevenage, thereby creating space for 'Liveable Streets' (*sic*) , or setting reduced levels and increased charges for public car parking to promote alternative forms of travel. It should also consider the implementation of EV charging points and whether there are other ways to future proof the infrastructure.

9.61 Car sharing, car-pooling, and car clubs are methods which promote the use of the car as a communal vehicle rather than a private vehicle. Incentives to encourage this should be considered, for example, designated car parking spaces at places of work for those who are car sharing.

Future Town, Future Transport: A Transport Strategy for Stevenage

pp.51-52

4 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

Recommendation 2.1: That the content of the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 be noted.

- 4.1 The draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 is included in Appendix A. A broad overview of the key amendments and additions from the adopted version are presented below.

Objectives

- 4.2 Four broad objectives are set for managing parking in Stevenage, based on existing policy positions and known concerns. These are:
- To prevent unsafe or obstructive parking;
 - To restrain unnecessary or undesirable parking and encourage modal shift;
 - To manage necessary or desirable parking; and
 - To support the town's Zero Carbon ambitions.

4.3 Approaches to pursuing these objectives are set out, in that:

- Work will be managed through a planned programme of projects;
- A “user hierarchy” will be adopted, guiding priority in managing parking in different contexts – consistently putting more sustainable modes and parking for disabled car users ahead of others, who are prioritised based on the character of the location (e.g. residents in a street; short stay for customers at shops);
- Will make decisions based on quantitative data and taking into account the views of residents and community stakeholders;
- Will use “soft approaches” such as publicity/educational campaigns alongside or instead of regulatory options;
- While pursuing transport objectives and not seeking to make money as a revenue raising exercise, the parking account should continue to be self-funding; and
- Some measures will be subject to funding bids for capital budgets within SBC, from the County Council, or from national funds.

4.4 A number of specific issues are then covered:

- Parking for disabled car users – that they will be prioritised and SBC will seek to ensure they can park where they need to;
- Support for sustainable transport – that parking may be prevented where needed to support other modes e.g. dealing with known obstructive parking blocking footways/cycleways, providing cycle parking at destinations, prohibiting parking at a previously unenforceable bus stop, providing for electric cars and car clubs, deterring excess car ownership;
- Parking in residential areas – clear criteria that must be exceeded for parking permits to be put in place, alternative ways to deal with commuter parking, approaches to managing parking of “white vans” to be kept under review, parking construction in existing streets to be based on the Parking Standards SPD for new developments, parking construction to contribute to funding tree planting and sustainable travel;
- Destination parking – “hospital parking” to normally prioritise outpatients & visitors (caveated for flexibility e.g. repurposing to support NHS workers as now during a pandemic), impact of parking proposals on school travel to be considered, short stay parking to support customers, servicing activity to be provided for, options for local workers to be considered especially where there isn’t an off-street option, low priority for railway commuters and football match parking;
- Placemaking and living streets – to be supported, led by Co-operative Neighbourhoods placemaking/living street projects;
- Regeneration – to be supported as required;

- New developments – aspiration to ensure Parking Standards SPD is effective by limiting parking to that intended by the application; and
- Discretionary services – such as bar markings at driveways will be kept under review to ensure they offer value the resident and SBC, and may be added to e.g. private contributions accepted to providing cycle parking or electric car charging.

Recommendation 2.2: That delegated powers be granted to the Assistant Director: Planning and Regulation, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy, Enterprise and Transport, to make minor amendments as are necessary in the final preparation of the draft Strategy prior to its consultation.

- 4.5 The draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 is appended to this report. However, it may be necessary to make minor changes prior to the consultation start date. This might include cosmetic adjustments, the correction of typographical errors and any minor factual changes.
- 4.6 It is recommended that any such amendments be approved via delegated powers.

Recommendation 2.3: That the Executive approve publishing the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy for consultation in early 2021.

- 4.7 The draft Parking Strategy was circulated electronically to the Portfolio Holders' Advisory Group, which includes the Environment and Economy Select Committee, to ensure it met their expectations.
- 4.8 Whilst there are no clear external requirements for the adoption of a new Parking Strategy, it has similarities with planning policy documents such as the Parking Standards SPD setting parking expectations for new developments, which are introduced following The Town & Country Planning Regulations 2012. The proposed approach is based on this, as supplemented by the requirements of the Council's Constitution and Statement of Community Involvement (May 2019).
- 4.9 In line with these principles, the Council should undertake a consultation for a minimum four week period. Following this, the Council should consider the consultation responses, produce a document stating the main issues raised by respondents, and summarise how the issues have been addressed by the Council.
- 4.10 Consultation will be promoted through a number of channels, including:
- direct engagement with known interest groups such as the Stevenage branch of Cycling UK;
 - online approaches including social media and the SBC website;
 - the local press.

- 4.11 The timetable for consultation and adoptions is currently as follows:

Stage	Date
Public Consultation	January-February 2021
Consider and address responses	Spring 2021
Adopt Strategy through Exec/Council	Summer 2021

- 4.12 As with any consultation exercise, it is not known how many responses will be received so the post-consultation stages will not be known for definite until a later date.

5 IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

- 5.1 The costs associated with producing and consulting on the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 will be met from the agreed departmental budget.
- 5.2 If adopted, the Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 sets out that operational management of on-street parking should seek to continue to be self-funding, and any surplus will be prioritised for spending on transport and parking measures as required by the Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 5.3 Larger projects and ongoing measures arising from the Strategy will require funding. In the main third party external funding will be sought to further the Strategy's aims, however some external funding does requires an element of match funding for example the government's electric car point grants cover a maximum of 75% of the project costs. Any SBC funding will need to be subject to the availability of limited capital resources and subject to capital bids on a case-by-case basis.

Legal Implications

- 5.4 Consultation on the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy will be undertaken in accordance with best practice as set out in paragraphs 4.7-4.12. Responses to the consultation will be considered and where appropriate taken into account in preparing a final draft for adoption.
- 5.5 There are no direct legal implications associated with consulting on the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031.

Risk Implications

- 5.6 There are no significant risks associated with producing the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031.

Policy Implications

- 5.7 The draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 accords with, and has been produced to supplement policies in Future Town, Future Transport the adopted Stevenage Transport Strategy (2019). It also accords with the policy aims of the SBC Mobility Strategy and the Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 4.
- 5.8 The document is also aligned with other corporate Council documents such as the Healthy Stevenage Strategy, the SBC Parking Standards SPD, the recently-declared Climate Emergency and the Climate Change Strategy, Action Plan and Charter.

Planning Implications

- 5.9 There are no direct planning implications associated with the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.10 The draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 has the potential to have a positive impact on climate change through the multiple benefits that prioritising sustainable and active modes of transport, and minimising car use, can bring. Active forms of transport, walking and cycling, can replace the need to use private cars, cutting the emissions associated with journeys within the town. The support provided by the Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 for promotion of public transport services and active modes of transport will help to reduce reliance on private car journeys, replacing them with more energy-efficient options. The Strategy will also have benefits in terms of air quality more generally.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.11 The draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 prioritises the parking needs of those with mobility disabilities. Otherwise, Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 itself does not have any direct equality or diversity implications. When undertaking any work under the direction of the Stevenage Parking Strategy the delivery body will need to consider the potential impacts on different community groups, in particular those who are less mobile or disabled.

Community Safety Implications

- 5.12 Whilst the draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 does not have any direct community safety implications itself, when undertaking any work under the direction of the Stevenage Parking Strategy the delivery body will need to consider the potential impacts on community safety.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- BD1 [Stevenage Parking Strategy 2004, SBC](#)
- BD2 [Future Town, Future Transport, SBC](#)
- BD3 [Local Transport Plan 4, HCC](#)

APPENDICES

- A Draft Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031

Living and Sustainable Streets for Stevenage



1 Foreword

When I attended The Barclay School back in the 1960s, my father used to park his Triumph Herald outside our house in Green Street. We were a “one-car” family in those days. The railway station was a ten minute walk away in Julians Road and the small station car park which could accommodate 50 cars was located opposite the old ESA furniture factory in Fairview Road.

I reminisce about those days with great affection. The population of Stevenage was about 60,000 and the pace of life seemed much slower and less frenetic.

Fifty-five years later and the population of Stevenage has increased by almost half. The current railway station has car parking capacity for over 450 vehicles, whilst within a five minute walk from the station another ten car parks can hold an incredible 2,850 vehicles. Bumper to bumper, that’s the equivalent of almost four football pitches of car parking – all within the confines of the Stevenage town centre.

However, car parking is a serious, emotive issue.

7.6 million homes in the UK have at least two cars. In the East of England (including Stevenage), the average is 1.38 cars for every household.

The New Towns Act of 1946 failed to anticipate the rise of private car popularity. Consequently, when the Stevenage Development Corporation built our town, it neglected to reflect the extent of present-day car ownership and how or where people prefer to park their car (i.e. within sight and easy reach of their front door).

As a Co-operative Council, Stevenage strongly believes that communities must be at the heart of the decisions we make. We want to hear from our residents how they feel parking problems and street management could change to better meet their needs. How do our residents feel about neighbourhood parking spaces or controlled parking zones? Are they worried about where to leave their works van, or because their neighbour’s van takes up a lot of space? Do parked cars affect their morning walk, or their decision on whether to cycle to the local shops?

This Strategy, and the actions that it sets out, seeks to empower and inspire communities to make behavioural changes and to lead the implementation of projects in their neighbourhoods, that will encourage them to make better use of our streets – our living streets.



Lloyd Briscoe

Executive Member, Economy, Enterprise & Transport

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2 Introduction

Stevenage was largely built during a period when planners predicted that in future there would be “a great flood of vehicles”¹ and sought to prepare accordingly with an efficient and capacious road network. However, only limited parking was provided for in residential areas and modern levels of car ownership and use put great pressure on the town’s streets.

Since 2004, when it applied for Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) powers, Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) has had a Parking Strategy to guide how those powers are used, but in that time its capabilities have changed. Although SBC no longer has the range of highway powers devolved from Hertfordshire County under its Highways Agency Agreement it did in 2004, it retains limited powers to undertake highway improvements such as parking bay construction. These powers are likely to be extended in the future to enable SBC to help provide for new technologies such as Electric Vehicles (EVs) to support their wider adoption.

Following the previous Parking Strategy’s adoption a rolling series of reviews was undertaken looking at different parts of the town and introducing parking restrictions to address hazardous or obstructive parking, and to prevent parking on the verge or footway. These were very large projects and could take years to complete, with the last of them not yet complete when work was begun on this new strategy. This final review is being undertaken in a more piecemeal fashion, to allow more rapid results where concerns are greatest.

The town is also actively regenerating and growing. As well as redevelopment of the New Town Centre, local centres are being renewed, and new housing developments are coming forward as proposed in the *Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031*.

In this context, SBC’s transport strategy, *Future Town, Future Transport* identified the need for a new Parking Strategy to be prepared.

This Parking Strategy must address how parking is managed to support local residents, businesses and employers, whilst also considering the need to transition away from private petrol or diesel fuelled vehicles to more sustainable modes.

Parking is a derived demand resulting from vehicle travel, which is in turn a derived demand arising from spatially separated activities. Management of parking must therefore consider what alternative ways of travelling are available.

The existing transport system strongly favours motor vehicles, which thanks to their convenience are the mode of choice for a great many people. Cars, vans and taxis accounted for 83% of passenger kilometres in 2018. However, reducing reliance on motor vehicles is seen as desirable, as transport contributes more to national greenhouse gas emissions than any other sector with 55% of this coming from cars and a further 15% from vans. Making different transport choices can also have a significant impact on an individual’s health and wellbeing.

At the same time, Stevenage is growing, with its population passing 88,000 in 2017 compared to 76,000 at the time of the 2004 Strategy. Simultaneously the typical number of cars per household in the East of England had risen, going from 1.30 per household in 2011/12 to 1.38 by 2016/17, or about 1% a year. With neither the financial resources nor the physical space available to build significant additional

¹ Crowther et al., 1963, p.2

parking, encouraging a modal shift away from the car becomes not only a desirable objective but a practical necessity.

This strategy will therefore also include parking-related options to help individuals to choose appropriately from a variety of modes of transport rather than defaulting to the car, which will then have to be parked, whilst recognising that for some journeys it will be the most appropriate choice.

By doing so it will help to develop streets that are comfortable and social spaces where people feel at home and communities come together. This is a concept commonly known as “Liveable Streets” but which SBC calls “Living Streets” reflecting the aspiration for streets to be not just liveable but positively alive.

DRAFT

3 Policy context

3.1 National Policies

National policy directions and concerns affecting parking have been considered in preparing this Strategy, in particular those summarised below.

3.1.1 The Department for Transport

The Department for Transport (DfT) is primarily responsible for setting national transport policy, which includes parking, and sees its objectives as being to: “

1. support the creation of a stronger, cleaner, more productive economy
2. help to connect people and places, balancing investment across the country
3. make journeys easier, modern and reliable
4. make sure transport is safe, secure and sustainable
5. prepare the transport system for technological progress and a prosperous future outside the EU
6. promote a culture of efficiency and productivity in everything we do”²

The national policy document dealing directly with on-street parking issued by DfT is *The Secretary of State's Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities on the Civil Enforcement of Parking Contraventions* (“The Statutory Guidance”). This does not guide Councils as to what their policies should be, but makes it clear that Councils that are Parking Authorities are required to “design their parking policies with particular regard to:

- managing the traffic network to ensure expeditious movement of traffic, (including pedestrians and cyclists), as required under the Traffic Management Act 2004 Network Management Duty;
- improving road safety;
- improving the local environment;
- improving the quality and accessibility of public transport;
- meeting the needs of people with disabilities, some of whom will be unable to use public transport and depend entirely on the use of a car; and
- managing and reconciling the competing demands for kerb space”³

and cautions that they “should not undermine the vitality of town centres”⁴ or seek to achieve financial targets.

The Road to Zero sets out DfT’s ambition of at least 50% of new cars and 40% of new vans being ultra low emission by 2030, while the government has announced an aim of ending the sale of conventional cars by 2035. This transition may create significant demand for EV charging facilities on-street or in public car parks that would have to be managed through controls on parking, particularly in areas where residents have little or no private parking.

Whilst The Statutory Guidance does not suggest what approaches Councils should take in managing parking, DfT’s stated policy positions firmly support measures to encourage other modes.

² DfT, 2019 (A)

³ DfT, 2016, p.7

⁴ Ibid.

The *Cycling and walking investment strategy* states an objective of doubling cycling by 2025, and also increasing walking. It emphasises the health benefits of active travel and recognises that parking can have an effect on individuals' choice of transport mode. This was also identified by the House of Commons Transport Committee in *Active travel: increasing levels of walking and cycling in England*. Factors influencing the decision to drive, walk or cycle may include not only the availability of parking for motor vehicles, but the presence of inconsiderate motor vehicle parking and the availability and suitability of cycle parking.

