

6.2 Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire Cross boundary strategy

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Foreword

This joint statement sets out how the two local authorities listed below have agreed to work together in a number of important areas of transport policy and plan implementation. We agree to work jointly to:

- promote improved management of our strategic transport infrastructure and services;
- integrate local network management schemes and initiatives to promote greater use of public transport, walking and cycling; and
- explore opportunities to deliver better value for money in the delivery of transport maintenance and other transport services.

We see our joint work as being fully supportive of the shared priorities agreed between national and local government, particularly in tackling congestion, promoting accessibility and improving air quality.

I INTRODUCTION

Over the last 12 months there has been a step change in the amount of joint working, understanding, and appreciation between Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire County Councils. This has culminated in discussions and work taking place on a wide range of issues at a high strategic level as well as at the local operational level.

This statement sets out a jointly agreed position on a wide range of transport policy, infrastructure and operational issues. It represents a framework for the authorities to continue to work together to promote the national shared priorities. Importantly, it also offers each authority opportunities to secure local transport and other objectives, particularly on cross-boundary highway routes and transport services.

The joint work is also securing better co-ordination of local highway network management and improving cross-boundary scheme delivery. Users of the transport network are not constrained by local authority boundaries and greater joint working is helping the local authorities to better meet travel demands.

The joint work is also allowing the authorities to explore the possibility of joint procurement of services across authorities, particularly in highway maintenance and parking enforcement. The authorities are hoping to secure significant financial benefits through this approach whilst maintaining a high quality of service and meeting local objectives.

Both parties view this joint statement as a commitment to an ongoing programme of liaison and work.

2 CONTEXT

All authorities are appreciative of the need to work together to deliver effective services to address congestion, urban traffic management control, parking management, freight routing and signing, air quality management areas, maintenance and road safety in the next LTP2 period.

ACTION

2(a) Authorities to work together to deliver the schemes associated with their regional agendas but also to lobby Government and relevant agencies to ensure the strategies contained within the 'joint statement' are heard and taken account of.

Our joint working helps to meet the 'shared priority' objectives as the following table illustrates. Joint working will also help in securing quality of life which is an over-arching theme for the development of our second Local Transport Plans.

3 STRATEGIC HIGHWAY NETWORK

(i) Both authorities recognise the need to involve the Highways Agency on key routes and junctions, including the M25 and its junctions.

(ii) Both parties would support lane expansions on the M25 within the Highways Agency boundary. We would, however, express concerns in relation to air quality issues on the trunk road network as volumes of traffic are likely to increase as a result.

(iii) Both parties will not promote the use of road user charging in their authority areas until a national study has taken place to assess its viability and it is developed as a national initiative. There are particular concerns over the potential increase in rat-running in rural areas to avoid charging.

(iv) The quality of the road on the A41 from Aston Clinton to the M25 is considered high and we consider able to cope with growth in Aylesbury and further along this corridor. We will continue to work together to address joint issues on this route such as maintenance and safety programmes as and when they occur.

Contents	Congestion	Air Quality	Safety	Accesibility
Strategic Route Network	✓		✓	✓
Local Network Management	✓	✓	✓	✓
Promotion & Development	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional Public Transport	✓	✓		✓

(v) The A416 from the A41 to Chesham is a major route that links the A41 into Chesham and Amersham. We will continue to work together to ensure the safety and maintenance of this road are of an acceptable standard. This particular route is of more concern for Buckinghamshire County Council and they will be primarily responsible for this route but Hertfordshire County Council will offer assistance when required.

(vi) The A412 from Amersham to Rickmansworth is a major route that links the two towns and is a route into London. We will continue to work together to ensure the safety and maintenance of this road are of an acceptable standard. This particular route is of more concern to Hertfordshire County Council and they will be primarily responsible for this route but Buckinghamshire County Council will offer assistance when required.

ACTION

- 3(a) *To work in partnership with the Highways Agency to ensure we are consulted on the M25 expansion and we feed back our comments.*
- 3(b) *To commit to partnership involvement when either party are looking at issues on A41, A416, A412.*

4 NETWORK MANAGEMENT

There is a continuing need to ensure efficient movement of all forms of traffic on the network and to maintain the network as an asset.

(i) Congestion

- Key shared priority for DfT and local authorities.
- Traffic Management Act – local authorities are considering the impact of this enabling legislation and have appointed Traffic Managers.
- Hertfordshire County Council have a Traffic Management Act working group which involve the key individuals in the authority to ensure the implications in the act are understood and tasks are carried out. Buckinghamshire County Council will consider a similar approach.

ACTION

- 4(a) *Newly appointed Traffic Managers in each of the authorities to meet at the earliest opportunity to understand roles and opportunities and to consider cross boundary protocol.*

(ii) Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC)

- Both authorities are considering how UTMC will assist them in addressing traffic flow through their areas.
- At present, both authorities are pursuing individual paths to seek congestion reduction through management control systems.
- There is a need for relevant officers to meet up to explore if there are any opportunities for joint working / joint procurement opportunities in this area.

