

Ware Neighbourhood Plan: Draft Transport Policies

Introduction

Transport policies have an important role to play in facilitating sustainable development and contributing to Ware’s wider sustainability and health objectives.

The Town’s transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable transport modes to ensure people are provided with a real choice about how they travel.

Overall Transport Policies Objective:

To make moving around and through Ware more convenient and safer by encouraging the use of sustainable transport; including making Ware more pedestrian and cyclist friendly and improving public transport provision.

TRANSPORT POLICY 1: Traffic Congestion

Transport Policy 1 - Key Objectives:

- a) Improve traffic flow through Ware High Street, while still enabling businesses and shops to trade effectively;
- b) Reduce congestion outside schools;
- c) Encourage considerate driver behaviour by reducing speed limits and introducing other traffic calming measures;
- d) Support improvements to residential car parking issues.

Context and reasoned justification.

- 1) Ware’s historic town centre suffers from congestion on its narrow roads. This is exacerbated by retailers loading/unloading during peak hours, causing traffic to idle and creating additional congestion and pollution.
- 2) Traffic congestion occurs mainly within weekday morning (i.e. 07.30 – 09.30) and evening ‘peak hours’ (i.e. 17.00 – 18.00) local school’s afternoon ‘School Runs’ (i.e. 15.15 – 16.15) and during weekend busy ‘shopping hours’ (i.e. 09.30 – 17.00).
- 3) Parents delivering and collecting students cause congestion within local roads close to all of Ware’s Primary and Secondary schools during the morning and afternoon ‘School Run’.
- 4) Responses from the recent community engagement indicate concern regarding harm from large construction and delivery vehicles. In addition to air pollution and noise, large construction and delivery vehicles cause physical damage to the surfaces of roads and pavements, and clog up narrow streets, impeding the free movement of traffic, and frustrating pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.

- 5) Traffic flows on New Road, Star Street and Viaduct Road are constricted by the pedestrian crossing, and cars parking outside Sainsbury's in Star Street.
- 6) The allocated highway space for car parking within Ware Town Centre and surrounding residential roads is inadequate, and encourages residents and visitors to park on the pavement, thereby blocking access for emergency vehicles and creating traffic congestion.
- 7) Ware High Street and other streets in the immediate vicinity within central Ware, should be subject to an Air Quality Monitoring Area, so that Herts CC can introduce appropriate traffic management measures to restrict these streets to 'low emission vehicles only'.

Transport Policy 1: Traffic Congestion

Ware Town Council will work collaboratively with East Herts DC and Herts CC to:

- 1) Review and improve traffic flow within Ware High Street, and at the following key Ware Transport Network locations:
 - Star Street;
 - Star Street junction;
 - New Road / Musley Hill;
 - Park Road;
 - Wadesmill Road / A1174 roundabout;
 - Baldock Street / Watton Road roundabout; and
 - London Road / Viaduct Road.
- 2) Promote the implementation of 'School Streets' outside all Ware Primary and Secondary schools to prevent vehicles parking near schools during morning and afternoon 'School Run' hours to:
 - reduce traffic congestion,
 - improve air quality; and
 - make Ware's roads safer for school students walking and cycling to/from school.
- 3) Review traffic management within Ware High Street, and explore options for:
 - limiting delivery hours;
 - reducing on-street parking; and
 - limiting the quantum of heavy vehicles travelling through Ware High Street.
- 4) Review the speed limit within Ware High Street and its surrounding roads, including Wadesmill Road and Watton Road.
- 5) Review the allocation of highway space accorded to car parking within Ware, and improve and extend the existing Residents parking permit scheme.

TRANSPORT POLICY 2: Air Quality

Transport Policy 2 - Key Objectives:

- a) Develop an effective air quality monitoring network within Ware to measure progress and to help prioritise actions;
- b) Protect Air Quality within areas of Ware that currently meet national Air Quality standards;
- c) Have a clear consistent procedure for the assessment of Air Quality in the context of East Herts DC and Ware Town Council's implementation of development control; and
- d) Identify opportunities to involve and inform Ware's communities regarding Air Quality issues, and undertake wider information campaigns regarding Ware's existing and potential future Air Quality.