3.1.2 Other Government Departments

As well as following the direction set by DfT, parking policy should also support wider national policy objectives. In recent years successive governments have made strong commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including a requirement of the Climate Change Act 2008 to reduce emissions to 50% of 1990 levels by 2025, the declaration of a Climate Emergency in June 2019, and a commitment to zero net emissions by 2050 in the Queen's Speech of December 2019. Given the vehicle emissions noted in the introduction above, parking management clearly has a role to play in achieving this.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has an interest in the management of parking by Councils as the government body responsible for overseeing local government, and issues the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) which sets out planning policies for England and how these should be applied. This states that "Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that: ... the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for net environmental gains; and ... patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places."⁵ These impacts of transport and parking are evidently as significant in existing streets as in new developments.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills has also been concerned to ensure that parking policies support the local economy, commissioning *The Portas Review: An independent review into the future of our highstreets*. This suggested that unrestrained parking can negatively impact local businesses, and that parking needs to be managed in order for them to thrive.

Health is another key governmental concern, and is affected by transport emissions as highlighted in the *Clean Air Strategy* produced by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra). At the same time Public Health England has set out in *Everybody Active, Every Day* that "one in two women and a third of all men in England are damaging their health through a lack of physical activity. It is an unsustainable situation, and one that is costing an estimated £7.4 billion a year. If current trends continue, the burden of health and social care will destabilise public services, and take a real toll on quality of life for individuals and communities"⁶. This inactivity is attributed in part to "Over-reliance on cars and other motorised

⁵ Ibid., p.30

⁶ PHE, 2014, p.4

transport... Traffic, not pedestrians, dominates most public spaces”⁷, underlining the need for this strategy to support and encourage active travel.

3.2 Local Policies

Local policies and concerns relevant to this strategy originate both from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), in its role as the local Highway Authority and Traffic Authority, and from within Stevenage Borough Council. These have been considered in preparing this Strategy, in particular those summarised below.

3.2.1 Hertfordshire County Council

HCC’s fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4) covering 2018-2031 highlights the scale of population growth expected throughout the county, and considers that the “response to growth cannot be to just build more roads and encourage more and more car use... A combination of policies and improvements will be required to tip the balance in favour of non-car modes, and it will be to everyone’s benefit that by 2031 we have evolved our transport system to be less dependent on the car.”⁸

As part of this, LTP4 highlights the need to “constrain car use through parking charges and supply”⁹ and that “Other areas have successfully encouraged higher levels of walking, cycling and passenger transport use by restrictive car parking policies... Local evidence exists from analysis conducted... on the difficulties of achieving travel behaviour change in the absence of car parking constraints.”¹⁰

Specific policies in LTP4 are also relevant to this Strategy and will inform its approaches.

Policy 1: Transport User Hierarchy (TUH) sets out in what order the needs of different modes should be considered and employed in considering the Network Management Duty. It forms the basis of the Parking User Hierarchy (PUH) that is to be used in preparing any new on-street parking management proposals.

Policy 2: Influencing land use planning and Policy 3: Travel Plans and Behaviour Change have the potential to significantly contribute to parking management, and will be referred to and promoted to relevant stakeholders when appropriate.

Policy 4: Demand Management is of particular relevance, setting out that:

The county council considers greater traffic demand management to be essential in the county’s urban areas in the next five years to achieve modal shift and improve sustainable travel provision. This can only currently be achieved efficiently and effectively through parking restrictions and charging applied to on-street, off-street and potentially at workplace parking. The county council will work with the district and borough councils and other key stakeholders to develop locally appropriate strategies.¹¹

⁷ Ibid, p.8

⁸ HCC, 2018, p.4

⁹ Ibid., p.7

¹⁰ Ibid., p.29

¹¹ Ibid.

This emphasises the role of parking management in restraining demand to achieve the modal shift aspired to in both local and national policies, which must shape the Council's approaches going forward.

Policy 5: Development Management sets out principles around new developments, including levels of parking provision and allowing for EV charging, car clubs and autonomous vehicles, as factors affecting rates and types of car use. This strategy will seek to provide where possible for consistent approaches in existing streets to those in new developments in order to allow residents to be treated fairly and to benefit from similar opportunities.

Policy 6: Accessibility emphasises the need to ensure key destinations are easily accessible, particularly for disadvantaged groups and by sustainable modes. This strategy will include approaches to support access to key destinations, both to facilitate access by sustainable modes and to ensure that those who are unable to choose such modes are able to park to access services.

Policy 7 Active Travel – Walking, and Policy 8: Active Travel: Cycling call for measures to specifically support those modes. At times parking is likely to be relevant to this, whether by physically obstructing them or by creating a more hostile environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Approaches in this strategy will seek to address these impacts to support active and sustainable travel. Policy 8 also calls for provision of secure cycle parking, which SBC will pursue within this strategy.

The *North Central Hertfordshire Growth and Transport Plan* (not yet adopted) does not engage directly with parking, but does again emphasise that in future although “targeted improvements to some roads will continue to be required, this approach is no longer sustainable as it can have long lasting, negative impacts on the environment and local communities. Instead, there needs to be a focus towards making journeys by sustainable modes of travel like walking, cycling and public transport, easier and more attractive to people.”¹²

3.2.2 Stevenage Borough Council

Stevenage's transport strategy, *Future Town, Future Transport (FT,FT)* was adopted in 2019 and sets out “SBC's approach to delivering sustainable transport and better living conditions locally”¹³. As part of this *FT,FT* identified the need for a new parking strategy to be prepared.

FT,FT identifies four key themes, all of which are relevant to this strategy:

- Connectivity – loss or management of parking may be needed to improve connections for non-car modes;
- Living Streets – reducing car-domination of the streetscape often forms part of “approaches that enhance... street[s] as places to live”¹⁴ and loss or management of parking may be needed to “Reallocate road space to promote multi-modal transportation uses”¹⁵.
- Active and Healthy Travel – parking can form an important part of the attractiveness of the car as a convenient mode of transport, and changes to

¹² HCC, 2019, p.3

¹³ SBC, 2019 (A), p.2

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

car parking may be needed to encourage travel by active modes, together with other measures such as provision of cycle parking.

- Green Travel – supporting and increasing the use of EVs may require interventions by SBC to provide for them, for instance by installing EV charge points.

FT,FT specifies that this new Parking Strategy will “promote demand management and the reduction of parking in residential streets”¹⁶ and notes that “increase in car use in Stevenage has led to a reduction in use of the pedestrian and cycle network, and an increase in parking problems on residential streets... When the new town was developed, in some areas it was envisaged residents would be happy to park their cars to the rear of their properties or in garage courts, but, ease of access and visibility benefits, means that parking in front of homes is the preferred choice. This has resulted in congestion on local streets and an uninviting environment for residents.”¹⁷ *FT,FT* also notes that “There is, at present, a lack of good quality and secure cycle parking in the town centre. Additionally, there are not always secure cycle parking spaces in people’s homes and places of work. Without these facilities there is a fear that bikes will be damaged or stolen when parked, and this discourages cycle journeys.”¹⁸ In looking more widely than at motor vehicle parking only, this new parking strategy will seek to ameliorate this situation as it is seen that “Smaller scale improvements such as... increasing and securing cycle parking, and promotional campaigns can be sufficient to have a real effect on the use of the network.”¹⁹ The *Stevenage Cycle Strategy* also notes the importance of cycle parking to enabling cycling.

Although seeking to promote other modes *FT,FT* recognises that “for particular trips the private vehicle will continue to be the most logical mode”²⁰ while suggesting that novel approaches such as car clubs, and new technologies, may change car ownership and parking expectations in future. This strategy will seek to provide for such future developments. One such development is increasing interest in and demand for EVs and the need for supporting infrastructure, and as anticipated by *FT,FT* the parking strategy will seek to support this.

These changes would support the SBC’s efforts to reduce carbon and other emissions across the town in line with the Council’s declaration of a Climate Emergency at its extraordinary meeting on 12 June 2019.

During the preparation of this Strategy, the process of adopting the Parking Standards SPD also allowed councillors to raise comments and concerns about on-street parking management. These included:

- From the Executive Committee:
 - Ensuring external funding is sought where possible, for instance to support the installation of EV charge points; and
 - Ensuring appropriate management of parking places for disabled car users.
- From the Scrutiny Committee:

¹⁶ Ibid., p.5

¹⁷ Ibid. p.9

¹⁸ Ibid., p.20

¹⁹ Ibid., p.20

²⁰ Ibid., p.24

- The need for on-street parking to be effectively controlled/managed in new developments for the Parking Standards SPD to be meaningful, ideally prior to first occupation;
- The need to coordinate the provision of disabled parking and EV charging infrastructure;
- Suggesting the possibility of varying parking charges for different vehicle types;
- Suggesting that commercial vehicle parking in residential areas should be prevented;
- The need to ensure that any surplus parking income contributes to measures to promote modal shift; and
- Noting that parking constraint is key to encouraging modal shift, and that parking control is vital to addressing climate change.

3.3 Covid-19 Recovery

This strategy was largely drafted during the first half of 2020, under the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has underlined the need for changes to how we travel and for greater support for alternatives to the private car, but has at least in the short term made some of those alternatives less attractive. Public transport capacity fell dramatically to allow passengers to distance from one another, whilst car clubs are reported to have suffered a huge decline in demand.

This has led to much greater recognition of the role walking and cycling can play as modes of transport, and to reduce obesity and inactivity offering significant health benefits.

The *Grimsey Review: Build Back Better Covid-19 Supplement for town centres* calls for a recognition “that towns and cities must no longer be designed around the car”²¹ and for making “the 20-minute neighbourhood a central principle... to encourage people to travel less, buy locally and be able to get all the services they need within a short walk”²².

Steps in this direction have been made rapidly in recent months, reflecting in practice what has been known in theory for many years. Millions of pounds have been offered in government funding to support local authorities in improving walking and cycling infrastructure, and HCC and SBC have actively partnered to apply for funding and make changes.

The DfT has issued long awaited new guidance on providing protected infrastructure for cycling (LTN1/20), and stated that government funding for schemes will be conditional upon their meeting these high standards that will make cycling a real option for a much wider variety of people. DfT is also consulting on updates to the Highway Code giving more protection to pedestrians and cyclists and placing duties on road users based on the risk they pose to others.

Stevenage’s existing network of cycleways and footpaths already provide better facilities than are found in most towns. However, levels of walking and cycling are no

²¹ Grimsey et al. (2020) p.8

²² Ibid.

higher than the national average. This may be attributed to the deterrent effect of parking-dominated residential streets in the town, and the mentality fostered by an historic car-centred approach to transport nationally. Yet according to a Yougov poll, 81.2% of those they surveyed in the UK agreed that action should be taken “to curb air pollution by reserving more public space for walking, cycling and public transport”²³.

This strategy’s aims and approaches are aligned with the emerging policy directions to deal with the fallout from Covid-19 and support the development of the less car-dependent new normal that most of the public want.

²³ Posaner et al. (2020)

4 Objectives

Having considered the relevant existing policy positions and known concerns, four broad objectives have been determined for managing parking in Stevenage.

These are:

- To prevent unsafe or obstructive parking;
- To restrain unnecessary or undesirable parking and encourage modal shift;
- To manage necessary or desirable parking; and
- To support the town's Zero Carbon ambitions.

In setting these objectives SBC seeks to combine traditional approaches to parking with recognition that modern parking management is about more than where cars are stored. Parking affects everyone who uses a street, not only drivers. Poor parking management can mean pedestrians are prevented from walking safely along the street where they live, that public green space is spoiled, or that ordinary people don't feel safe to cycle to their local shops.

As a Council, SBC wants to create Living Streets that don't only support car parking and movement but provide "places that our community can enjoy and be proud of"²⁴ and at the same time "Reduce the carbon footprint of Stevenage's travel movement and improve air quality"²⁵. This Strategy through its objectives and the approaches to pursuing them, particularly the adoption of a Parking User Hierarchy to help prioritise different modes of transport and reasons for parking (see section 5.2 below), will shape how parking management helps to achieve those aims.

4.1 To prevent unsafe or obstructive parking

It is an essential part of the Traffic Management Act 2004 Network Management Duty that due regard is had to both improving safety and securing the expeditious flow of traffic. Where parking is unambiguously unsafe or obstructive, SBC may have no choice but to act on this duty and put controls in place to prevent parking.

This does not mean that SBC will always seek to remove parking that creates a perception of danger or delay for drivers.

Sometimes it will be appropriate to allow apparently "hazardous" or "obstructive" parking to continue. The perception of danger may improve safety through increased caution more effectively than would be achieved by removing the parked vehicle, whilst mild "obstruction" caused by parked cars helps to moderate traffic speeds and can improve safety overall.

It must also be understood that "traffic" means not only motor vehicles but people travelling by any mode of transport. So for example while a motorist might favour being allowed to park on a footway, and even request the creation of parking spaces partially or entirely on the footway, as this would secure the flow of traffic for motor vehicles on the carriageway, it would have the opposite effect for pedestrian traffic

²⁴ SBC, 2019 (A), p.2

²⁵ Ibid., p.3

as well as placing pedestrians at risk as cars were driven onto the footway or if they were forced to walk in the carriageway. It is therefore unlikely that this is something that SBC would take forward.

4.2 To restrain unnecessary or undesirable parking and encourage modal shift

It is a clear expectation of this strategy's parent policies that we must restrain the supply of parking to improve the quality of the public environment, support the shift to other modes of transport and discourage further growth in car use.

This may be achieved through active measures such as placing time limits or charges on parking, or passively by declining to build additional parking in areas where there is a desire or perceived need for more to be provided.

This is not to say that SBC's approach will be "anti-parking" or "anti-car", but that the need for and appropriateness of parking, and the benefits and costs of alternatives, will be considered when managing and reconciling the competing demands for kerbside space whether through parking controls or when considering parking bay construction requests or other measures.

4.3 To manage necessary or desirable parking

Recognising that there are trips for which the car will continue to be the most logical mode, SBC will seek to effectively manage necessary or desirable parking.

For some individuals with physical disabilities there may be no viable choice other than using a car, and SBC will endeavour to ensure suitable parking is provided to ensure that they can access destinations, services and their homes.

Customers or workers travelling by car can be vital to many local businesses and residents unable to commute by other modes may depend on being able to park a car at home.

A Parking User Hierarchy will be adopted as part of this strategy to help prioritise the use of kerbside space for parking where there is a genuine need for it, depending on both user and vehicle type. Alongside this the viability of alternative modes will be promoted to reduce this need in future.