The objective is to ensure the network is managed in a consistent manner and in accordance with the strategies outlined in this Joint Statement.

ACTION

- 4(b) *Authorities to work together to explore joint procurement and operational opportunities in respect of UTMC, when and where appropriate.*

(iii) Parking Management

This section primarily relates to Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) schemes across the area and the possibilities for joint procurement and operations. The various local authorities are at different stages.

- Some local parking issues will be addressed via operational meetings; see Chapter 7 on Local Liaison Procedures.
- Buckinghamshire has Special Parking Areas in Aylesbury District Council and Wycombe Town Centre area and the County Council is looking to develop similar schemes with the District Council in the Chesham and Amersham area in the next 1 – 2 years. A financial appraisal of this scheme is underway.

- Hertfordshire County Council has Special Parking Areas in Three Rivers District Council, Dacorum Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council and Watford Council areas. Currently this approach is not financially viable in the more rural areas of the council so Welwyn and Hatfield Council, North Herts District Council and East Herts District Council are looking to develop a joint initiative to implement something similar in these areas.

(iv) Freight Routing and Signage

ACTION

- 4(c) Authorities to work together and encourage district councils to consult each other to ensure there is a consistent approach to parking management in the area.*
- 4(d) All authorities agree to take into account adjoining authorities' concerns when implementing local schemes to ensure adjacent area is not adversely affected.*

- This section relates to Chapter 3: Strategic Highway Network and making sure long distance lorries use the appropriate corridors throughout the area rather than local roads.
- Both authorities are currently developing their freight strategies
- Both authorities have signed up to ensuring that the strategic network is used for such traffic and signed accordingly.

ACTION

- 4(e) Both authorities agree to direct / sign through HGV traffic away from local roads onto the strategic Network*
- 4(f) Both authorities to develop consistent signing policy for freight routing*
- 4(g) Both authorities will commit to consulting each other on their freight strategies to ensure consistency.*

(v) Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA)

Air quality is an important measure for the quality of life for a particular area. The joint authorities will use AQMA Action Plans where necessary to help improve existing situations and where appropriate to seek mitigation for any worsening of the current situation.

Several areas have been declared in the joint working area on Highways Agency roads.

ACTION

- 4(f) To work with Highways Agency to address AQMA issues, yet at the same time ensuring local communities and the local network are not adversely affected.*

(vi) Maintenance

Opportunities may exist for joint procurement processes relating to:-

- Signs cleaning
- Street lighting maintenance
- General maintenance
- Structural maintenance for roads and bridges
- Winter services

These need to be examined further.

The possible co-ordination of maintenance works under the Traffic Management Act can be seen in sections 3(i) and Action 3a.

ACTION

- 4(g) Authorities to work together to explore joint procurement opportunities in respect of maintenance costs.*

(vii) Road Safety

Current joint working primarily relates to examining collision records on cross boundary routes and to introducing appropriate remedial measures.

Both authorities are finding site specific remedial work is not the solution any longer as collisions appear to occur over entire routes. Both authorities are committed to addressing these routes across their local authority area and where there are joint routes, relevant officers will work together.

Both local authorities identify the importance of Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity (ETP) if we are to meet Government targets and will continue to work together on joint campaigns and initiatives such as the award winning 'For My Girlfriend' campaign aimed at younger drivers in the two authorities and beyond.

5 PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT

(i) Accessibility Planning

ACTION

- 4(h) *Road Safety Officers to continue to work together to improve road safety on cross boundary routes with regard to ETP measures.*
- 4(i) *Road safety engineering staff to meet to discuss cross border route treatment where appropriate and consult on specific schemes affecting either authority.*

Promoting improved accessibility to employment, learning, healthcare, food shops and other services is one of key shared priorities agreed between the DfT and Local Government. A key activity for local authorities in preparing and implementing their second Local Transport Plan will be understanding existing levels of accessibility. Authorities will then need to work together and in partnership with other key agencies and organisations to promote improved local accessibility.

Understanding and improving accessibility is clearly a cross boundary issue and the authorities have agreed where necessary to work in partnership to assess accessibility and develop action plans to promote improved accessibility. This joint work will focus initially on accessibility to:

- healthcare facilities (e.g. Hemel Hempstead Hospital, Stoke Mandeville Hospital);
- key trading estates;
- retail centres; and
- schools and other educational facilities whose catchment extends across a number of joint authorities.

ACTION

- 5(a) *To work together to ensure cross boundary Accessibility Planning issues are understood and where necessary to develop accessibility strategies jointly.*

(ii) Travel Planning

Individual authorities are working with large employers in their area to promote the development of travel plans which encourage sustainable travel. The development and implementation of company travel plans, however, can often require action across an area wider than a single local authority. Further, the joint area is characterised by high levels of car ownership. This coupled with high levels of cross-boundary commuting for work travel means it is difficult to achieve significant modal shift just through travel planning (BFBC/TRL study sponsored by DfT).

