



Mobility Strategy

December 2016

Stevenage Mobility Strategy

Overview

1 This overarching Mobility Strategy for Stevenage makes commitments to tried, tested and innovative initiatives in Mobility and Behaviour, that do not just mitigate the demands from the Local Plan growth but will accelerate the more efficient use of transport infrastructure within the town. It enables growth, not just for this Local Plan but beyond, with a reduced reliance on the car and more active and integrated communities.

2 It steers away from the historic, and now contra-policy, predict and provide car commuter peak as a proxy for transport and Mobility. Instead of prioritising road building schemes to satisfy a theoretical short lived car commuter demand, the strategy is to design for and prioritise Mobility as a whole. It is to create even more attractive choice in movement than already exists, committing funds to physical improvements to the higher capacity cycle network, which can be up to seven times more effective in terms of unit road space compared with car use, invest in public transport and make huge inroads in influencing behaviour by significant funding of new measures to promote and use the mobility options that already exist and will improve.

3 The commuter peak periods are the times of the day when the highway network is under the most pressure. The National Travel Survey (NTS) shows that in the AM peak hour (08:00-09:00), 25% of all movement is for commuting and business purposes and 50% is associated with education⁽¹⁾. Therefore, three quarters of all movement in the AM peak hour are focussed on just these two activities. In the PM peak hour (17:00-18:00), over 40% of all movement is associated with these purposes.

4 In addition to this, Stevenage has a high level of internalisation of jobs, with many local residents taking up available jobs in Stevenage. Therefore, commuting distances will be short for many residents. A high proportion of all trips, not just commuter trips, are less than 5 miles.



Figure 4.1 Propensity to Increase Active Travel for Short Trips

1 National Travel Survey Table NTSS0502 Trip Start Time by Trip Purpose (Monday to Friday) England

5 Given this, the strategy is to be cognisant of these trip purposes and to target in particular short trips made by car that could easily be made by active travel and public transport instead.

Active Travel Strategy

Existing Situation

6 Stevenage's cycle network was modelled on Dutch infrastructure and by the 1970s, when the network was finalised, Stevenage was held up as proof that the UK could build a Dutch-style cycle network.

7 Stevenage's good active travel infrastructure can easily become excellent with further investment. The cycle routes have the capacity to accommodate significant movement by bicycle, becoming material economic conduits for movement. **Appendix i** is the cycle map of the whole Stevenage network.

Proposed Strategy

8 Stevenage Borough Council will place a high priority on active travel. For the purposes of this Local Plan and beyond, it will plan on the basis that the proportion of travel by active travel will increase, that commuter peak car demand will remain broadly static and therefore that the proportion of travel by car driver will decrease.

9 The strategy is to further encourage this shift through the creation of an active travel /car differential whereby it is more attractive to cycle for short journeys than drive.

10 The existence of the extensive, segregated cycle infrastructure means that Stevenage is better equipped than many towns to facilitate safe and convenient cycling and encourage this change in emphasis.

11 In Hertfordshire, it has been estimated that 63% of all journeys are less than 5 miles. Not only has Stevenage been designed with cycling in mind, but the majority of trips are of a distance that can comfortably be accommodated by a choice of means of mobility.

12 The strategy will focus on the following aspects:

- **Cycle Strategy:** an up to date cycling strategy will be prepared for Stevenage that will set out the strategy, measures and timescales for implementation. The strategy will consider all potential cycle trip purposes, including commuting, cycling to school and recreational cycling.
- **An upgraded cycle network:** the highest priority for investment will be the upgrade of the existing cycle network, which has suffered from a historic lack of investment. This will include improved surfacing, improved lighting, addressing missing links in the network and changes to priority where cycleways meet the highway in order to create continuous routes. In accordance with Policy IT5 of the Local Plan, developers will be required to provide safe, direct and convenient routes within the development, and link to existing cycleway and pedestrian networks.