Context and reasoned justification.

- 1) Air pollution can exacerbate breathing problems, and contribute to asthma, lung and heart diseases. Road transport emissions are the largest single source of air pollution within UK urban areas.
- 2) Children, elderly people and those with existing medical conditions, are especially at risk from poor air quality. Cars should be prevented from driving and/or waiting close to schools, doctors' surgeries and care homes to help protect those most vulnerable from poor air quality
- 3) Improved air quality may enable more local residents to consider walking and cycling within Ware. Thus, Air Quality within Ware, especially within Ware Town Centre, is considered an essential element of our Ware Neighbourhood Plan.
- 4) No part of Ware is currently located within an Air Quality Monitoring Area. Thus, it is difficult for us to obtain any current measurements and/or information regarding the quality of the air within Ware Town Centre.
- 5) Existing local Air Quality planning policies (that include Ware) are detailed within the following documents
 - an '*Air Quality Planning Guidance*' document, published by EHDC in 2016; and
 - an '*Air Quality Strategic Plan for Hertfordshire, 2015 – 2020*' published by Herts CC in May 2015.

- 6) Herts CC and EHDC has detailed information regarding the likely increased traffic flows and consequent increased congestion within Ware High Street and surrounding roads from their modelling of the North & East Ware Housing Development site (HCC letter to EHDC of 19th May 2016 refers).
- 7) The DEFRA ‘Emissions Factors Toolkit’ (EFT) guidance and the EFT software regarding vehicle emissions (published May 2019) assists local authorities in carrying out the Review and Assessment of local air quality, as part of their duties under the Environment Act 1995.
- 8) The EFT allows users to calculate road vehicle pollutant emission rates for NOx, PM10, PM2.5 and CO2 for
 - a specified year;
 - road type;
 - vehicle speed; and
 - vehicle fleet composition.
- 9) The May 2019 DEFRA Emissions Factor Toolkit software should be interrogated, utilising the traffic data from the assessment of the North & East Ware Housing development traffic forecasts, to generate a forecast air quality for Ware High Street and other congested parts of the Ware Road Network.

Transport Policy 2: Air Quality

Ware Town Council will work collaboratively with East Herts DC and Herts CC to:

- 1) Create an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) encompassing Ware High Street, the Star Street junction, central Ware streets within the immediate vicinity of Ware High Street, and other congested parts of the Ware Road Network.
- 2) Introduce traffic management measures to reduce air pollution and improve air quality within Ware, including a ‘Low Emissions Zone’ traffic regulation order for Ware High Street and the Star Street junction.
- 3) Create ‘School Streets’ to remove vehicular traffic near all of Ware’s schools.
- 4) Encourage all of Ware’s students to walk and cycle to/from school.
- 5) Ensure that Ware’s Air Quality measures and associated Air Quality mitigation measures do not have an unacceptable impact upon climate change, or create any other negative environmental impacts.

TRANSPORT POLICY 3: Pedestrian Facilities

Transport Policy 3 - Key Objectives:

- a) Provide new pedestrian road crossing points, where necessary and viable, which are of good design, are pleasant for pedestrians to use, and promote safety by encouraging road users to regard the street as a shared space, and hence be vigilant of other road users;
- b) Avoid unnecessary barriers, width restrictions, buildouts, islands and management measures, which detract from Ware's historic character, and/or are likely to worsen, rather than reduce street congestion;
- c) Demonstrate that the needs of those with disabilities have been positively considered in the design and implementation of new pedestrian schemes, and provide appropriate facilities to assist them; and
- d) Ensure all new development includes appropriate facilities for pedestrians.

Context and reasoned justification.