4.4 To support the town's Zero Carbon ambitions

Innovations such as new fuels and autonomous vehicles, and new forms of mobility such as electric scooters, have the potential to change the face of transport during the period of this strategy. Achieving modal shift to healthier modes of transport and away from the private motor car is expected to go hand in hand with changes to the highway network to prioritise other modes rather than being centred on the car.

SBC's approach to parking management will support this, as reducing car dependency has an important role to play not only in public health but in combatting climate change. Controls on parking will form a helpful part of SBC's response to

climate change, together with parking provision for more sustainable modes of transport.

Although what will be needed is not predictable with certainty, and there are likely to be legislative changes, SBC will seek to take a dynamic stance and to update its approaches, controls and practices to place itself at the cutting edge of new developments so as to continue to manage parking effectively and to achieve its other objectives.

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5 Approaches

5.1 Planned programme of projects

Requests for changes to parking arrangements are received by SBC daily, but making changes is subject to a lengthy and onerous process whether making a new Traffic Order subject to extensive consultations and approvals or building more parking spaces subject to planning consents and safety audits. At the same time only limited resources are available to carry out the necessary work.

In order that work can be carried out effectively, there will be a planned Programme of parking projects. These will vary in scale, and the general makeup of the Programme will depend on the nature and scale of projects undertaken. The Programme will seek to strike a balance between helping residents, businesses, and others, and to give all parts of the town fair opportunity in having their problems or concerns addressed. Projects included may be the result of requests from the public or from stakeholders, or on SBC's initiative.

The content of the Programme will be set before the start of the financial year by officers subject to the approval of the Portfolio Holder, who shall also approve any updates, alterations or additions in the course of the year. Guidance as to likely inclusions, possible strands of work and the achievable scale of the Programme can be found in Appendix I.

Records of requests from the public and from stakeholders will be kept, so that they can be considered for inclusion in the programme when resources allow.

5.2 Transport and Parking User Hierarchies

LTP4 sets out the hierarchy of road users as follows:

Policy 1: Transport User Hierarchy

To support the creation of built environments that encourage greater and safer use of sustainable transport modes, the county council will in the design of any scheme and development of any transport strategy consider in the following order:

- *Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel*
- *Vulnerable road user needs (such as pedestrians and cyclists)*
- *Passenger transport user needs*
- *Powered two wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs*
- *Other motor vehicle user needs²⁶*

In considering how to prioritise space for parking SBC will have regard to this hierarchy, giving due consideration to different types of "other motor vehicle user" and that how space should be prioritised will vary depending on its setting. To assist with this consideration, a more detailed Parking User Hierarchy (PUH) will be employed when considering those other motor vehicle user needs as set out in Table 1 below. This follows on from LTP4's TUH and in the PUH, as in LTP4, the wants and needs of other users will be considered before those of motorists.

²⁶ HCC, 2018, p.45

The PUH recognises the need to consider different settings, and provides for three broad types of location: residential areas, “short stay” destinations such as local shops and “long stay” destinations such as employment areas. It is recognised that some locations will not fall neatly into one category, and in those cases a balance must be struck considering the makeup of the area to support a mixture of uses.

Within the PUH greater priority is also given among motor vehicle users to parking for disabled car users, who may be unable to choose alternative modes of transport, and for less polluting vehicles such Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs).

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Table 1: Parking User Hierarchy




Order of Consideration	LTP4 Policy 1	In residential areas	At short stay destinations (e.g. local shops)	At long stay destinations (e.g. employment areas)	Priority
1	Reduce the need to travel	Can parking demand be reduced?	Can demand be restricted using limited waiting and/or parking charges?	Workplace Parking Levy?	HIGH
2	Pedestrians	Do parked vehicles discourage walking or interfere with pedestrian facilities? Are pedestrians' needs adequately met? Continuous wide footways, dropped kerbs etc.	Do parked vehicles discourage walking or interfere with pedestrian facilities? Are pedestrians' needs adequately met? Continuous wide footways, dropped kerbs etc.	Do parked vehicles discourage walking or interfere with pedestrian facilities? Are pedestrians' needs adequately met? Continuous wide footways, dropped kerbs etc.	
3	Cyclists	Do parked vehicles discourage cycling or interfere with cycling facilities? Are cyclists' needs adequately met? Is communal secure cycle parking needed (e.g. Bikehangers or lockers)?	Do parked vehicles discourage cycling or interfere with cycling facilities? Are cyclists' needs adequately met? Is cycle parking needed (e.g. Sheffield stand cycle hoops)?	Do parked vehicles discourage cycling or interfere with cycling facilities? Are cyclists' needs adequately met? Sheffield stands provided? Is communal secure cycle parking needed (e.g. a bike shed)?	
4	Bus users	Can buses pass freely and stop at stops? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars?	Can buses pass freely and stop at stops? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars?	Can buses pass freely and stop at stops? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars?	
5	Motorcyclists	Is there good junction visibility? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars?	Is there good junction visibility? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars? Has dedicated motorcycle parking been provided?	Is there good junction visibility? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars? Has dedicated motorcycle parking been provided?	MEDIUM
6a	Other Motor Vehicle (OMV): Cars	Is parking needed for disabled car users? Provision based on local demand.	Provision for disabled car users based on local demand and national guidance.	Provision for disabled car users based on local demand and national guidance.	

Table 1: Parking User Hierarchy

Order of Consideration	LTP4 Policy 1	In residential areas	At short stay destinations (e.g. local shops)	At long stay destinations (e.g. employment areas)	Priority
6b	OMV: Cars	Is parking needed for ULEVs? Provision based on supporting local demand and transition.	Is parking needed for ULEVs? What ULEV provision would help businesses and the local community? Limited provision suited to short stay for EVs.	Is parking needed for ULEVs? Provision based on national proportion of registered ULEVs.	
6c	OMV: Cars	Is parking provision for residents substantially less than SPD levels? Are junctions and bends clear of parked cars?	Is there sufficient short stay parking for non-residents? (e.g. shoppers)	Is there sufficient long stay parking for non-residents? (e.g. workers)	
6d	OMV: Cars	Can parking for residents' visitors be accommodated?	Should long stay parking for non-residents be accommodated? (e.g. workers)	Should short stay parking for non-residents be accommodated?	
6e	OMV: Cars	Is there a need to provide for short stay parking for non-residents?	Is parking for residents needed?	Is parking for residents needed?	
6f	OMV: Cars	Is there a need to provide for long stay parking for non-residents?	Parking for residents' visitors is low priority	Parking for residents' visitors is low priority	
7	OMV: Light Commercial Vehicles	No special provision to be made	Loading provision only	Car Parks and loading only	LOW
8	OMV: Coaches and Heavy Commercial Vehicles	Banned during night time and weekends	Loading provision only	Loading provision only; designated parking on Argyle Way.	

5.3 Integration of on and off street parking management

Management of on-street parking will be coordinated with the management of off-street parking taking account of the availability of both. When considering the best use of on-street parking supply, off-street and private parking availability to relevant road users will be taken into consideration.

This will particularly be the case in town centre areas where it is anticipated that, given its convenience, on-street parking will be at a premium and lower-priority parking users should be encouraged to use off-street parking instead.

This approach has been broadly successful in the past, and it is expected that the relationship between on and off street parking management shall be developed more closely in future.

5.4 Measurement

Parking is an emotive subject for many people and it is easy to make purely qualitative judgements.

In order to manage parking SBC will seek to take measured approaches. The first stage in any project will be to investigate the problem or request, and seek to quantify the situation. This may mean conducting surveys of parking pressure or turnover, and/or of residents' and others' views on parking problems or solutions, in order to decide if changes should indeed be proposed and if so what.

Data-led approaches will also be used to monitor and improve ongoing parking management, including the effectiveness of parking enforcement and how parking charges shape demand for paid-for parking.

5.5 Consultation and engagement

Changes to parking are subject to legal processes, which will necessarily shape how SBC consults on changes to parking and managing parking. However, as a Co-operative Council, SBC will encourage feedback and contributions from the general public when investigating possible alterations as well as seeking comments once proposals have been prepared. This will help SBC to ensure that parking projects are completed openly and taking into account as many different needs and preferences as possible.

At the same time, it must be recognised that there are limitations on what is possible and practical. Fulfilling public desires will not always be achievable, whether due to legal or financial constraints, available resources or the physical space itself. SBC's management of parking will take into account the public's views but must balance this with these considerations and with local and national policy objectives.

When consultations are undertaken, this will normally be by direct written communication which allows everyone a fair and equal opportunity to respond and enables the measured consideration of their comments and any necessary investigations to be conducted. Key consultation documents will be posted on the Council's website and social media may be used to encourage people to view and comment on uploaded material. Public meetings, which disenfranchise those who are unable to attend, will not normally be held.

5.6 Publicity and soft approaches

Active management of on-street parking is largely limited to the creation and enforcement of formal controls on parking, such as placing yellow lines at a junction, or the physical creation of more parking spaces.

These are costly and onerous undertakings, and are not always the most appropriate response, while members of the public may see them as disproportionate or a poor use of resources.

At a national level, behaviour change in relation to seatbelt wearing and drink driving has been successfully promoted through publicity campaigns. SBC will consider similarly using publicity to deter inappropriate parking and encourage modal shift to avoid the need for parking.

SBC has had some success in deterring unsociable parking through informal/unenforceable painted markings such as “KEEP CLEAR”, and will continue to use such measures where appropriate.

5.7 Budgets, fees and charges

In line with The Statutory Guidance SBC does not regard raising revenue as an objective of CPE, and while attempting to forecast revenue for the purpose of responsible financial management does not set any targets.

Pay-and-display parking fees are set to encourage turnover of parking, which improves parking availability. This benefits drivers looking for a space to park in and supports local businesses and services by facilitating access. It also encourages motorists to think about their decision to drive and consider using other modes of transport. The elasticity of parking demand in response to price changes will be monitored to help predict the effect of parking prices and enable them to be set at an effective level to achieve these traffic management purposes.

Charges for parking permits and visitor vouchers similarly encourage motorists to consider their decision to keep a car. Permit fees are set on a sliding scale imposing higher costs for parking permits where a household keeps multiple vehicles, reflecting the disproportionate amount of street space used by those households and serving to discourage excess vehicle ownership.

While many residents feel that they should be provided with parking permits for free and that they should not be charged to park in their street, the Council has to consider fairness to all residents. Where permit parking schemes exist or are introduced, if there were no charges for parking permits and visitor vouchers then the costs of operating the scheme would effectively fall on every resident in Stevenage regardless of whether they benefit from it or even own a car. It is considered fairer that the costs of excluding other drivers from parking should be borne by the motorists who benefit from this exclusion and gain the opportunity to park through charging for the permits or visitor vouchers they use. Requiring that parking permits and visitor vouchers are charged for also serves to restrain demand for “residents’ only” permit parking controls in residential streets.

Permit/voucher fees are therefore set at a level that seems likely to allow permit parking to be self-funding. However, for the avoidance of doubt or confusion there is no target income level for permit fees.

Charges are also applied for supplying discretionary services relating to parking to private individuals, such as placing advisory “H-bar” Driveway Access Markings to diagram 1026.1 of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD) highlighting the presence of a dropped kerb, in accordance with SBC’s powers under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Income from these sources and from Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) is first spent on parking management, including the costs of employing staff and maintaining parking facilities and the necessary signs and lines to allow enforcement. It is also spent on undertaking CPE which (contrary to popular misconception) does not cover its own costs and is not “profitable”, and on undertaking the Programme of Parking Projects. Together the incomes and expenditures from managing on-street parking form the Special Parking Account (SPA). Should there be any surplus funds once these costs have been accounted for, this can only be spent in line with the requirements of Section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended).

This sets out that any surplus in the SPA can be used only to make good any deficit when the SPA made a loss during the preceding four years, meet the cost of providing or maintaining off-street parking; or:

if it appears to the local authority that the provision in their area of further off-street parking accommodation is unnecessary or undesirable, the following purposes—

- (i) meeting costs incurred, whether by the local authority or by some other person, in the provision or operation of, or of facilities for, public passenger transport services,*
- (ii) the purposes of a highway or road improvement project in the local authority's area,*
- (iii) in the case of a London authority, meeting costs incurred by the authority in respect of the maintenance of roads maintained at the public expense by them,*
- (iv) the purposes of environmental improvement in the local authority's area,*
- (v) in the case of such local authorities as may be prescribed, any other purposes for which the authority may lawfully incur expenditure*

Any surplus on the SPA will accordingly be used, once any recent deficit has been made good, to pay for:

- highway and environmental improvements to encourage modal shift and sustainable travel;
- supporting passenger transport services;
- maintaining off-street parking; and
- where the criteria set out in this strategy are met, providing off street parking.

It is intended that the everyday actions arising from this Strategy would be funded from existing budgets, a portion of which will be ring fenced for introducing measures to promote modal shift and sustainable transport. Larger individual projects or

service growth would be subject to ad-hoc capital funding bids or future requests to agree additional revenue expenditure. Such spending will be the priority for expenditure of any surplus on the SPA.

Where interventions require capital bids to be made, funding will be sought from external sources where the opportunity exists, including from the County Council, central Government, or other bodies, for example through the OLEV On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme to fund the installation of electric vehicle charging facilities.

5.8 Enforcement

Experience shows that, in the absence of effective enforcement measures, unfortunately a selfish minority of motorists will disregard both the law's general expectation that they will park safely and any specific controls such as yellow lines that have been introduced to guide them in doing so.

Since being granted the necessary powers in 2005, SBC has successfully delivered CPE to manage parking on the highway. While The Statutory Guidance states that "The objective of civil parking enforcement should be for 100 per cent compliance, with no penalty charges"²⁷ the reality is that growing vehicle numbers over time have necessitated more parking restrictions being introduced and required increasing enforcement leading to more PCNs being issued.

There have also been changes in the times at which enforcement is needed. Complaints about insufficient enforcement on Sundays and in the evenings have resulted in changes to patrol patterns to supply an effective service throughout the week. Throughout the period of this Strategy the numbers and timing of patrols will be kept under review to ensure they are appropriate. This could mean retiming or adding patrols as new parking controls are introduced or removing them as compliance improves and they are no longer needed.

The format of patrols will also be reviewed and improvements be sought over time to ensure that they are carried out where possible by the more sustainable modes of transport.

In enforcing parking restrictions, SBC will aim to even-handedly uphold the law while treating all motorists with fairness and respect. SBC will fairly and reasonably consider any challenges to PCNs where the motorist believes they should not be paid.