- **Wayfinding:** the former active travel Wayfinding Strategy that was developed, but not implemented, will be reviewed and updated where necessary. An Action Plan for its implementation will be included in the updated Cycle Strategy.
- **Cycle Storage:** a review of existing cycle parking available to the public within Stevenage will be undertaken. The review will identify any gaps in existing cycle parking provision in terms of appropriate locations at trip ends as well as the quality of cycle parking. In addition, in accordance with Policy IT5 of the Local Plan, developers will be required to provide secure cycle parking as part of any development coming forward.
- **Cycle Training:** Positive actions to influence behaviour are education in, and awareness of, opportunities, including the opportunity to make best use of the active travel infrastructure. Cycle training, including for those of an early age, will help to broaden horizons and provide confidence.

Public Transport Strategy

Existing Situation

13 Public transport (buses and trains) is well used in Stevenage. Approximately 6% of travel to work is by bus, and 7% by train. However, the existing bus and railway station have been underinvested for some time and require an upgrade in provision. The bus-rail transfer is currently relatively poor as the existing bus station is not located adjacent to the railway station to provide a seamless interchange.

Proposed Strategy

14 As part of the regeneration of the Town Centre it is proposed to close the existing bus station and replace it with new bus interchange at the railway station. It is also proposed to significantly improve bus connections into and through Stevenage, which will enable more employees in the town centre and Gunnels Wood employment area easily access their place of work.

15 Through the Thameslink expansion, Stevenage will be directly connected, by fast services, to the heart of central London and a variety of destinations south of London, including Gatwick Airport. Services will also stop at Farringdon for easy connections onto the Elizabeth Line (i.e. Crossrail) to Heathrow, Canary Wharf and beyond. With new trains on both commuter and intercity services, by 2018 there will be a step change in the accessibility and attractiveness of travel by rail to/from Stevenage. The Local Plan identifies (Policy TC4 iv) 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. This will also help to drive a shift in travel onto rail.

Car Parking strategy

Proposed Strategy

16 Parking is no longer a stand-alone issue, but has become a key aspect of both transport and land use planning. Control over the availability of parking spaces is a key policy instrument in influencing car trips. The supply and pricing of car parking has a fundamental influence on the

way people travel. Research has shown that even where good alternatives to the car exist, if cheap and convenient car parking is available then people with access to a car will tend to choose this mode of travel.

17 The 2004 Parking Strategy will be updated as part of the development of the Stevenage Mobility Strategy as a tool for encouraging greater activity in the town centre whilst minimising the demand for commuter car parking.

18 Stevenage Borough Council will take the lead in this by critically reviewing and managing its own staff car parking strategy.

Car Sharing

Existing Situation

19 Hertfordshire County Council currently operates a Liftshare car-pooling scheme, which has over 1,000 members.

Proposed Strategy

20 Stevenage Borough Council will develop car-pooling within the Stevenage community, and expect new development, where appropriate, to invest in the development and encouragement of this type of mobility. It will stay abreast of the significant emerging European research in this field, and seek the implementation of the most effective elements of this growing, and particularly socially inclusive, method of mobility.

Workplace Travel Planning

Existing Situation

21 2011 Census data provides an insight into the main modes of travel for people working in Stevenage. This shows that 69% of people who work in Stevenage drive a car, 11% travel by public transport and 13% walk or cycle.