- 1) Improved pedestrian facilities within Ware would encourage many local residents to walk rather than use cars for short, local trips, e.g.:
 - dropped kerbs;
 - improved footway / footpath surfaces;
 - improved street lighting;
 - public seats; and
 - clear pedestrian priority at junctions.
- 2) Ware's footways and pedestrian routes need to be better maintained, so that the pavements are smooth, level and free of obstructions – benefiting all pedestrians, including those with prams, those in wheelchairs, and those using mobility scooters.
- 3) The towpath through Ware, from Ware Lock to Amwell End, and beyond Crane Mead, is well-used and is a favourite place for families to walk with their children. However, the towpath is very narrow in places, and it is becoming increasingly unsafe to have cyclists and walkers using the towpath at the same time.
- 4) The pedestrian bridges over the river have fallen into disrepair. Issues relating to the ownership of the bridges needs to be resolved, and action taken to repair and maintain the bridges in the long term.
- 5) The design features of pedestrian facilities will take into account the needs of groups with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, particularly those with age-related infirmity, disability, and/or poor health.

Transport Policy 3 – Pedestrian Facilities

Ware Town Council will work collaboratively with East Herts DC and Herts CC to:

- 1) Promote walking within Ware as a viable alternative to the use of a private vehicle.
- 2) Improve pedestrian facilities within Ware Town Centre.
- 3) Work with the Canals and Rivers Trust and Sustrans to improve the towpath through Ware Town Centre, and create a pedestrian-only “Green Heart of Ware” corridor along the river front.
- 4) Work with the Canal and Rivers Trust to actively to maintain all of Ware’s Public Right of Way footpaths and footbridges to ensure that they are accessible by all members of the community.

TRANSPORT POLICY 4: Cycling Facilities

Transport Policy 4 - Key Objectives:

- a) Provide a network of safe and easily accessible cycling routes;
- b) Increase the amount of secure cycle parking;
- c) Identify opportunities to involve and inform communities; and
- d) Encourage cycling as a safe and convenient mode of transport.

Context and reasoned justification.

- 1) Cycling is an essential sustainable transport mode for both accessibility and health. It can be also a significant option for travelling to work or to school. Whilst Ware has a few dedicated cycle routes, most routes into and across the town are restricted by the historic street pattern. Better cycle route connectivity and off-road provision is required to achieve a significant modal shift in cycling within Ware.
- 2) Improved cycle facilities within Ware would encourage the use of cycles, rather than cars for short, local trips
- 3) *National Cycle Network Route 61* utilises the River Lea towpath within Ware and provides an alternative (off road) cycle route to Hertford. This route is very popular for both cyclists and pedestrians. However, the section between Ware Lock and Amwell End, and again from Amwell End to Wickham's Wharf is very narrow and not conducive to shared use. The alternative loop for cyclists from Ware Lock via Ware Rail Station is poorly signed and consequently is not well used. The route could be made significantly safer for both cyclists and pedestrians by:
 - Improving the cycle route signage;
 - Promoting the 'alternative cycle route' from Ware Lock via Ware Rail Station; and
 - Creating a 'Pedestrian-Only' section of the towpath.
- 4) The surface of the *National Cycle Network Route 61* within Ware, and signs at local access points into Ware Town Centre should be improved, to encourage cyclists to visit Ware's key visitor attractions (e.g. the Priory, Museum, Lido, cafés etc.)
- 5) A designated, signed and equipped (i.e. dropped kerbs, cycle parking spaces) 'Ware Cycle Network' that connects all local Primary and Secondary schools with Ware's residential areas, green spaces and Ware Town Centre would encourage many local residents to use cycles rather than cars for local trips.

- 6) The provision of additional, secure, cycle parking facilities at Ware Rail Station and other key central Ware locations would enable people to easily stop and safely secure their cycles when accessing shops, cafés, leisure facilities and other services.

Transport Policy 4 – Cycling Facilities

Ware Town Council will work collaboratively with East Herts DC and Herts CC to:

- 1) Promote cycling within Ware as a viable alternative to the use of a private vehicle.
- 2) Work with Sustrans, the Canals and Rivers Trust and other local partners to establish and maintain a 'Ware Cycle Network'.
- 3) Work with Greater Anglia to provide and maintain additional secure cycling facilities adjacent to Ware Rail Station.
- 4) Provide and maintain additional secure cycling facilities within Ware Town Centre.