²⁷ DfT, 2016, p.8

6 Specific issues

6.1 Parking for disabled car users

As highlighted by the Statutory Guidance, some people with disabilities “will be unable to use public transport and depend entirely on the use of a car”²⁸ and for these motorists parking is less of a choice and more of a necessity than for others.

It is for this reason that parking for disabled car users is ranked most highly among motor vehicles in the Parking User Hierarchy, and national legislation requires that exemptions are made from many parking restrictions for drivers who have a Blue Badge.

To further assist disabled car users, SBC will seek to ensure there is sufficient parking for them at known destinations such as the town centres and neighbourhood centres at least at a level in line with the latest government guidance and higher where there is sufficient demand. This parking will be suitably located offering greater ease and convenience than general parking, and if needed may be protected from abuse by other drivers. Consideration will also be given to the accessibility of disabled parking bays, including the provision where appropriate of dropped kerbs.

SBC will assist with the provision of disabled bays for residents where needed within permit parking areas or on SBC land, whilst the provision and management of disabled bays on the public highway outside permit parking areas will be a matter for the highway authority (HCC). Where SBC provides disabled bays to assist residents this provision will normally be subject to a similar expectation regarding the proportion of local parking provision to be used for disabled bays to that specified by HCC.

6.2 Supporting sustainable transport

6.2.1 Parking and pedestrians

Parking on the verge or footway causes environmental and infrastructure damage and damage to vehicles. It frequently inconveniences pedestrians, in particular those who use wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs and can place them in real danger by forcing them into the carriageway. This makes walking less attractive as a choice contrary to the objectives of LTP4.

Verge and footway parking has been illegal in London for more than 40 years and successive governments have indicated an intention to roll the ban out nationwide. However this has not happened to date and as a result Stevenage has been amongst the first local authorities to implement local traffic regulation orders to prohibit it. These have been rolled out throughout most of Stevenage with the exception of Old Town, Symonds Green and Woodfield wards. There is little evidence of demand for it to be rolled out on an area-wide basis to the three remaining wards but there are some locations where it is seen to present an issue and others may arise in future.

²⁸ Ibid., p.7

Where residents request it, SBC will be willing to investigate the introduction of verge and footway parking bans in specific locations to address this.

Parking also impacts pedestrians when vehicles are left across lowered kerbs, making it more difficult to cross the road – particularly for those who use wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs. SBC is able to enforce against such parking under Section 86 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, and will continue to do so to help prevent cars causing difficulty for others.

6.2.2 Parking on cycle routes

Protected routes for cycling play an important role in helping people to feel cycling is safe and successfully encouraging people to cycle. Stevenage has an excellent cycleway network which is largely segregated from motor traffic. Cars are generally prevented from parking on the cycleways by posts at the entrances for which the highway authority (HCC) is responsible. Driving on the cycleways is illegal and can only be enforced against by the Police.

Entrances to the cycleway network are generally served by a lowered kerb, and parking across them can make routes less attractive and the network harder to access. SBC is able to enforce against such parking under Section 86 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, and will continue to do so to help prevent cars causing difficulty for others.

The creation of new or improved cycle routes is a transport priority for the council, and may require the loss of on-street parking. This could be to allow for an on-carriageway cycle lane to be put in place, or due to narrowing of the carriageway to create a separate cycleway. Although these are likely to be HCC projects, SBC shall not oppose the loss of parking in such circumstances.

Should other measures to create and support cycle routes and deprioritise motor vehicles, such as “filtering” a street by placing bollards or similar to prevent through traffic except for pedestrians and cyclists, be put forward then SBC shall not oppose the loss of parking in such circumstances.

6.2.3 Cycle parking

The ability to securely park a bicycle at home or at the destination can be an important consideration in deciding whether cycling is a viable mode. In order to support the viability of cycling as a mode, SBC will:

- consider measures to facilitate home cycle parking for residents who would otherwise struggle to keep a cycle at home, such as secure outdoor cycle lockers;
- seek to ensure there is suitable cycle parking at known destinations such as the town centres, neighbourhood centres, and railway station, including where possible “long stay” sheltered cycle stands;
- take into account the diversity of cycles when installing cycle stands, to ensure there is suitable provision for non-standard cycles;
- seek to ensure that cycle parking is prominently placed in suitable locations offering greater ease and convenience than general car parking;

- consider signs or other measures to improve public awareness of cycle parking and ensure cycle parking is easy to find;
- consider the provision of shelter from the weather to improve the attractiveness of cycle parking; and
- support local businesses and employers to provide suitable, secure cycle parking at their private premises.

6.2.4 Support for public transport

Parking on bus routes can cause delays or diversions to, and reduce the attractiveness of, passenger transport services.

To address this, where parking causing obstruction to buses is reported to SBC as an issue by a local bus operator, by HCC or by the Intalink Enhanced Partnership, or if they confirm that they consider it an issue when it has been reported to SBC by a member of the public, SBC will, as appropriate:

- put in place a Bus Stop Clearway to prevent parking at a bus stop; and/or
- consider for inclusion in the Programme of Parking Projects investigating further parking restrictions that may be needed.

Demand for parking can be reduced by making other modes more attractive to the public. For public transport this could mean new services being offered, or offering increased frequency or longer hours on existing routes; it could also mean faster journey times, better on-board passenger accommodation, or improved waiting facilities such as bus shelters. SBC shall be supportive of improvements such as these and others, and shall not oppose the loss of parking where needed to provide them.

6.2.5 Electric vehicle and other Ultra Low Emission Vehicle parking

EVs and other ULEVs offer a more sustainable alternative to Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles.

SBC shall investigate options to support the uptake of ULEVs, including seeking to provide EV charging at known destinations such as the town centres and neighbourhood centres, and once provision is in place to expand it in line with demand. This provision may be placed to offer greater ease and convenience than general parking (though at a lower level of ease and convenience than parking for disabled car users), and if needed may be protected from abuse by other drivers.

The greatest utility is afforded to EV drivers by providing charging infrastructure at the locations where they would normally park long term. Drivers who are unable to charge their vehicle at home are more likely to want to charge whilst parked when they are at work. Priority will therefore be given to providing EV charging where it can support long-stay parking as well as or instead of short-stay parking.

SBC will aim to encourage provision of private workplace charging through the Planning system for new commercial applications and by advising employers on the availability of government grants.

SBC will aspire to help to provide affordable options to residents who would otherwise be reluctant to own an EV because they lack off-street parking, in

coordination with HCC and with national funding schemes. This may include provision of EV charging on SBC land and/or the public highway.

SBC may aspire to offer similar solutions or support for other ULEVs using novel fuel types with similar characteristics should they emerge during the period of this strategy and dependent on the legislative framework.

6.2.6 Car clubs

SBC has operated a car club in the town centre since 2016, which as well as helping to provide a pool of low emission vehicles for SBC staff use during the hours of operation enables town centre residents who only occasionally use a car to avoid needing to own and park one. SBC has committed in its Workplace Travel Plan to support the existing town centre car club using electric cars until at least 2024-25, with an aspiration to expand in 2022-23 (subject to funding).

Should a car club operator wish to offer its service in other parts of the town to facilitate reduced residential car ownership, SBC will be willing to discuss any requests they wish to make and will consider putting in place measures such as reserved parking places to enable them to operate. The introduction of further car club facilities could help residents across the town to benefit from reduced car ownership, lessening demand for parking and allowing the use of street-space for other purposes. If there should be competing requests, all else being equal preference will be given to car clubs using ULEVs over ICE vehicles.

6.2.7 Restricting car ownership

The Council's Parking Standards SPD indicates the level of car ownership that is considered appropriate and acceptable for different property types, but has no effect on extant properties.

Consideration will be given to using permit parking controls to restrict levels of car ownership at each residential property in the town to those set out in the Parking Standards SPD. This would of necessity include limits on the number of permits allowed at each address depending on the amount of off-street parking available to it, and planning controls on the ability to create additional off-street parking. It would be necessary to extend some form of charging to non-residents who parked in the town to prevent the controls being abused.

It would also be desirable to include pollution-related incentives such as differential pricing to encourage the uptake of less-polluting vehicles in general and ULEVs in particular.

6.3 Parking in residential areas

6.3.1 Requests for “residents only” permit parking

Residents frequently take issue with parking perceived to be by non-residents, normally attributed to commuters. They often feel that such parking affects their quality of life, and ask that measures are put in place to limit parking to residents only.

The only legal mechanism available to enable residents to park without interruption by non-residents is to put in place permit parking controls.

Such controls place costs and limitations on all residents and their visitors, and will only be introduced where it is shown that there is both:

- a genuine lack of parking for residents as a result of an external source of parking demand; and
- that there is strong support from residents.

Requests

Permit parking schemes will only be considered where, within a geographic area that could viably and practicably operate as a permit area, 20% of residents have independently requested it.

Survey

Where this criterion is met and a project to investigate permit parking is added to the Programme of Parking Projects, the investigations will include a survey of all residents' views on whether they support permit parking's introduction, if they would be content to pay the permit fees, and what days/times they would wish any permit scheme to operate. Formal proposals would only be prepared if at least 75% of households responded and of those responses 75% favoured permit parking and were willing to pay the necessary costs. Any proposals arising from this would take into consideration residents' preferred days and times of operation and stated concerns.

Consultation

If proposals are prepared and public consultation undertaken on specific proposals, these would only be implemented if consultation responses from affected residents' households demonstrate the same level of support as the survey or greater (it being assumed that the views of those who do not respond to the public consultation remain unchanged from when they were surveyed). Even if the same level of support is met, this does not guarantee that the proposals would be implemented as the final decision must depend on full consideration of any objections received.

Effects of restricting car ownership

If measures are brought in to restrict car ownership throughout the town as set out in 6.2.7 above, the need for pre-existing "residents only" permit parking areas will be reviewed and they may be withdrawn or modified. The existence of town-wide restrictions would not exclude the possibility of additional controls to limit parking to residents of a particular locality only.

6.3.2 Alternatives to permit parking

Where residents have concerns about non-resident parking pressure in a residential area, alternative measures may be considered such as "commuter ban" single yellow lines preventing parking during a short period in the middle of the day.

It must be recognised that such controls also apply to, and would prevent parking by, residents and will not be suitable in some locations such as where residents lack off-street parking and have no alternative to parking on the street. Such controls would only be introduced with support from residents.

The viability of such controls will also depend on the number and timing of similar restrictions, as a large number of concurrent but brief periods of restriction would not be practical to enforce. Timings should therefore vary from location to location and not be standardised.

6.3.3 Commercial vehicles in residential areas

The parking of commercial vehicles in residential areas is a source of annoyance to some residents, whether due to the greater space taken up by a large van compared to a car in areas that experience high levels of parking pressure, or because they find them unsightly.

For other residents, being able to park their works vehicle is necessary for them to earn a living either as an independent tradesperson or as the firm employing them requires them to take a works vehicle home.

At present there is a town wide ban on parking commercial vehicles with a maximum authorised mass of 5 tonnes or more and vehicles able to carry 12 or more passengers between 8pm and 7am Monday to Friday and throughout the weekend. Following the adoption of the 2004 Parking Strategy, options for further limiting commercial vehicle parking were explored but no viable alternatives were found.

Given the concern that this continues to cause for some residents, the provision of secure off-street parking for vans will be investigated and possibilities for management of commercial vehicle parking will be kept under review should opportunities present themselves or the legislative framework change. Any measures to manage commercial vehicle parking will consider not only the views of those residents who are aggrieved by commercial vehicle parking, but the effect on residents who are dependent on it.

6.3.4 Requests for parking construction

Residents are often concerned about not having enough parking near to their homes. Although SBC has no responsibility or obligation to improve the highway to resolve parking problems or provide additional parking facilities (and doing so is liable to encourage car ownership and use) it will receive requests for parking construction from residents.

There may be locations where parking pressure, due to lack of capacity, causes severe difficulties for residents, and is a contributory factor in causing hazardous, obstructive or inconsiderate parking, making parking construction a valid choice.

The Parking Standards SPD indicates the level of parking provision that is considered appropriate by SBC, and is periodically updated. Where the amount of parking provision in a location (including both on and off street parking) meets or exceeds the level set out in the most recent adopted Parking Standards SPD, it has to be considered adequate for motorists needs and will not be added to.

Where the Council considers that this is not the case, and that there is an overriding argument for providing more parking, it may investigate the construction of new parking spaces. Such construction shall be subject to identifying and securing funding and if on the highway to approval by the highway authority (HCC). If such spaces are provided at SBC's instigation, the council will also seek to introduce

commensurate spend an equal amount to introduce measures to support uptake of other modes of transport.

If following investigation SBC considers it necessary to build parking facilities in a location it will commit to budgeting an equivalent value of spending on introducing measures to promote the uptake of sustainable transport. If SBC carries out parking construction on behalf of HCC or another third party a contribution to fund measures to promote the uptake of sustainable transport will similarly be sought.

The Council will plant one tree for every parking space built. Should any trees have to be removed to build parking spaces three new trees will be planted for each tree that is lost (or such higher number as may be set in SBC's Tree Planting Policies in future). Parking spaces will not be built if it would result in unacceptable tree loss, for example of an ancient oak or of a mature historic hedgerow in good condition, or other high value trees.

6.3.5 Land sales and easements

SBC will not sell land or allow new easements across its land for the purpose of allowing residents to create parking, except in cases where the existing parking provision (including both on and off street parking) falls below the level set out in the most recent adopted Parking Standards SPD.

Land sales and easements will not generally be permitted where they would result in a loss of communal parking. Where a land sale or an easement is otherwise granted for the purpose of constructing private parking a sustainable transport contribution will be required equivalent to the value of all construction works involved.

6.4 Destination parking

6.4.1 Hospital parking

Parking at the Lister Hospital site is owned and managed by the NHS Trust. However due to an excess of demand over supply hospital-related parking also has an impact on the surrounding streets. This may be by visitors to the hospital or by hospital staff.

In order to facilitate short stay parking by outpatients and by visitors to patients, SBC has provided limited waiting bays along Coreys Mill Lane and in North Road, and with rising demand may add to this in future subject to the environmental commitments made in section 6.3.4 above. These parking spaces are subject to pay and display controls to encourage drivers not to park for longer than they need to and thereby maximise the parking capacity, while fees are set at a low level to encourage short-stay drivers to prefer them to parking on the hospital site so that on-site parking is available for those needing to stay for longer periods.

These controls may be varied or suspended, or exceptions made, during times of crisis where extraordinary circumstances create a need to do so in support of essential services such as enabling NHS staff to get to work during a pandemic.

On residential streets in the area, hospital related parking contributes to parking pressure from non-residents, which can cause distress and annoyance for residents.

This shall be dealt with in the same manner as non-resident parking in other residential areas and from other sources as detailed in sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2.