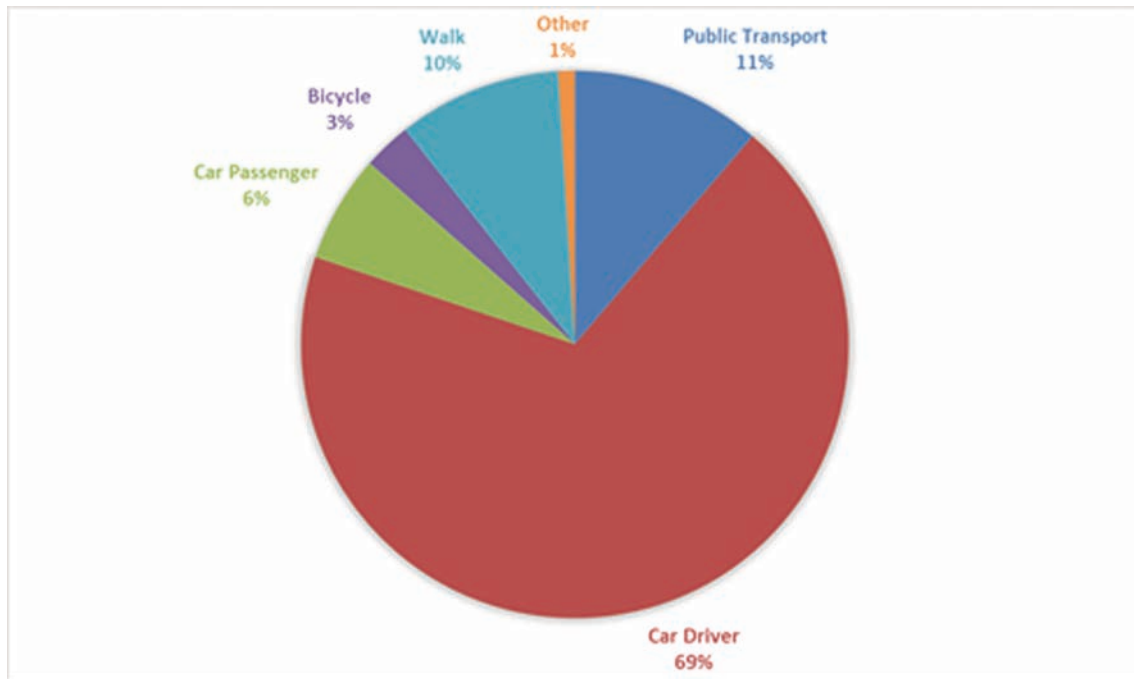


Figure 4.2 Mode of Travel to Work for People Working in Stevenage (2011 Census)

22 The Hertfordshire 2015 Household Survey provides a useful insight into how far people travel to work and by which mode. Of particular interest are those trips that are under 3 miles, and therefore have the easiest potential to be made by sustainable modes. Figure 4.3 illustrates the mode share of journeys to work under 3 miles.

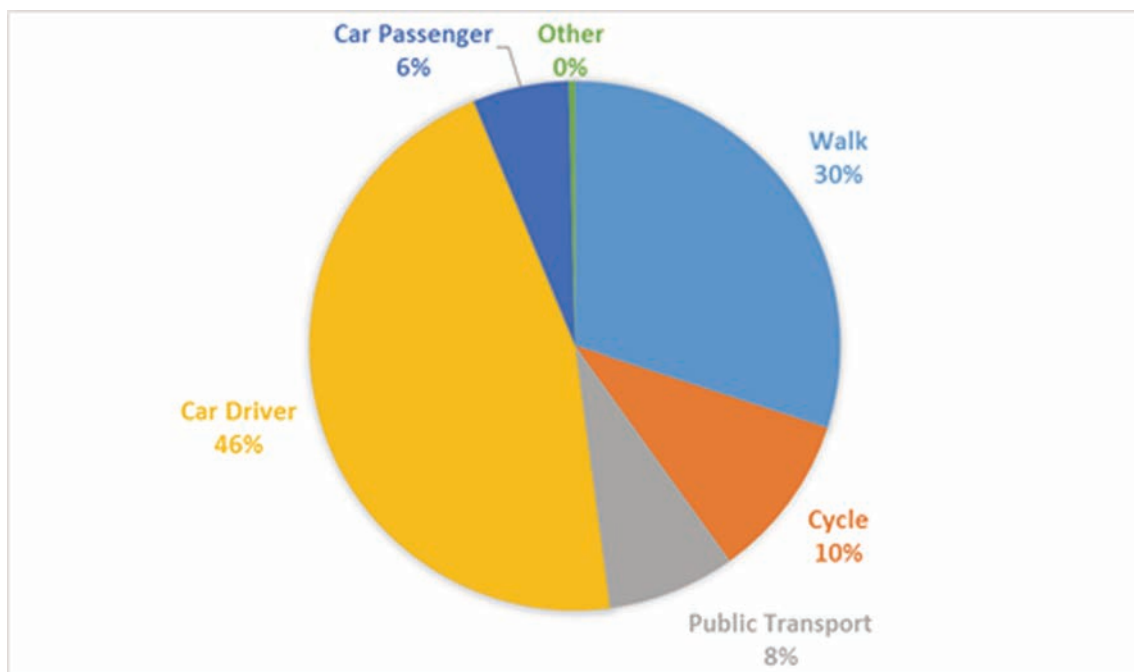


Figure 4.3 Mode of Travel for Journey to Work Trips under 3 miles

23 The survey showed that 22% of journeys to work in Hertfordshire are within 3 miles and that over half (52%) of these journeys are made by car. There is a significant potential for mode shift for these short trips to be made by active travel, public transport or more efficient use of the car.

