

## Transport

3.80 This section of the Local Plan sets out the Council's approach to managing growth in car travel and its linked impacts including on the local economy and on the environment and communities. The policies seek to widen the choice of travel opportunities using public transport, walking and cycling. The Council is also considering the development of residential car parking standards which are specific to Epping Forest District to reflect local information on car ownership and the need to make best use of land. It also sets out how land will be safeguarded for future transport schemes and seeks to protect petrol filling stations and car repairs/servicing sites, which are an important, but diminishing, local facility.

## Sustainable Transport Corridors

3.81 The District has a very varied character ranging from urban areas located on the edge of London through to rural areas. As a consequence there is very variable access to public transport, walking and cycling opportunities even in some more urban areas.

3.82 The District is bisected by the M11 and M25 motorways which are key parts of the strategic road network. Incidents on both of these roads very quickly can result in impacts on the operation of the local road network within the District. The reverse can also happen. The consequences of this include:

- potential road safety issues, when the slip roads cannot clear resulting in stacking back onto the motorways;
- impacts on journey time reliability for both residents and businesses; and
- slow moving traffic increasing impacts on air quality with resultant health consequences on both residents and the District's environmental assets, such as the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

3.83 The District's economy is such that there are high levels of both in and out commuting which put pressure on the District's road network (at all levels) at peak periods, and also impact on

rail capacity (both national rail and London Underground networks). The London Underground Central Line terminates at Epping, and there are a number of other Central Line stations within the District. This is both a benefit to District residents and businesses but also has a downside. Because there are price differentials between the cost of travel on rail services and London Underground (the latter being cheaper), the London Underground stations are an attractor at peak hours for longer distance car trips by commuters. Not only does this impact on the Central Line's capacity but also adds to peak hour traffic congestion, and places pressure for on-street parking on local roads.

3.84 An initial analysis of traffic growth across the District Work has shown that even without development in the future, parts of the highway network will be operating over-capacity, in some cases by 2026 and in other cases by 2036. Whilst some junctions could be improved most physically cannot be improved or would have environmental consequences by doing so. For example, traffic congestion and delays that occur on the routes south of Epping could only be resolved by using land which forms part of the Forest. Delays and queuing affect economic productivity, increase air pollution and can sever local communities.

3.85 In 2008 road transport related CO<sup>2</sup> emissions produced per person per annum in Epping Forest was 1.66 tonnes. Whilst this is similar to the UK average, that average exceeds recognised UK air quality targets. Whilst traffic is not the only source of pollution it plays a major role, and has local impacts on key road routes through the District.

3.86 The District, as in many other places, has an ageing population where the car will, over time, become less feasible as a method of travel. Whilst car ownership increased by 4.6% between 2001 and 2011 (as would to some extent be expected when taking into account an increase in the District's households and population over the same period and an increase in the number of younger people staying in the family home than previously),

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.

there were also some 15% of households that do not have access to a car.

3.87 Epping Forest District faces a number of challenges including:

- that for some communities public transport, walking and cycling are not realistic options. Rural bus services are becoming less commercially viable and therefore cannot operate without receiving subsidy from Essex County Council, which is itself operating within an environment of significant financial challenges;
- that levels of traffic using roads through the Epping Forest SAC and associated junction capacity issues within and adjacent to the Forest have a negative impact on its health as a result of, in part, air borne pollutants arising from vehicle emissions.
- the recognition that the majority of new developments will still need to accommodate the car. Research undertaken nationally has been inconclusive as to whether reducing car parking in new developments has any effect on car ownership and this appears to be backed up by, albeit somewhat dated, post-occupancy research undertaken in relation to new residential developments that many households will still want to have access to a car. Environmental, road safety and community impacts occur if an appropriate balance is not adopted;
- the size of modern cars has increased and this has led to a need to increase the size of parking spaces in new development. This means that more land is needed to accommodate the same number of cars thus placing additional pressure on land when planning for the development needs of the District; and
- the level of car ownership across the District is varied ranging from 66.7% of homes in the Loughton Town Council area having no or 1 car through to 17.8% of homes in Theydon Garnon parish having no or 1 car.

### Key Evidence

- Essex Highways Technical Notes (various);
- The Essex Transport Strategy: the Local Transport Plan for Essex 2011-2026 (Essex County Council, 2011); and

- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Arup, 2017).

### Approach

3.88 Recognising that there is a need to manage any future growth in car travel the Local Plan has taken into account the need to maximise the potential to widen sustainable transport choices and encourage reductions in car use wherever possible by:

- considering existing and future sustainable transport opportunities as part of the criteria when identifying sites for housing and employment;
- ensuring the provision of facilities and services in new strategic developments to provide high levels of 'self- containment'; and
- securing the provision of, or financial support for, bus services, and walking and cycling facilities.

All planning applications which generate significant amounts of movement, as defined in the Council's Local List of Validation Requirements, will be required to submit a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement

3.89 Taking such an approach has a wider benefit in that it can also provide access to new transport opportunities for existing residents, thus reducing increases in background traffic growth, make a contribution to reducing car-related pollution levels and improve access to services for those who do not have a car or who are unable to drive.