6.4.2 School Parking

School parking gives rise to brief periods of high demand at the start and end of the school day as children are dropped off and picked up. This can lead to obstructive parking and safety concerns, as well as inconvenience for residents.

HCC has spent and continues to spend considerable resources in seeking to ensure safety at these times, including both promotion of other forms of transport and the introduction of parking controls. SBC supports this with special attention to parking enforcement outside all of the over thirty schools in the town including attendance outside at least one school every day during term time. Every school in the town is patrolled at least once each month, depending on the severity of its issues and the availability of patrolling staff.

SBC will take into consideration the impact of any new parking proposals on schools in the vicinity and will be supportive of future projects by HCC to manage school travel to improve its safety and sustainability.

6.4.3 Customer parking

The ability of customers to visit businesses is important to the success of the local economy. Where this appears to be hindered at customer destinations, such as the neighbourhood centres, SBC will consider measures to facilitate customer parking such as time limited waiting to prevent spaces being occupied all day by commuter parking.

Customers should have the option to travel by a variety of modes, and SBC will take into consideration the impact of any new parking proposals on them, and seek to support their transition to other modes of transport including both public transport and cycling as indicated in sections 6.2.1 to 6.2.4 above rather than providing for car parking only.

6.4.4 Servicing activity

Servicing activity, from the delivery of goods to visits by tradespeople, is essential to both businesses and residents and is often reliant on motor vehicles due to the weight and bulk of goods or supplies.

There are however growing trends in urban areas towards delivery of some of these services by other modes, such as micro-consolidation and the use of cargo-cycles (which could be well supported by Stevenage's cycleway network).

SBC will take into consideration the servicing needs of businesses and residents when making new parking proposals. SBC will be supportive of parking changes to support more sustainable methods of servicing, for example assisting demand for cycle deliveries by providing for cargo-cycle parking at key locations.

6.4.5 Local workers

Many people working in Stevenage rely on their car to be able to get to work, and while they should be encouraged towards using other modes of transport this may not be viable for them for compelling personal reasons such as caring responsibilities, or because of the absence of suitable services or infrastructure. Where workers must commute by car off-street parking in employers' car parks or public car parks is expected to be the norm.

SBC will take into consideration the impact of any new parking proposals on local workers, particularly where the expectation of their parking off-street cannot be fulfilled, and will seek to support their transition to other modes of transport including both public transport and cycling as indicated in sections 6.2.1 to 6.2.4 above.

SBC may, working with HCC, consider the implementation of a Workplace Parking Levy to support transition away from car dependency by local workers.

6.4.6 Longer distance railway commuters

Parking pressure in some locations in the town is attributed to longer distance railway commuters, apparently seeking to avoid parking charges at the railway station. This not only causes annoyance for residents, but can limit opportunities for local workers to be able to park. Provision of parking for such commuters shall be considered the lowest priority, and should be discouraged from taking place on street. The railway station is well served by connecting bus services and the walking and cycling network, and is well supplied with parking for both cars and cycles, and its users should be encouraged to make use of these facilities.

6.4.7 Match day parking

On days when Stevenage Football Club plays home matches this can attract large numbers of vehicles to park in the area. Although motorists are encouraged to use the Fairlands Valley Car Park, whether due to excess demand or because drivers are unwilling to queue for parking/to leave the car park, or due to delinquency, parking frequently overflows into surrounding residential streets. This can lead to nuisance, obstructive and potentially hazardous parking.

Measures to address this non-resident parking in residential streets may be pursued as set out in sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2 above.

Should the Football Club seek planning consent for new stands or an increased crowd capacity, developer contributions may be sought to mitigate any increase in impact of match day parking on the area. This could include funding for the creation, implementation and operation of match day parking restrictions, sustainable transport improvements to encourage and support the use of alternative modes of transport, or other measures.

6.5 Placemaking and Living Streets

SBC aspires to bring forward specific "placemaking" and Living Street projects, through its Co-Operative Neighbourhoods programme, in addition to this Strategy's

overall approach to create more Living Streets when making changes to parking. These would be expected to work collaboratively with residents to improve their local environment and reduce the domination of the streetscape by cars, making them into nicer places to live. At the same time this would encourage more sustainable travel to both improve people's health and combat climate change.

Such schemes can include reducing or preventing through traffic, creating shared spaces, and changing how parking is managed to ensure it does not dominate entire streets. This does not necessarily mean simply taking parking away, but could involve other measures such as provision of alternative parking for larger vehicles such as vans that have a bigger visual impact so as to create a greater sense of space.

Changes to parking controls are anticipated to be needed to support achieving this and support for CMN projects shall where needed form part of the Programme of Parking Projects.

6.6 Regeneration

Regeneration will help to reshape Stevenage during the life of this Strategy, including both the redevelopment of the New Town Centre and renewal of some neighbourhood centres. This gives the opportunity for reduced car dependency, and the parking provision in redeveloped areas will be determined and managed as part of the development process.

Changes to parking controls are likely to be needed to support redevelopment as streetscapes change and this shall form part of the Programme of Parking Projects.

6.7 New developments

For the Parking Standards SPD to be meaningful it is essential in new developments that informal parking is prevented from happening in locations on the street that are not intended for parking. Otherwise the SPD would not limit the volume of parking, only cause it to take place in unsuitable locations. While design measures may help to deter some inappropriate parking, they can also serve to increase the severity of inappropriateness when it does occur. Pursuing parking controls to prevent this imposes a cost on the Council as a direct result of the development taking place. Developer contributions will therefore be required when planning applications are made, to fund the pursuit of formal Restricted Parking Zone (RPZ) controls on parking to prevent problems from occurring and ensure that the Parking Standards SPD is effective.

S106 funding for parking controls must be payable in full prior to first occupation to allow for RPZ controls to be implemented at the outset to prevent the gradual spread of on-street parking. Developers will also be required to commit to cooperate with the Council to enable the timely installation of necessary traffic signs to give restrictions effect should the road in question remain in their ownership when those restrictions come into force. Such early implementation of parking controls will help to ensure that Living Street designs are effectively upheld from the start.

Where it appears necessary and appropriate planning conditions, covenants or other measures may also be sought to deter or prevent the creation of additional off-street parking after the initial development has been completed.

6.8 Discretionary services

Discretionary services may be offered through the SBC's capabilities under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003, in support of its transport objectives.

In relation to parking, this currently comprises placing advisory "H-bar" Driveway Access Markings to diagram 1026.1 of the TSRGD highlighting the presence of a dropped kerb. This service will be kept under consideration to ensure that it continues to offer fair value for both residents and the Council.

Additional services may be brought forward in future, where there is evidence of demand or the potential to assist residents or businesses.

This could include for example allowing private contributions to be made to fund the installation of EV charge points by SBC for public use, or installation of cycle parking through SBC contracts to help businesses provide facilities for their employees and visitors.

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Parking strategy consultation summary plan

Before the consultation begins:

Advertising/promoting the consultation before it begins would prompt “responses” before it begins without sight of its content, in all likelihood about specific issues/locations rather than the strategy itself. It is preferable to run the consultation for longer, allowing informed responses, rather than encouraging the public to soak up limited resources to little purpose before it begins.

During the consultation:

Timing TBC – would not be appropriate to launch during lockdown or Purdah. As these are likely to overlap, a May start date may be the earliest achievable date. If they don’t (i.e. local elections are cancelled) then starting earlier and retaining same end date would enable longer consultation period. Timing needs coordinating with TRO project work so that only one consultation is live at a time.

Consultation May to end July/early August would allow report preparation in August/September to take to December Exec for consideration.

Face-to-face approaches can’t be seen as responsible at present, but we can engage with representative groups through remote meetings. Also promote consultation through print and broadcast media as well as online.

Medium	Item	Needs	Actions	Timing
Consultation document	Questionnaire/summary doc.	Summary of key points Key questions & comment options	Draft Commission print & design to style up	ASAP
Councillor briefing	Information for all Cllrs prior to public launch	Summary of key points Key questions & comment options Offer of 1-1 briefings Following with link to web info when it becomes available	Draft	Prepare February Send one month before to allow for queries n.b. if May timing then complexity if new Cllrs
Meetings	Cooperative neighbourhoods	Briefing information to use	Arrange with CN team	Request as soon as

				timing of consultation certain
	Disability forum	Briefing information to use	Arrange with Guru	Request as soon as timing of consultation certain
	Other interest groups	Briefing information to use	Identify groups and arrange with organisers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAs? • CTC? • Others? 	Identify ASAP Request as soon as timing of consultation certain
Press	News story	Explanation Link to web info Contact details to get hard copy of consultation	Comms to write	Seek to arrange for just after launch
Radio	Interview with Cllr Briscoe?	Agreeing with Cllr Briscoe Briefing information to use	Get agreement Commission comms to arrange Draft	Seek to arrange for just after launch
SBC website	Have your say page	Explanation. Link to online questionnaire. Copy of full document.	Comms to write.	Publish at launch
	News story	Explanation. Link to online questionnaire. Copy of full document.	Comms to write.	Publish at launch
	Online version of questionnaire	Summary of key points Key questions & comment options	Commission based on paper consultation documents	ASAP
Social media	Facebook	Rolling promotions	Draft & schedule together with comms	At launch, then ongoing – frequency to be agreed with comms
	Twitter	Rolling promotions	Draft & schedule together with comms	At launch, then ongoing – frequency to be agreed with comms

Traffic & transport stakeholder comms	Notification & information	Explanation Link to web info Contact details to get hard copy of consultation	Draft	At launch
Stevenage Chronicle	Promotional story	Explanation. Link to web info. Contact details to get hard copy of consultation.	Comms to write.	Edition issued during consultation

All responses to be acknowledged & collated as they are received.

After the consultation ends:

Schedule report process.

Update respondents on timelines.

Prepare report & recommended alterations.

Exec process for adoption/approval of amendments/instruction to amend further/other outcome.

Update respondents on outcome.

Publish adopted version on website unless not adopted.

News story & social media to promote outcome. Further Comet story if amenable.

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Draft questions to allow design of questionnaire and online survey.

None of the {Y/N} questions should be mandatory. {Free text} fields conditional on {Y/N} answers if *italic*, and if marked * should be mandatory .

Introduction

Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) is consulting on an update to its 2004 Parking Strategy, to ensure that it fits the needs of the town. *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031* is envisaged as being used to shape how SBC manages on-street parking over the next decade. It doesn't set out an action plan of particular projects or schemes to be undertaken, but presents the principles that will be applied in SBC's work to manage on-street parking.

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 is subtitled *Living and Sustainable Streets for Stevenage*. That doesn't mean that the draft strategy proposes to turn every street into a "shared space" with no pavements, or to stop residents from having cars. It does reflect the intention to ensure that when managing parking its impact on streets as places for people, on the environment, and on other modes of transport, is properly considered. It is hoped that small changes made in day-to-day work can help make incremental improvements to provide pleasanter Living Street type outcomes.

This consultation document presents the key questions we would like your views on. You are encouraged to read *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031* in full before responding, but if you don't have time this questionnaire summarises the key content of the Strategy as it goes along. The first three chapters (Foreword, Introduction, and the description of the Policy Context) haven't been summarised.

As well as asking SBC's key questions, there is the opportunity at the end of the consultation document to make additional comments on any part of *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031*.

Approaches

1. Objectives (Chapter 4)

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 sets out four broad objectives that reflect national and local policy requirements. These are:

- To prevent unsafe or obstructive parking
- To restrain unnecessary or undesirable parking and encourage modal shift

- To manage necessary or desirable parking
- To support the Council's Zero Carbon ambitions

- Do you agree with these objectives? {Y/N}
- Do you have any comments on them? {Free text}

2. Planned programme of projects (Section 5.1 and Appendix I)

SBC receives many requests for parking changes to be made. Most of these require long and resource-intensive work to comply with the necessary legal processes, while only limited staff and money are available to do so.

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 adopts a structured management approach to pursue changes only through a planned programme of projects so that work can be carried out effectively. It acknowledges the need for the programme include a mixture of project types and sizes so that best use is made of resources and a balance is struck between helping residents, businesses and others, and to give all parts of the town fair opportunity in having their problems or concerns addressed. It recognises that projects may result from requests from the public or stakeholders, or on SBC's initiative, and confirms that records of requests to SBC will be kept so that they can be considered for inclusion.

Appendix I outlines different project types that may be undertaken to deliver the Parking Strategy, which of *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031*'s objectives they align with, who they help and what their general aim is. It highlights criteria for different projects to be undertaken, which if not specified in the main text of *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031* may be updated from time to time in agreement with the Portfolio Holder, and gives some outline expectations as to what workloads may be achievable.

- Do you have any comments on this approach? {Y/N}
- * *What comments would you like to make?* {Free text}

3. Transport and Parking User Hierarchies (Section 5.2)

The County Council's key transport policy, *LTP4*, sets out a Transport User Hierarchy. *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031* proposes a Parking User Hierarchy that reflects this, and prioritises different parking needs in different locations. For example, long stay residential parking is prioritised in residential areas, short stay (shopper) parking at "short stay destinations" such as shops, and long-stay parking by workers at "long stay destinations" such as employment sites.

It also recognises that some locations won't fall neatly into just one of these categories, and in those cases a balance must be struck considering the makeup of the area to support a mixture of uses.

- Do you agree with this approach? {Y/N}
- * *If not, why not?* {Free text if N selected}

4. Measurement, consultation and engagement (sections 5.4 and 5.5)

Parking is an emotive subject for many people and it is easy to make purely qualitative judgements. *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031* proposes that SBC seeks to take a measured approach to quantify and understand parking issues, which could include both gathering data on parked vehicles and surveying residents to find out how they feel about an issue.

If then proposing changes to parking management in a street, as a Co-operative Council SBC will encourage feedback and contributions from the public when investigating possible alterations, as well as seeking comments once proposals have been prepared.

Public engagement will usually include a mailshot to affected households to ensure everyone has the chance to be aware and to have their say. It wouldn't usually include public meetings, which deny a voice to those who can't attend and that experience shows seldom offer a constructive forum for understanding residents' often conflicting views.

- Do you agree with this approach? {Y/N}
- * *If not, why not?* {Free text if N selected}
- Are there any other methods of public engagement that you feel would be valuable when consulting on changes to parking, such as door-to-door canvassing of opinions or exhibition events where you can look at plans and discuss problems/proposals one-on-one? {Y/N}
- * *What other methods of consultation are you in favour of?* {Free text if Y selected}

5. Publicity and influencing opinion (section 5.6)

Rather than relying only on formal controls on how people park, *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031* suggests that this is not always the most appropriate course of action. It proposes that where appropriate SBC should use "soft approaches" such as media campaigns or informal road lining to encourage behaviour change.