Proposed Strategy

24 Gunnels Wood, between the A1(M) and the town centre, is by far the largest employment site in Stevenage. The area is made up of a large range of businesses, from small and medium businesses through to some very large employers including GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) and MBDA. Around 19,000 employees work on the estate for approximately 300 different businesses and it is set to intensify as part of the Local Plan.

25 The concentration of this many people, makes it an ideal area to target travel behaviour change through a range of travel planning measures. Major employers in this area, including GSK, are already part of the SmartGo Stevenage scheme, which offers a range of travel benefits and services to help make travel cheaper and easier for employees.

26 The strategy is to concentrate infrastructure and behavioural influence initiatives in these concentrated areas of employment, which include the Council office in Stevenage. There are some significant mobility benefits to be had in this way, and a strong evidential basis already in the UK for the effectiveness of this.

Education Travel Planning

Existing Situation

27 With regards to education trips, the Hertfordshire 2015 Household Survey shows that 40% of trips (all school ages) are made by car and the remaining 60% by non-car modes.

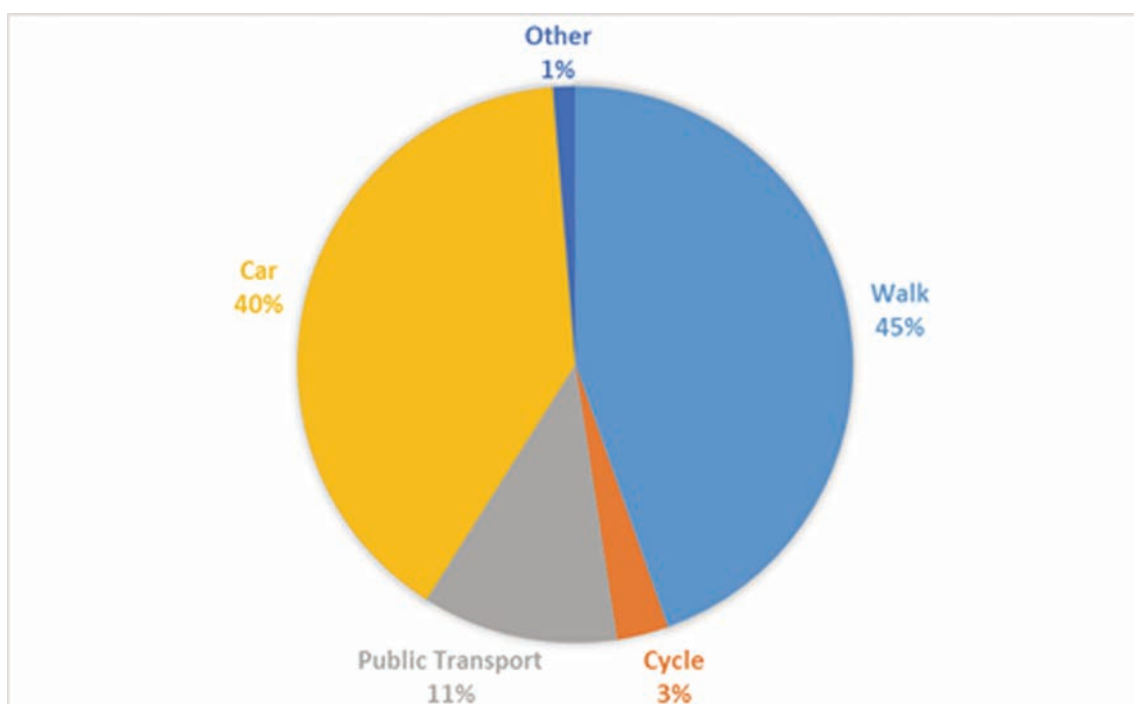


Figure 4.4 Mode of Travel for Education Trips (All School Ages)

28 Short car trips have the greatest propensity to change to active travel. The short educational trips (under 3 miles) make up the vast majority of education related trips (over 70%) and, 30% of these are currently made by car. Therefore, any shift away from the car for these trips would have a positive effect on travel, particularly in the morning peak period.