TRANSPORT POLICY 5: Public Transport Use

Transport Policy 5 - Key Objectives:

Provision of a positive public transport environment within Ware, including:

- a) Liaison between bus /coach operators, Herts CC and Ware Town Council regarding bus routes and the location of bus stops at an early design stage;
- b) The provision of Real-Time information at all Ware bus stops;
- c) The use of electric and other ultra-low emission bus / coach vehicles within Ware by all bus and coach operators; and
- d) The provision of bus friendly traffic calming measures, bus laybys and fully accessible bus shelters suitable for midi-bus operation on Ware’s main streets.

Context and reasoned justification.

- 1) Ware relies heavily on car usage, due to the poor-quality public transport links.
- 2) Encouraging more local residents to use public transport instead of a car for short, local trips within Ware, would reduce road congestion and improve local air quality.
- 3) The single rail link to London Liverpool Street is very well used, and peak-hour trains are over-crowded. Many rail commuters travel to Ware Rail station by car, as the public transport links are poor.
- 4) There is a limited bus service throughout the town, with services in the evening and/or at weekends very limited, or non-existent.
- 5) Improvements to the frequency and reliability of local bus services would provide local residents with a viable alternative to a car for their short, local trips, and for connecting trips to other public transport facilities (e.g. Ware Rail Station and the Greenline Coach stop)
- 6) Reduction in the amount of fossil fuel powered vehicles in Ware will help contribute to the health of the people and the environment.

Transport Policy 5 – Public Transport Use

Ware Town Council will work collaboratively with East Herts DC and Herts CC to:

- 1) Promote the use of public transport, especially for short, local trips.
- 2) Work with local Bus Operators to devise/fund cost-effective improvements to enhance the frequency and reliability of local bus services.
- 3) Work with Greater Anglia to maintain Ware Station's passenger facilities and increase the number of rail services to/from Ware per day.
- 4) Work with local NHS partnerships and local voluntary groups to provide a cost-effective local Community Transport facility for Ware residents.

TRANSPORT POLICY 6: North East Ware Housing Development Impact

Policy 6: Sustainable Transport, Safety and Accessibility Planning

Transport Policy - Key Objectives:

The proposed NE Ware Housing Development residential development is outside the designated area of the Ware Neighbourhood Plan. However, the potential transport impacts of such a large residential development upon Ware's existing infrastructure, services and highway network are considerable, and therefore:

- a) The impact of the NE Ware Housing Development upon Ware's infrastructure, services and highway network should be considered as part of the Ware Neighbourhood Plan.

Context and reasoned justification.

- 1) The potential transport impacts of such a large residential development upon Ware's existing infrastructure, services and highway network should be considered as part of the Ware Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2) The proposed NE Ware Housing Development should include the provision of a comprehensive pedestrian route network within the site curtilage, with high quality links to:
 - Ware's existing pedestrian routes;
 - Ware's existing Public Rights of Way network.
- 3) The provision of enhanced and/or new pedestrian crossing facilities on the existing Ware Highway network is essential, especially where increased NE Ware Housing Development related-pedestrian movements (combined with increased traffic movements, e.g. Wadesmill Road, Widbury Hill) might endanger pedestrian highway safety.
- 4) The proposed NE Ware Housing Development should include the provision of a comprehensive cycle route network within the site curtilage, with high quality links to:
 - Ware's existing cycle routes; and
 - Ware's existing Public Rights of Way network;
 - And include the provision of enhanced and/or new cycle crossing facilities on the existing Ware Highway network, where increased cycle route movements (combined with increased traffic movements) might endanger cyclist safety.