- Do you agree with SBC seeking to influence behaviour through "soft approaches" as well as formal measures? {Y/N}
- * *If not, why not?* {Free text if N selected}

6. Finance and enforcement (sections 5.7 and 5.8)

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 highlights that parking enforcement does not set out to make money. In itself enforcement makes a loss, and is likely always to do so. Parking fees are set to manage parking demand, not to raise revenue, and income from them goes first to offset the parking enforcement deficit. If there is any money left over after this, it is spent in line with the law, which sets out a limited range of purposes it can be spent on such as maintaining parking facilities or making improvements to support active and sustainable travel.

Enforcement activity will be kept under review throughout the period of the strategy to ensure that the number, timing and format of patrols is appropriate to supply an effective traffic management service and represents value for money for the tax payer.

- Do you agree with these approaches? {Y/N}
- * If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}

Specific issues

7. Parking for disabled car users (section 6.1)

People with disabilities are likely to have fewer alternatives to using a car than most other drivers, if any. Once they have parked, it is likely to be more difficult for them to get from their car to their final destination.

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 makes parking for disabled car users a correspondingly higher priority. In particular, SBC will set out to ensure that at known destinations such as the town centres and neighbourhood centres have suitable levels of disabled parking provision and this will be located to offer greater ease and convenience than general parking. While disabled bays in residential areas are generally managed by Hertfordshire County Council, SBC will assist with this where possible (for example on SBC land) in line with the County Council's standards.

- Do you agree with SBC seeking to ensure that there is a suitable level of appropriate parking for disabled car users at destinations? {Y/N}
- * If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}

8. Supporting sustainable transport (sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2 and 6.2.4)

While most drivers don't park this way, a minority leave their cars parked in antisocial locations that hinder sustainable and active travel.

This could mean forcing pedestrians off the pavement on a busy road, and placing them in danger; preventing cyclists accessing Stevenage's world class network of off-road cycleways by blocking an entrance; or parking in a bus stop so that passengers can't get on and off. These and other similar parking behaviours ultimately encourage people to drive, adding to congestion and pollution, and discourage healthier and cleaner travel.

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 sets out that SBC will be open to changing how it manages parking to deal with such problems in specific locations where there is a concern (such as making changes so it can enforce against parking in a particular bus stop or on the pavement where it is causing residents a problem), and to enable improvements for active and sustainable travel (such as allowing access to a new cycleway).

- Do you agree with these approaches? {Y/N}
- * If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}

9. Cycle parking (section 6.2.3)

Cycle parking takes up a fraction of the space needed to park a car, and can be vital to people seeing cycling as a viable alternative to driving – which not only improves health and reduces pollution, but frees up space on the road for those who still drive.

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 says SBC will consider options to help residents who can't already store one keep a bike at home, try to ensure they can securely park it at their destination, and to make sure that cycle parking is suitably located, of a high standard and easy to find.

- Do you agree with SBC trying to help residents be able to own a bike and seeking to ensure that there is an appropriate level of suitable cycle parking at destinations? {Y/N}
- * If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}

10. E-cars and Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) (section 6.2.5)

Growing numbers of Stevenage residents own, or want to own, an electric car, and the government is phasing out the sale of conventional internal combustion engine powered cars. *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031* commits SBC to investigating how it can assist residents to own an e-car or other ULEV. This is expected to include helping to provide E-car charging facilities at destinations such as the town centres (which is already under way) and neighbourhood centres, and encouraging employers to provide workplace charging. SBC may also aspire to provide similar support for other new fuel types for ULEVs.

- Do you agree that SBC should try to help residents be able to run cars that don't have an internal combustion engine in this manner? {Y/N}
- * *If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}*

11. Car clubs and levels of car ownership (sections 6.2.6 and 6.2.7)

Car clubs let residents hire cars that are stored near their homes as and when they need them. This can enable residents to reduce the number of cars they own and save themselves considerable amounts of money, as well as reducing demand for parking and making it easier for residents to park their remaining cars.

SBC successfully operated a car club in the town centre from 2016 to 2020, which is now on hold due to the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on customer demand. When the market allows SBC intends to resume this service, and will be open to requests to introduce similar services elsewhere in the town. If there are competing requests, all else being equal preference would be given to the cleaner/lower emission service.

As well as being supportive of car clubs, SBC may consider other measures to encourage residents to reduce their car ownership in line with the council's parking standards.

- Do you agree with these approaches? {Y/N}
- * *If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}*

Car parking in residential areas

12. "Residents Only" Parking Permits and alternatives (sections 6.3.1 and 6.3.2)

SBC recognises that some residents often see "residents only" permit parking controls as a solution to many of their parking problems, whilst others will strongly oppose them as they place costs and limitations on all residents and their visitors.

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 sets out that SBC may introduce "residents only" permit parking controls to help residents be able to park, but only if there is found to be both a genuine lack of parking for residents as a result of an external source of parking demand and a high level of support for permits from residents.

SBC may also consider alternative ways to deter non-resident parking, such as "commuter ban" single yellow lines preventing parking for a short time in the middle of the day.

- Do you agree that “residents only” permit parking should only be introduced where there is a genuine lack of parking for residents due to non-resident parking, and most residents are in favour of permit parking being put in place? {Y/N}
- * *If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}*
- Do you agree that SBC should also be willing to consider other ways of deterring non-resident parking in residential areas, if it is causing a problem? {Y/N}
- * *If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}*

13. Increasing parking (sections 6.3.4 and 6.3.5)

SBC receive many requests for parking construction, but has no responsibility or obligation to improve the highway. Some residents see a real need for more parking in their street, whilst others are concerned by the environmental impacts of building over green spaces and that increased parking can be detrimental to sustainable and active travel. At the same time, parking construction can cost considerable amounts while council budgets are strictly limited.

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 sets out that SBC can only consider building parking where there really isn't enough, and if funding can be obtained. It also makes environmental commitments when parking is built: to match-fund sustainable travel improvements; to plant one tree for each new parking space created; and to replace any trees that are lost in line with the council's Tree Planting Policies.

It also sets out that the sale of, or granting of an easement to allow access over, SBC land to allow private parking will be allowed where there is a real need, but not if it would cause a loss of communal parking, and that if it is permitted a sustainable transport contribution will be required.

- Do you agree with these approaches? {Y/N}
- * *If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}*

Car parking at destinations

14. Hospital parking (section 6.4.1)

SBC's approach to managing parking near to the Lister Hospital has been to normally prioritise kerbside space for short-stay parking such as outpatients and hospital visitors.

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 proposes that this approach is continued so that on-site parking is freed up for longer-stay parking and the more

seriously ill, whilst regular turnover of on-street parking allows as many people as possible to attend for shorter periods.

In time of crisis, as in 2020-21, this regime may be temporarily changed to due to extraordinary circumstances and to support essential services such as by allowing NHS workers to park for longer and without fee.

- Do you agree that on-street parking near to the Lister Hospital should normally be prioritised for short-stay parking such as outpatients and hospital visitors? {Y/N}
- * *If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}*
- Do you agree that in times of crisis such as the Coronavirus pandemic the Council should be willing to vary this due to the extraordinary circumstances and to support essential services? {Y/N}
- * *If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}*

15. School parking (section 6.4.2)

“School run” parking is seen by many residents as a cause of inconvenience, obstruction and even safety concerns. The County Council has expended considerable resources to try to address this, including both encouraging families away from driving to school and introducing parking restrictions to prevent inappropriate parking.

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 commits SBC to continue supporting this with dedicated enforcement visits to all schools throughout term time, and whenever making any new parking proposals near schools SBC will take into consideration their impact on the school. SBC will be supportive of future projects by HCC to manage school travel to improve its safety and sustainability.

- Do you agree with these approaches? {Y/N}
- * *If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}*

16. Customer parking (section 6.4.3)

Local businesses depend on customers being able to visit them, making this vital to the local economy.

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 states that where needed SBC will consider measures to enable customer parking where needed, such as placing time limits on parking so that spaces are not blocked by cars being left all day, in order that businesses can thrive.

It also says that SBC will consider the impact of any parking proposals on other modes of transport, so that customers have a choice of how to reach their destination.

- Do you agree that where customer parking needs to be managed SBC should support local businesses? {Y/N}
- * If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}

17. Deliveries and servicing (section 6.4.4)

Both businesses and residents rely on goods being delivered and servicing activity such as visits by tradesmen to carry out maintenance. This is often reliant on motor vehicles due to the weight and bulk of goods or supplies.

At the same time there are growing trends in urban areas towards some of these activities being undertaken by other modes, such the use of cargo-cycles (which could be well supported by Stevenage's cycleway network).

The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031 says that SBC will take into consideration the delivery and servicing needs of businesses and residents when making new parking proposals. SBC will be supportive of changes to support more sustainable methods of servicing, for example assisting demand for cycle deliveries by providing for cargo-cycle parking at key locations.

- Do you agree with SBC taking the delivery and servicing needs of businesses and residents into account? {Y/N}
- * If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}

18. Local workers and longer distance railway commuters (sections 6.4.5 and 6.4.6)

A lot of people living or working in Stevenage rely on their car to get to work. Whilst it is expected that off-street parking in employer's or public car parks will be the norm, *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031* accepts that this may not always be the case and there may be compelling reasons why they can't use other modes of transport instead.

As part of the new strategy, the council will take into consideration the impact of any new parking proposals on local workers, particularly where the expectation of their parking off-street cannot be fulfilled. It will also seek to support their transition to other modes of transport. Given the direction in which policy is developing nationwide, *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031* recognises that it may be necessary for SBC, working with HCC, to consider the implementation of a

Workplace Parking Levy to support transition away from car dependency by local workers.

At the same time, the railway station is well served by bus services and the walking and cycling network, and is well supplied with parking for both cars and cycles. *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031* expects commuters travelling via the railway station to make use of these facilities.

- Do you agree with these approaches? {Y/N}
- * *If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}*

Parking in relation to other changes

19. Regeneration, Placemaking and Living Streets (sections 6.5 and 6.6)

During the life of *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031* the regeneration of the New Town Centre and renewal of some neighbourhood centres will help to reshape the town. SBC also aspires to implement “placemaking” and Living Street projects, working collaboratively with residents to transform their local environment.

Parking changes are expected to support these improvements, rather than to lead them, and to help support reduced car dependency and environmental improvements. Where this impacts parking, it doesn’t necessarily mean simply taking parking away, but could involve other measures such as provision of alternative parking for larger vehicles such as vans that have a bigger visual impact so as to create a greater sense of space.

- Do you have any comments on the role of parking management in regeneration projects? {Y/N}
- * *What comments would you like to make? {Free text if Y selected}*
- Do you have any comments on the role of parking management in placemaking and Liveable Street projects? {Y/N}
- * *What comments would you like to make? {Free text if Y selected}*

20. New developments (section 6.7)

Parking difficulties in existing streets are often attributed to perceived planning failures, whereby vehicles overflow the space allocated to them when the street was built and/or are left in locations that were never intended for parking. *The Stevenage Parking Strategy 2021-2031* envisages a future where this is better controlled and, with the help of developers, measures are put in place to prevent informal and problematic parking before developments are occupied.

- Do you agree that when new developments are built, effective measures should be put in place at an early stage to prevent parking problems from arising? {Y/N}
- * *If not, why not? {Free text if N selected}*

Other comments

- Do you want to make any further comments on the draft strategy? {Y/N}
- * *Section number: {Short free text if Y selected}*
- * *What comments would you like to make on this section? {Free text if Y selected}*
- Add another comment {button, duplicating the preceding two free text fields}

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Meeting: Planning and Development
Committee

Agenda Item:

Date:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION - DELEGATED DECISIONS

Author – Technical Support 01438 242838

Lead Officer – Zayd Al-Jawad 01438 242257

Contact Officer – Gemma Fitzpatrick 01438 242270

The Assistant Director of Planning and Regulation has issued decisions in respect of the following applications in accordance with his delegated authority:-

1. Application No : 20/00370/FP
Date Received : 06.07.20
Location : Land Adjacent To 39 Jessop Road Stevenage Herts SG1 5LG
Proposal : Demolition of 4 no. garages, removal of on street parking and alterations to service road to facilitate the erection of a 3 storey block of 6 x 1 bed flats with associated parking and 8 replacement public parking spaces.
Date of Decision : 14.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is REFUSED**

For the following reason(s);

The proposed three-storey block of apartments would result in an overdevelopment of the site with an excessive coverage of built form and hard surfaces with minimal soft landscaping to soften its appearance and would have an imposing and hard appearance in the street scene which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies SP8, GD1 and HO5 of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 2019), the Council's Design Guide SPD (2009), the NPPF (2019) and the Governments Planning Practice Guidance including the National Design Guide (2019).

The proposed development due to the lack of amenity space provision combined with the residential dwelling units being below Nationally Described Standards for 1 bedroom 2 person properties would result in unacceptable harm to the living conditions of future occupants. The scheme is therefore contrary to Policies SP8, GD1 and HO5 of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 2019), the Council's Design Guide SPD (2009), the NPPF (2019) and the Governments Planning Practice Guidance including the National Design Guide (2019).