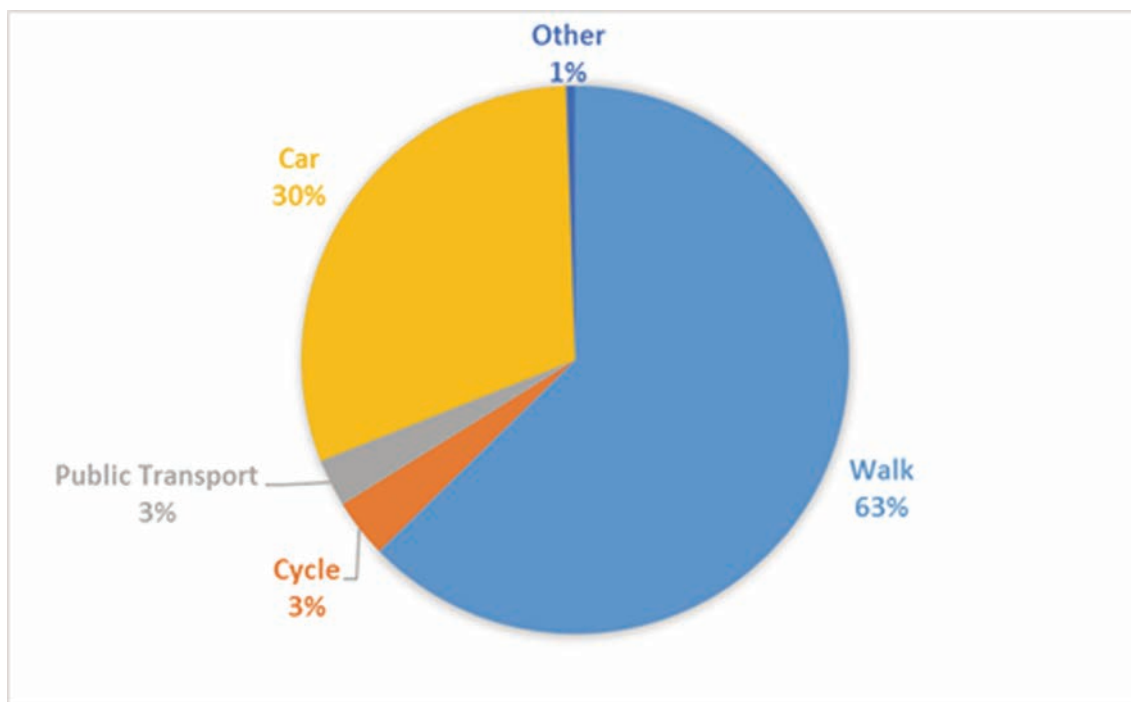


Figure 4.5 Mode of Travel for Education Trips under 3 miles

Proposed Strategy

29 The Mobility Strategy for Stevenage will focus on encouraging a change in behaviour away from the car for education trips. There is a good evidential base⁽²⁾ for the effectiveness and benefits of education related interventions on school related travel, to the extent that positive behavioural initiatives can have a substantial effect on the propensity to travel to school by healthy and sustainable means. The strategy is to promote a plethora of measures, including:

- Development and enforcement of School Travel Plans;
- Bikeability cycle training in schools; and
- Continued development of education facilities within easy access by non-car modes.

² DfT Modeshift STARS; NICE Guidance "What can local authorities achieve by encouraging walking and cycling"; Living Streets "Making the Case for Investment in the Walking Environment, A Review of the Evidence"

Highway Network Management

Proposed Strategy

30 For car travel in Stevenage to be sustainable, many people will need to travel by other means. It is unrealistic to expect traffic to flow unimpeded at peak times, or to design to accommodate that desire.

31 The strategy is to prioritise delivery of the overall mobility network. In some cases, that might mean reallocation of road space between modes, and this may include junction or road improvements.

32 In terms of traffic capacity, the Council will identify pinch points on the network in the first instance, and prioritise funding for road capacity improvements to relieve those pinch points in the context of the overarching mobility strategy. The IDP identifies the pinch points currently forecast by the traffic modelling exercise and assigns costs and priorities to those measures.