- 5) The proposed NE Ware Housing Development S.106 Agreement should include the provision of monies to fund:
 - the provision of appropriately located bus stops and bus shelters with ‘real time’ bus service information within the site curtilage; and
 - the provision of local bus services for a minimum of 5 years, that will connect the NE Ware residential neighbourhoods with Ware Town Centre and other parts of the Town.
- 6) The NE Ware development planning application submission documents should include a *Transport Assessment* report that should detail the:
 - quantum of traffic likely to be generated by each of the proposed land uses within the site curtilage (e.g. Shops, Schools, Private Housing, Social Housing etc.);
 - calculated volume of traffic that will typically access and egress the NE Ware Housing Development during peak periods, and during a day;
 - calculated number/type of vehicles that will utilise each of the NE Ware Housing Development’s proposed pedestrian, cycle and vehicular accesses during a 24 hour period.
- 7) The NE Ware development’s *Travel Plan* documents should include details of at least:
 - a Residential Travel Plan that includes incentives to encourage new NE Ware Housing development residents to walk, cycle, use public transport or Car Club vehicles for local trips;
 - Outline School Travel Plans that detail how the proposed new schools will encourage students (and their Parents) to walk, cycle, use public transport or Car Club vehicles for their trips to and from school.
- 8) The NE Ware Housing Development’s Transport Assessment report should include at least:
 - an assessment of the likely impact of the NE Ware Housing Development’s forecast traffic generation upon the local highway network, including local Ware roads and the A10 (for at least 5 years and 10 years after the date of the planning application submission);
 - a schedule of suggested ‘highway improvement’ works (e.g. improvements to the Wadesmill Road roundabout, the junction at The High Street and Star Street) that the developer’s transport consultants have calculated would be required to mitigate the impact of the increased quantum of (NE Ware Housing Development generated) traffic upon the local highway network once the NE Ware Housing Development is fully occupied.

9) NPPF Extracts

NPPF para 108 states:

*“ it should be ensured that:
(c) any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.”*

NPPF para 109 states:

“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.”

Transport Policy 6 – North East Ware Housing Development Impact

Ware Town Council will work collaboratively with East Herts DC and Herts CC to:

- 1) Ensure that the NE Ware residential development’s design accords with NPPF sustainable transport, environment and air quality objectives.
- 2) Ensure that the significant highway capacity, congestion, highway safety and air pollution impacts of the NE Ware Housing development upon Ware’s road network are comprehensively mitigated in accordance with the NPPF.
- 3) Ensure that the NE Ware residential development’s proposed cycle routes:
 - Provide high quality links to Ware’s existing cycle routes and Public Rights of Way; and
 - Enhance existing cycle crossing facilities, and/or provide new cycle crossing facilities on strategic cycle desire lines between the NE Ware Housing Development and key existing Ware community facilities, and Ware Town Centre.
- 4) Ensure that the design of the proposed NE Ware residential development accords with NPPF sustainable transport objectives regarding ‘minimising the need to travel and maximising the use of sustainable modes of transport’, and demonstrates cognisance of NPPF para 110, including the provision of:
 - high quality bus service infrastructure (e.g. bus shelters near to homes);
 - regular and reliable local bus services, that commence within days of the first occupation of each phase of housing; and
 - current local bus services information to all new NE Ware residents / occupiers, to enable them to choose a bus journey as a viable alternative to a car for their short, local trips.

- 5) Ensure that the significant highway capacity, congestion, highway safety and air quality impacts of the NE Ware development traffic on the local highway network are:
 - systematically modelled;
 - appropriately assessed; and
 - comprehensively mitigated, so that the residual cumulative impacts on Ware's road network are reduced as much as possible.
- 6) Ensure that the significant highway capacity, congestion, highway safety and air quality impacts of the NE Ware development traffic on the local highway network are appropriately assessed and comprehensively mitigated at the following locations:
 - Ware High Street;
 - Star Street;
 - Star Street junction;
 - Widbury Hill;
 - New Road / Musley Hill;
 - Fanhams Hall Road;
 - Wadesmill Road / A1174 roundabout;
 - Baldock Street / Watton Road roundabout;
 - London Road / Viaduct Road.