3.90 The provision of sustainable transport choices and securing modal shift away from reliance on the car is a key component in mitigating the future impacts of air-borne pollutants on the health of the Epping Forest SAC. In addition, in order to follow the commitment by government and car manufacturers to cease sales of petrol and diesel cars by 2040 to support improvements in air quality, the Council will require the provision of electric vehicle charging points in all new development which include vehicle parking spaces.

3.91 The delivery of development around Harlow is a key part of the Council's strategy for the future delivery of new homes within the District, and to support the opportunities that Harlow's Enterprise Zone offers to create new jobs, as part of its partnership approach with Harlow, Uttlesford, and East Hertfordshire Councils. A

key part of the infrastructure needs to support this strategy is the provision of a new junction (J7a) on the M11 motorway, for which planning permission has recently been granted. The approach to delivering sustainable transport choices helps to support the business case needed to support its funding by, amongst others, Highways England.

3.92 As set out above there are issues around the provision of car parking in new development. The Council believes that there are opportunities to take a more locally focused approach to car parking standards across the District. It is therefore proposing to develop specific residential car parking standards for Epping Forest District. These parking standards will be developed based on:

- an understanding of differing levels of car ownership across the District;
- the different levels of current and future access to services and facilities across the District; and
- making better use of land through widening the use of ‘unallocated’ car parking within larger developments and looking at the need for providing on-site garage provision.

Until such time as those standards are adopted, planning applications will use Essex County Council’s adopted Parking Standards as the starting point. Where practicable and within 400m of a railway station, the Council will seek reduced car parking, including car free, development.

3.93 Some of the issues raised through consultation are not within the remit of the Local Plan to address. These include matters such as:

- the differential pricing between rail and London Underground services;
- the issues arising from the down time of barriers at rail crossings; and
- the impact of existing HGVs on the local road network.

3.94 The Council recognises that these are important issues that need to be addressed wherever possible and will continue to pursue these matters with partners including Essex County

Council, Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies and Transport for London.

### Policy T 1 Sustainable Transport Choices

- A. The Council will work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to promote a safe, efficient and convenient transport system which will:
- (i) build on the District’s strategic location, through improvements to strategic road and rail connections and other public transport networks to the wider area;
  - (ii) promote transport choice, through improvements to public transport services and supporting infrastructure, and providing coherent safe, attractive and direct cycling and walking networks to provide a genuine alternative to the car and facilitate a modal shift;
  - (iii) provide opportunities to improve access to the two Town and four Small District Centres and rail stations by all modes of transport and ensure good integration between transport modes;
  - (iv) manage congestion, seek to reduce journey time and maintain consistency in journey times;
  - (v) promote and improve safety, security and healthy lifestyles; and
  - (vi) improve the efficiency of the local highway network.
- B. Development should minimise the need to travel, promote opportunities for sustainable transport modes, improve accessibility to services and support the transition to a low carbon future.
- ~~C. Development proposals will be permitted where they:~~
- ~~(i) integrate into existing transport networks;~~
  - ~~(ii) provide safe, suitable and convenient access for all potential users;~~
  - ~~(iii) provide on-site layouts that are compatible for all potential users with appropriate parking and servicing provision; and~~

The Local Plan should be read as a whole. Proposals will be judged against all relevant policies.

~~(iv) do not result in unacceptable increases in traffic generation or compromise highway safety.~~

- ~~D.~~ C. Development proposals that generate significant amounts of movement must be supported by a Transport Statement or Transport Assessment and will normally be required to provide a Travel Plan. Development proposals which generate a significant number of heavy goods vehicle movements will be required to demonstrate by way of a Routing Management Plan that no severe impacts are caused to the efficient and safe operation of the road network and no material harm caused to the living conditions of residents.
- E. D. Development will, where appropriate, ensure that transport infrastructure will be of a high quality, sustainable in design, construction and layout, and offer maximum flexibility in the choice of travel modes, including walking and cycling, and with accessibility for all potential users.
- F. E. Development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated, where appropriate, that it:
- (i) does not result in a cumulative severe impact on the operation ~~and safety~~ of, or accessibility to, the local or strategic highway networks or compromise highway safety;
  - (ii) mitigates impacts on the local or strategic highway networks and London Underground station infrastructure within the District, arising from the development itself or the cumulative effects of development, through the provision of, or contributions towards, necessary transport improvements, including those secured by legal agreement, subject to viability considerations;
  - (iii) protects and, where appropriate, enhances access to Public Rights of Way;
  - (iv) provides appropriate parking and servicing provision, in terms of amount, design and layout and cycle storage arrangements, in accordance with adopted Parking Standards and which mitigates any impact on on-street parking provision within the locality. Reduced car parking, including car free, development in sustainable locations will be supported; and
  - (v) ensures that, ~~where appropriate,~~ development proposals provide a co-ordinated and comprehensive ~~scheme~~ approach with layouts that are compatible for all potential users in terms of their

safety, suitability, convenience and attractiveness and which that does not prejudice the future provision of transport infrastructure on and through-adjointing sites, and integrate with existing transport networks.

- G. F. In order to accommodate the use of low emission vehicles to support improvements in air quality within the District all new car parking spaces provided as part of a development must provide direct access to an ~~the provision of~~ electric vehicle charging points. will be required within all new developments which make provision for car parking for vehicles.