The proposed development fails to provide the necessary disabled parking and electric vehicle charging infrastructure as required under the Council's adopted Parking Standards SPD (2020). As such, the proposal fails to accord with Policy IT5 of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted 2019), the Council's Parking Standards SPD (2020), the NPPF (2019)

2. Application No : 20/00507/FP
 Date Received : 09.09.20
 Location : Pitt Court Park View Stevenage Herts
 Proposal : Erection of Air Source Heat Pumps and associated enclosure.
 Date of Decision : 12.01.21
 Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

3. Application No : 20/00509/FP
 Date Received : 09.09.20
 Location : Truro Court Canterbury Way Stevenage Herts
 Proposal : Erection of Air Source Heat Pumps and associated enclosure.
 Date of Decision : 12.01.21
 Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

4. Application No : 20/00510/FP
 Date Received : 09.09.20
 Location : Wellfield Court Norwich Close Stevenage Herts
 Proposal : Erection of Air Source Heat Pumps and associated enclosure.
 Date of Decision : 12.01.21
 Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

5. Application No : 20/00604/AD
Date Received : 16.10.20
Location : Cell & Gene Therapy Catapult Manufacturing Centre Stevenage
Bioscience Catalyst Gunnels Wood Road Stevenage
Proposal : Installation of 3no illuminated company name signs to 3
elevations of the building
Date of Decision : 11.01.21
Decision : **Advertisement Consent is GRANTED**
6. Application No : 20/00616/COND
Date Received : 22.10.20
Location : Plot 2000 Gunnels Wood Road Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Discharge of Condition 5 (Construction Management Plan)
attached to planning permission 19/00673/FPM
Date of Decision : 12.01.21
Decision : **The discharge of Condition(s)/Obligation(s) is APPROVED**
7. Application No : 20/00638/FP
Date Received : 01.11.20
Location : 87-97 Lonsdale Road Stevenage Herts SG1 5DE
Proposal : Replacement of external first floor wall tiles with cellular PVC
interlocking boards
Date of Decision : 07.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
8. Application No : 20/00639/FP
Date Received : 01.11.20
Location : 143 - 153 Lonsdale Road Stevenage Herts SG1 5DG
Proposal : Replacement of external first floor wall tiles with cellular PVC
interlocking boards
Date of Decision : 08.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

9. Application No : 20/00640/FP
Date Received : 01.11.20
Location : 199 - 209 Lonsdale Road Stevenage Herts SG1 5DH
Proposal : Replacement of external first floor wall tiles with cellular PVC interlocking boards
Date of Decision : 08.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
10. Application No : 20/00641/FP
Date Received : 01.11.20
Location : 303 - 313 Lonsdale Road Stevenage Herts SG1 5DW
Proposal : Replacement of external first floor wall tiles with cellular PVC interlocking boards
Date of Decision : 08.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
11. Application No : 20/00645/FP
Date Received : 03.11.20
Location : 365 - 375 Lonsdale Road Stevenage Herts SG1 5DR
Proposal : Replacement of external first floor wall tiles with cellular PVC interlocking boards
Date of Decision : 08.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
12. Application No : 20/00646/FP
Date Received : 03.11.20
Location : 429 - 439 Lonsdale Road Stevenage Herts SG1 5DT
Proposal : Replacement of dark brown tile hanging to parts of first floor external walls with dark brown rosewood finish cellular PVC interlocking boards
Date of Decision : 08.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

13. Application No : 20/00647/FP
Date Received : 03.11.20
Location : 595 - 605 Lonsdale Road Stevenage Herts SG1 5EB
Proposal : Replacement of dark brown tile hanging to parts of first floor external walls with dark brown rosewood finish cellular PVC interlocking boards
Date of Decision : 08.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
14. Application No : 20/00648/FP
Date Received : 03.11.20
Location : 645 - 655 Lonsdale Road Stevenage Herts SG1 5ED
Proposal : Replacement of external first floor wall tiles with cellular PVC interlocking boards
Date of Decision : 08.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
15. Application No : 20/00650/CLPD
Date Received : 03.11.20
Location : 15 Rowland Road Stevenage Herts SG1 1TF
Proposal : Certificate of lawfulness for single storey rear extension
Date of Decision : 21.12.20
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**
16. Application No : 20/00654/CLPD
Date Received : 05.11.20
Location : 39 Brimstone Drive Stevenage Herts SG1 4FX
Proposal : Certificate of lawfulness for a loft conversion with rear facing dormer window
Date of Decision : 04.01.21
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**

17. Application No : 20/00658/FP
Date Received : 06.11.20
Location : Sycamore House Leyden Road Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Erection of electricity substation, bin store and plant enclosures (to house air source heat pumps and heat pump room)
Date of Decision : 21.12.20
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
18. Application No : 20/00660/FP
Date Received : 06.11.20
Location : 261 - 271 Lonsdale Road Stevenage Herts SG1 5DL
Proposal : Replacement of dark brown tile hanging to parts of first floor external walls with dark brown rosewood finish cellular PVC interlocking boards
Date of Decision : 08.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
19. Application No : 20/00661/FP
Date Received : 06.11.20
Location : 40 Burymead Stevenage Herts SG1 4AY
Proposal : Erection of 1no. one bedroom end of terrace dwelling
Date of Decision : 29.12.20
Decision : **Planning Permission is REFUSED**
- For the following reason(s);
- The proposed development in order to create a 1 bedroom dwelling, combined with the proposed hard surfaced areas, 1.8m high close board fence to demarcate the private garden areas, would result in an over development of the site which would erode the open and spacious character of the site within the context of a heavily urbanised area. Consequently, the development is therefore contrary to Policy GD1 of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2031 (2019), the Council's Design Guide SPD (2009), National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and the National Planning Practice Guidance (2014).

The internal amenity space of the proposed dwelling is below the nationally described space standards set out in Appendix C of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 (2019) and would thus be contrary to Policy GD1 of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 which requires proposals to at least meet the nationally described space standards. This would lead to unsatisfactory living conditions for future occupiers of the proposed residential accommodation.

The proposed dwelling, by virtue of its proximity to the side elevation of No. 42 Burymead fails to meet the required minimum back to side separation distance as laid out in Chapter 5 of the Council's adopted Design Guide (2009) and would therefore likely result in an unacceptable outlook for the occupiers of this neighbouring property, having a harmful and overbearing impact on the habitable room windows and immediate rear garden area. The development is, therefore, contrary to Policies GD1 and SP8 of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2031 (2019), the Council's Design Guide SPD (2009), National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and the Planning Practice Guidance (2014).

The depth of the main private amenity space falls below the minimum standard of 10m as laid out in Chapter 5 of the Stevenage Design Guide SPD (2009) and would thus be contrary to Policy GD1 of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 which requires proposals to have regard to the adopted Design Guide SPD. This would lead to unsatisfactory living conditions for future occupiers of the proposed residential accommodation.

20. Application No : 20/00663/CLPU
- Date Received : 06.11.20
- Location : 25 North Road Stevenage Herts
- Proposal : Certificate of lawfulness for proposed change of use from Use Class C3 to Use Class C3(b)
- Date of Decision : 29.12.20
- Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is REFUSED**

For the following reason(s);

Based on the information provided, the proposed use of 25 North Road as a care facility for persons under the age of 18 with no adults permanently residing in the premises as their main residential address fails to meet the criteria of Use Class C3(b). The use is considered to fall within Use Class C2 and therefore requires planning permission for a change of use.

21. Application No : 20/00666/LB
Date Received : 09.11.20
Location : 106 High Street Stevenage Herts SG1 3DW
Proposal : Consent to display advertisement signage consisting of an illuminated hanging sign and a wall mounted plaque sign
Date of Decision : 30.12.20
Decision : **Listed Building Consent is GRANTED**
22. Application No : 20/00669/AD
Date Received : 10.11.20
Location : 106 High Street Stevenage Herts SG1 3DW
Proposal : Consent to display advertisement signage consisting of an illuminated hanging sign and a wall mounted plaque sign
Date of Decision : 30.12.20
Decision : **Advertisement Consent is GRANTED**
23. Application No : 20/00673/FPH
Date Received : 11.11.20
Location : 60 Derby Way Stevenage Herts SG1 5TS
Proposal : Single storey front porch
Date of Decision : 30.12.20
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
24. Application No : 20/00675/FPH
Date Received : 12.11.20
Location : 11 Sefton Road Stevenage Herts SG1 5RH
Proposal : Single storey front extension
Date of Decision : 31.12.20
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

25. Application No : 20/00679/FPH
 Date Received : 13.11.20
 Location : 4 Grace Way Stevenage Herts SG1 5AA
 Proposal : Single storey front extension and rear conservatory
 Date of Decision : 21.12.20
 Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
26. Application No : 20/00680/AD
 Date Received : 13.11.20
 Location : Follett House Primett Road Stevenage Herts
 Proposal : Installation of 3no. internally-illuminated fascia signs and 2no. non-illuminated logo signs
 Date of Decision : 07.01.21
 Decision : **Advertisement Consent is GRANTED**
27. Application No : 20/00683/FPH
 Date Received : 14.11.20
 Location : 21 Broadview Stevenage Herts SG1 3TS
 Proposal : Single storey rear extension
 Date of Decision : 08.01.21
 Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
28. Application No : 20/00686/CLPD
 Date Received : 16.11.20
 Location : 81 Ingleside Drive Stevenage Herts SG1 4RY
 Proposal : Certificate of lawfulness for proposed Demolition of the existing conservatory to be replaced with a single storey rear extension.
 Date of Decision : 07.01.21
 Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**

29. Application No : 20/00691/CLPD
 Date Received : 17.11.20
 Location : 82 Marlborough Road Stevenage Herts SG2 9HL
 Proposal : Certificate of lawfulness for a single storey rear extension
 Date of Decision : 31.12.20
 Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**
30. Application No : 20/00694/FPH
 Date Received : 17.11.20
 Location : 52 Shephall Green Stevenage Herts SG2 9XS
 Proposal : First floor extension over existing single storey rear extension
 Date of Decision : 13.01.21
 Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
31. Application No : 20/00696/FPH
 Date Received : 19.11.20
 Location : 28 Hastings Close Stevenage Herts SG1 2JG
 Proposal : Retrospective planning permission for the retention of domestic CCTV cameras
 Date of Decision : 15.01.21
 Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

32. Application No : 20/00697/FPH
Date Received : 20.11.20
Location : 10 Gorleston Close Stevenage Herts SG1 2JS
Proposal : Erection of first floor cantilevered rear extension
Date of Decision : 06.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is REFUSED**

For the following reason(s);

The re-located window serving bedroom one at first floor in the northern side elevation, by way of its location and being clear glazed and openable, will directly overlook the private rear garden of No.8 Gorleston Close and would therefore likely result in an unacceptable loss of privacy for the occupiers of this neighbouring property, having a harmful impact on the private rear garden. The development is, therefore, contrary to Policies GD1 and SP8 of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011 - 2031 (2019), the Council's Design Guide SPD (2009), National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and the Planning Practice Guidance (2014).
33. Application No : 20/00698/FPH
Date Received : 20.11.20
Location : 48 Goddard End Stevenage Herts SG2 7ER
Proposal : Single storey front and rear extensions following demolition of rear conservatory
Date of Decision : 15.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
34. Application No : 20/00699/FPH
Date Received : 20.11.20
Location : 22 Sish Lane Stevenage Herts SG1 3LS
Proposal : Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing conservatory
Date of Decision : 04.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

35. Application No : 20/00700/TPTPO
Date Received : 20.11.20
Location : 1 Clements Place Rectory Lane Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Felling of 1no. Yew Tree (T2) protected by TPO 92
Date of Decision : 04.01.21
Decision : **CONSENT TO CARRY OUT WORKS TO A TREE, THE SUBJECT OF A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER**
36. Application No : 20/00704/FP
Date Received : 20.11.20
Location : Land Adjacent To 113 Bude Crescent Stevenage Herts SG1 2QP
Proposal : Change of use of public amenity land to private residential land for garden use only
Date of Decision : 08.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
37. Application No : 20/00702/FPH
Date Received : 21.11.20
Location : 141 Webb Rise Stevenage Herts SG1 5QG
Proposal : Single storey rear extension
Date of Decision : 15.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
38. Application No : 20/00703/FPH
Date Received : 22.11.20
Location : 6 Marymead Court Stevenage Herts SG2 8AE
Proposal : Erection of front porch
Date of Decision : 07.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

39. Application No : 20/00709/FPH
Date Received : 24.11.20
Location : 2 Orchard Crescent Stevenage Herts SG1 3EW
Proposal : Single storey rear extension
Date of Decision : 21.12.20
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
40. Application No : 20/00710/FPH
Date Received : 24.11.20
Location : 6 Jupiter Gate Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Rear conservatory
Date of Decision : 06.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
41. Application No : 20/00713/CLPD
Date Received : 24.11.20
Location : 7 Kilner Close Stevenage Herts SG1 5AZ
Proposal : Certificate of lawfulness for a single storey rear extension
Date of Decision : 15.01.21
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**
42. Application No : 20/00714/FPH
Date Received : 25.11.20
Location : 63 Collenswood Road Stevenage Herts SG2 9ES
Proposal : Front porch, front bay window and single storey rear extension
Date of Decision : 08.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

43. Application No : 20/00715/COND
Date Received : 25.11.20
Location : Airbus Defence And Space Gunnels Wood Road Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Discharge of condition 23 (Travel Plan) attached to planning permission 19/00167/FPM
Date of Decision : 19.01.21
Decision : **The discharge of Condition(s)/Obligation(s) is APPROVED**
44. Application No : 20/00716/HPA
Date Received : 25.11.20
Location : 40 Crossgates Stevenage Herts SG1 1LS
Proposal : Single storey rear extension which will extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 5.9 metres, for which the maximum height will be 3.4 metres and the height of the eaves will be 2.3 metres
Date of Decision : 05.01.21
Decision : **Prior Approval is REQUIRED and GIVEN**
45. Application No : 20/00717/COND
Date Received : 25.11.20
Location : Plot 2000 Gunnels Wood Road Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Discharge of condition 7 (Remediation Scheme) attached to planning permission 19/00673/FPM
Date of Decision : 06.01.21
Decision : **The discharge of Condition(s)/Obligation(s) is APPROVED**
46. Application No : 20/00718/TPCA
Date Received : 26.11.20
Location : 2 Nicholas Place Rectory Lane Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Reduction to approximately 7m to 3no. Conifers and fell 1no. Conifer
Date of Decision : 06.01.21
Decision : **CONSENT TO CARRY OUT WORKS TO A TREE IN A CONSERVATION AREA**

47. Application No : 20/00719/FPH
Date Received : 26.11.20
Location : 1 Boswell Gardens Stevenage Herts SG1 4SB
Proposal : Single storey side and rear extensions and front bay window
Date of Decision : 11.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
48. Application No : 20/00723/TPCA
Date Received : 27.11.20
Location : 10 Chestnut Walk Stevenage Herts SG1 4DD
Proposal : Reduction of crown by 33% on 2no. Sycamore trees
Date of Decision : 08.01.21
Decision : **CONSENT TO CARRY OUT WORKS TO A TREE IN A CONSERVATION AREA**
49. Application No : 20/00726/NMA
Date Received : 27.11.20
Location : Airbus Defence And Space Gunnels Wood Road Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Non material amendment to planning permission reference number 19/00167/FPM to detail amendments to the office building, plaza, vehicle and pedestrian accesses, boundary treatment and landscaping
Date of Decision : 21.12.20
Decision : **Non Material Amendment AGREED**
50. Application No : 20/00725/CLPD
Date Received : 28.11.20
Location : 72 Brunel Road Stevenage Herts SG2 0AD
Proposal : Certificate of lawfulness for a single storey rear extension
Date of Decision : 08.01.21
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**

51. Application No : 20/00728/CLPD
Date Received : 01.12.20
Location : 3 Hayfield Stevenage Herts SG2 7JP
Proposal : Certificate of lawfulness for a single storey rear extension
Date of Decision : 21.01.21
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**
52. Application No : 20/00732/FP
Date Received : 01.12.20
Location : 5 Medalls Path Stevenage Herts SG2 9DX
Proposal : Change of use from public amenity land to residential use to create a double hardstand
Date of Decision : 11.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**
53. Application No : 20/00735/CLPD
Date Received : 02.12.20
Location : 209 Collenswood Road Stevenage Herts SG2 9HE
Proposal : Certificate of lawfulness for a single storey rear extension
Date of Decision : 21.01.21
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**
54. Application No : 20/00738/FPH
Date Received : 03.12.20
Location : 13 Chester Road Stevenage Herts SG1 4JX
Proposal : Single storey front and rear extensions
Date of Decision : 21.01.21
Decision : **Planning Permission is GRANTED**

55. Application No : 20/00740/TPCA
Date Received : 03.12.20
Location : Stevenage Enterprise Centre Orchard Road Stevenage Herts
Proposal : Felling of 6no. Conifer trees
Date of Decision : 06.01.21
Decision : **CONSENT TO CARRY OUT WORKS TO A TREE IN A CONSERVATION AREA**
56. Application No : 20/00741/HPA
Date Received : 04.12.20
Location : 39 Fawcett Road Stevenage Herts SG2 0EH
Proposal : Single storey rear extension which will extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 5 metres, for which the maximum height will be 3.37 metres and the height of the eaves will be 2.37 metres
Date of Decision : 04.01.21
Decision : **Prior Approval is NOT REQUIRED**
57. Application No : 20/00743/PADEMO
Date Received : 04.12.20
Location : Unit 7 Stevenage Leisure Park Kings Way Stevenage
Proposal : Prior approval for the demolition of a single storey restaurant unit
Date of Decision : 06.01.21
Decision : **Prior Approval is REQUIRED and REFUSED**

Prior approval is refused for the method of demolition as insufficient information has been received to allow a full determination relating to dust control, duration and commencement of works and Covid-19 safety protocols.

58. Application No : 20/00750/TPCA
Date Received : 08.12.20
Location : 7 Dunwich Farm Stevenage Herts SG1 2JX
Proposal : Trim back branches to 1no. Oak tree
Date of Decision : 12.01.21
Decision : **CONSENT TO CARRY OUT WORKS TO A TREE IN A CONSERVATION AREA**
59. Application No : 20/00754/CLPD
Date Received : 10.12.20
Location : 55 Manchester Close Stevenage Herts SG1 4TQ
Proposal : Certificate of lawfulness for garage conversion
Date of Decision : 11.01.21
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**
60. Application No : 20/00756/TPCA
Date Received : 10.12.20
Location : 131 Chancellors Road Stevenage Herts SG1 4TZ
Proposal : Felling of 1no. Cherry and 1no. Beech tree, reduction by 30% on 1no. Cherry and 1no. Fig tree and reduction by 60% on 1no. Laurel tree
Date of Decision : 20.01.21
Decision : **CONSENT TO CARRY OUT WORKS TO A TREE IN A CONSERVATION AREA**
61. Application No : 20/00764/CLPD
Date Received : 14.12.20
Location : 237 Wisden Road Stevenage Herts SG1 5NP
Proposal : Certificate of lawfulness for a single storey rear extension
Date of Decision : 14.01.21
Decision : **Certificate of Lawfulness is APPROVED**

62. Application No : 20/00767/TPCA
Date Received : 15.12.20
Location : 50 Nodes Drive Stevenage Herts SG2 8AH
Proposal : To fell various scrub and saplings in rear garden and fell to ground level 1no. Sycamore tree
Date of Decision : 18.01.21
Decision : **CONSENT TO CARRY OUT WORKS TO A TREE IN A CONSERVATION AREA**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. The application file, forms, plans and supporting documents having the reference number relating to this item.
2. Stevenage Borough Council Supplementary Planning Documents – Parking Provision adopted January 2020.
3. Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 adopted May 2019.
4. Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 adopted May 2018.
5. Responses to consultations with statutory undertakers and other interested parties referred to in this report.
6. Central Government advice contained in the National Planning Policy Framework February 2019 and Planning Policy Guidance March 2014.

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Meeting: Planning and Development
Committee

Agenda Item:

Date: Wednesday 3 February 2021

INFORMATION REPORT - APPEALS / CALLED IN APPLICATIONS

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1. APPEALS RECEIVED

- 1.1 20/00384/FP, 8A Magellan Close. Appeal against refusal of permission for the Variation of condition 11 (no new windows and doors) attached to planning permission 16/00791/FP to allow insertion of a roof light and gable window to be added to the dwellings.
- 1.2 20/00146/FP, 330 Canterbury Way. Appeal against refusal of permission for the erection of 1no. one bedroom dwelling.

2. DECISIONS AWAITED

- 2.1 20/00175/FP, 86 Marlborough Road. Appeal against refusal of permission for the construction of a garage to the front of the property.
- 2.2 20/00228/FP, 30 Orchard Crescent. Appeal against refusal of permission for two storey front, side and rear extensions.

3. DECISIONS RECEIVED

- 3.1 17/00730/ENF and 18/00045/FP, 18B Boulton Road. Appeal against serving of Enforcement Notice relating to an unauthorised gym operating from the premises and refusal of permission for a retrospective change of use from D1 to D2.

3.1.1 Preliminary Matters/Enforcement Notice

One of the reasons for refusal/enforcement was the Council's concern that the change of use would affect the supply of employment space where a demand for office and commercial floorspace could be likely to accommodate the growth of the town over the Local Plan period. The appeal premises were deemed by the Council to be office (Class B1 (a)) and the gym caused lower employment density.

The Council obtained legal advice and confirmed it is now satisfied that the lawful use prior to the appeal development was a training centre (Class D1). As such, the Council does not dispute the appellant's argument that a change of use from D1 to D2 does not result in a loss of employment space. The Council confirmed they do not wish to pursue this issue further. Consequently the Inspector stated that this matter was no longer a principal important controversial issue between parties and would not form a main issue in his decision.

Therefore, the Inspector used his powers of duty to remove reference to office (Class B1 (a)) from paragraph 3 of the enforcement notice. It is well-established law that enforcement notices relating to change of use do not need to reference the 'base' use and as there is no longer a dispute over the base use, the Inspector felt there would be no injustice in removing it.

The Use Class Order (UCO) was recently amended and provides that as the application and deemed application for a change of use were made prior to 1 September 2020, they must be determined by reference to the uses or use class referred to in those applications at time of submission.

Since the refusal/enforcement notice, the Local Plan (2019) has been adopted and replaces the Stevenage District Plan Second Review 1991-2011 (2004) which was in force at the time of the applications.

3.1.2 Main Issue

The main issue in respect of both appeals is whether or not it has been demonstrated through the 'sequential test' that the development could not be accommodated in any available premises within town centre sites, edge of centre sites or other sequentially preferable sites.

3.1.3 Reasons

The appeal site is a detached building within the Pin Green Employment Area, with generous external space giving 41 car parking spaces and located over 3km from the town centre. Both parties agree the gym use is a main town centre use and the site is not in, or at the edge of, a town centre.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in Chapter 7 seeks the vitality of town centres and that the decisions support the role of town centres as the heart of communities. The Inspector placed significant weight, in favour of the appeal development, upon the fact that the Council's evidence does not clearly identify any planning harm caused by the change of use within this context. The Council confirmed the limited size and scale of the gym and its impact on the town centre and the regeneration proposals would be negligible.

The appellant conducted a sequential analysis in line with paragraph 86 of the NPPF and Policy TC13 of the former Local Plan (2004). The Inspector found there was plenty of evidence that the appellant had actively engaged with the Council in what He considered to be a systematic and genuine evaluation of potential relocation sites. He found the analysis to be proportionate and appropriate in line with the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG).

The Council argued the appellant did not fully consider relocation sites, however the Inspector was satisfied that the appellant demonstrated the flexibility required by the NPPG. He accepted the appellants submission that other sites were unsuitable for the gyms operation or else so uneconomical to be unviable. He accepted the appellant's conclusions on rejecting inappropriate properties which included sites with inadequate free car parking and agreed that this business use generally demands free car parking and without such, viability would be an issue. Further, He also accepted that noise and disturbance from a gym use renders some of the sites unsuitable being located close to commercial units and/or residential properties.

The NPPG indicates that viability is a factor in the sequential test. The Council argued more effort should have been made to negotiate rents in the town centre or other sequentially preferable locations but the Inspector placed significant weight that the NPPG advises Councils to be flexible and realistic in applying the test as town centre locations can be more expensive. The appellants business has an annual turnover of around £60,000 and the Inspector noted that in this regard it was not unreasonable of the appellant to have refrained from rental negotiations as secondary frontage units were unviable at more than £900 per month.

The appeal property is accessible and reasonably well-connected to the town centre. The Inspector noted from his site visit a bus stop on Great Ashby Way is within walking distance which has a regular service to the town centre. He went on to note that whilst some of the public footpath runs through woodland, there is a reasonable level of natural surveillance from the highways. The Inspector was unconvinced that the natural environment makes public transport uninviting. Further, the Highways Authority raised no concerns on highway safety grounds given the movements of large vehicles near the site.

For these reasons, the Inspector found it had been demonstrated through the sequential test that the development could not be accommodated elsewhere and as such there was no conflict with Policy TC13 of the former Local Plan (2004). He stated that the site is well-connected by multi-modal means to the town centre in accordance with Policy TC13 and for the same reasons the development accords with Chapter 7 of the NPPF (paragraphs 86, 87 and 90).

3.1.4 Conditions

The Inspector placed a condition on each permission to restrict the use to a gymnasium only following the sequential test and any other use has not been tested and may harm the vitality and viability of the town centre.

The Inspector placed a condition on each permission requiring a scheme of cycle parking facilities to ensure the development is acceptable in planning terms. He worded the condition such that it can be enforced if the requirements are not met.

The Council suggested a condition to retain the 41 car parking spaces but the Inspector was not persuaded that this was necessary to make the development acceptable in planning term as the Council's committee report indicated 30 spaces would be required to be in line with the adopted Parking Standards SPD (2012). Therefore the Inspector imposed a condition requiring no less than 30 spaces to be retained.

3.1.5 Conclusion

For the reasons given above The Inspector concluded that Appeal A should succeed on ground (a) and planning permission will be granted, the enforcement notice was corrected before being quashed and appeal B is allowed.

3.1.5 Award of Costs

The Inspector found that the Council had behaved unreasonably resulting in unnecessary and wasted expense and a full award of costs is justified.

In exercise of powers under section 250(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and Schedule 6 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended, and all other enabling powers in that behalf, the Inspector ordered that the Council shall pay the appellant the costs of the appeal proceedings.

3.2 **19/00529/FPH. 2 Whitney Drive.** Appeal against refusal of permission for a part two storey, part first floor side extension.

3.2.1 Main Issues

The effect of the appeal development on the character and appearance of the area.

3.2.2 Reasons

The site is a detached dwelling on a prominent corner position. The generally well-spaced dwellings in reasonably sized plots give the surrounding area a spacious appearance.

The proposed extension would be above the hall and garage and extend to the rear. The finished property would result in a significant projection of two-storey built form of an uncharacteristic scale from the prevailing pattern of development in the area. The Inspector stated that the resulting dominance on this prominent corner plot would cause material visual harm to the areas characteristic spaciousness.

Further, he stated that the substantial areas of white painted render to the front elevation would exacerbate the visual effect of excessive scale as it would draw attention to the dwelling in an area of muted appearance.

The Inspector found that the development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policies SP8 and GD1 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) and the adopted Design Guide (2009).

3.2.3 Other Matters

The Inspector noted that he was minded to view another property in the vicinity which is clad and rendered with modern materials; however He stated that this property is in a less prominent position and is further screened behind vegetation. He stated that the scale and proportions differ from the appeal site and therefore does not have sufficient similarities to be used to draw comparisons. Consequently the Inspector found that the other development did not alter his conclusions on the appeal site.

He acknowledged the need for more space in the appeal household and had sympathy; nevertheless planning in general is concerned with land use in the public interest. It is probable that the development would remain after the current personal circumstances cease to be material and for these reasons the Inspector can only attached minimal weight to this factor.

The Inspector found no material harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and He acknowledged the lack of neighbouring objections. However the Inspector noted that these are neutral matters which consequently do not attract weight to the decision.

The Inspector advised that it was suggested to him to add a condition relating to materials in order to secure a visually acceptable appearance. However He went on the state that the NPPG sets out it is inappropriate to impose a condition which would modify the development in a way that makes it substantially different from that set out in the application. Accordingly, this suggestion is not capable of rendering the proposal acceptable.

3.2.4 Conclusion

Appeal dismissed. Decision notice attached.

3.3 **20/00269/FPH. 1 The Noke.** Appeal against refusal of permission for a two storey side and rear extension.

3.3.1 Main Issues

The effect of the proposal on safety and convenience of highway users.

3.3.2 Reasons

The appeal site is an end of terrace dwelling situated close to the junction of The Noke and Broadwater Crescent. The proposal involves the erection of a two storey wrap around extension and would increase the number of bedrooms from 3 to 5.

Policy IT5 of the adopted Local Plan (2019) requires proposals to conform with the adopted Car Parking Provision SPD (2020). A three bedroom dwelling requires 2 spaces and 4+ bedroom dwellings require 2.5 spaces (rounded up to 3 spaces).

The Inspector noted the property is within accessibility zone 3 so a reduction of 25% in provision may be appropriate but regard must be had to the characteristics of the area and existing residential car parking problems are not exacerbated.

The site has no off-street parking facilities and the Inspector shared the Council's view that it would be impractical to provide any on site and no provision is made elsewhere. When the Inspector made his site visits (afternoon and evening) He noted that parking conditions were congested to the extent that vehicular access along the street was difficult in places and He had no reason to believe these conditions were unusual. He stated that in this regard, it would be inappropriate to reduce the standard required in the SPD below 100% provision.

He went on to acknowledge that appellant's four children who currently share 2 bedrooms may own cars in the future. However, He felt that the capacity of the property to accommodate adults would be greater if the property was extended. He therefore considered that the proposal would be likely to result in an increase in demand for on street parking, albeit not immediately. Further, He stated that given the existing congested conditions, this increased demand would lead to parking in appropriate locations close to junctions to the detriment of free flowing traffic and highway safety.

The Inspector concluded that the proposal would conflict with the SPD and Policy IT5 of the Local Plan and would cause unacceptable harm to the safety and convenience of highway users and in this respect would also conflict with the aims of the NPPF.

3.3.3 Other Matters

Whilst the Inspector noted the appellants desire to provide additional space for the children, in His judgment the benefits of the proposal, although important to the appellant, would not outweigh the harm He identified.

The Council indicated the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area and its impact on neighbouring amenity would be acceptable. The Inspector agreed with the Council's findings in this regard.

Nonetheless, neither of these or any other matters raised would be sufficient in the Inspector's opinion to outweigh the conclusions reached on highway safety.

3.3.3 Conclusion

Appeal dismissed. Decision notice attached.

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