Some travel plan initiatives such as car sharing schemes can be more viable, and ultimately more successful, when supported and used by a large number of companies across an area. Where applicable the authorities will promote the use of Bucks Car Scheme and Liftshare to companies developing their travel plans.

ACTION

- 5(b) *Each local authority to identify travel patterns of its residents and see if there are any joint initiatives that can run to assist each authority, such as car sharing schemes.*
- 5(c) *Each local authority to review their current car sharing database and look to make any improvements compatible with each other in order to share the data at a later date.*

(iii) Cycling and Walking

Effectively promoting increased levels of walking and cycling is particularly relevant to improve access to railway stations and to help in tackling congestion. It is important that a high quality network of safe routes is developed. This network should not stop at local authority boundaries. It is also important that facilities spanning boundaries are consistent in their design and standard.

Whilst a number of strategic cross-boundary cycling schemes have already been delivered further work is required on:

- Access to Tring Station. This station is a main station for residents in the rural areas of Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire

ACTION

5(d) *To promote, identify and implement, when resources permit, comprehensive cycling and walking networks across boundaries where they help to tackle congestion and improve access.*

(iv) School Travel Plans & Safer Routes to School

Working with local schools to promote safe routes for children to walk and cycle to school is an important component of each authority's Local Transport Plan Programme and will continue to be so in the second Local Transport Plan Period. These schemes often form part of work taking place by schools to develop a School Travel Plan.

The authorities recognise a need to co-ordinate activity and work jointly on these initiatives where the catchment area is such that the schools draw in children from long distances and where school locations and catchments create cross-boundary issues (e.g. Hemel Hempstead schools). There is also a need to work collectively in respect of grammar and private schools where commuting distances are longer and where journeys are across two or more authorities.

ACTION

5(e) *To share best practice and work together where the implementation of Safer Routes to School Schemes and School Travel Plans crosses local authority boundaries.*

5(f) *To share postcode data for schools who have travel issues affecting residents in the neighbouring counties.*

6 CROSS-BOUNDARY PUBLIC TRANSPORT ISSUES

ORBIT

The ORBIT Study was one of a number of Multi-Modal Studies announced by the Government in 1998. Its overall aim was to develop a long-term sustainable management strategy for the M25 which met the Government's objectives for transport and solved, or at least ameliorated, current and future problems on the M25. The Final Report of the study, published in 2002, recommended selective widening of the M25 by no more than one lane in each direction, to be accompanied by some form of demand management regime to "lock in" the decongestion benefits resulting from the additional capacity. Public transport initiatives were seen as unlikely to make a substantial contribution towards congestion relief, but they were recommended, mainly in the form of a high quality orbital coach system, for their contribution towards a sustainable transport system and to assist motorists displaced from car use on the M25 by demand management measures, especially if these took the form of tolls. Other initiatives included better management of roadworks and incidents and the extension of the Controlled Motorway trial to the whole of the M25.

Both local authorities support Orbit.

ACTION

6(a) *Buckinghamshire County Council and Hertfordshire County Council will support Orbit proposals.*

(i) Cross Boundary Bus Routes and Rail Service

- Tring railway station serves residents in both Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. Both authorities are committed to improving access to the station by public transport. Both parties are keen to explore the idea of a taxi bus service from the station serving the surrounding villages in conjunction with Silverlink.
- Buckinghamshire County Council are in full support of Hertfordshire County Council's work in ensuring the development of Tring Gateway is carried out with minimal disruption and of benefit to the public transport infrastructure.

- Buckinghamshire County Council and Hertfordshire County Council support interurban services such as Line 336 which links the towns of Berkhamsted, Chesham, Amersham, Rickmansworth and Watford. This is an important commuter route providing an hourly service. It is being promoted as a Quality Bus Partnership between the operator and Buckinghamshire County Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

(ii) Regional Public Transport / Coach Services and Infrastructure

There is a need to review existing sub regional services within the context of:

- the lack of a revenue stream to subsidise new public transport initiatives;
- the need to improve North-South and East-West inter-urban public transport links and interchange facilities;
- the accessibility planning work being undertaken by Local Authorities in developing their second Local Transport Plans.

There are also opportunities to work together to develop joint Quality Bus Partnerships and Corridor Enhancements. This work could help deliver infrastructure and service improvements cross border.

ACTION

6(b) To lobby the Government and other relevant agencies to secure the funding necessary to implement high quality interchange facilities at Aylesbury

6(c) Passenger Transport Officers to set up a cross boundary working group to review inter-urban bus/coach services and consider joint work developing Quality Bus Partnerships and Corridor Enhancements.

7 LOCAL LIAISON PROCEDURES

Meetings will take place regularly to consider policy and performance issues that are of concern to the parties e.g. maintenance, traffic management and parking issues.

The purpose of these meetings is to keep neighbouring authorities informed of the latest issues that may affect the adjoining areas.

It is proposed that operation staff are put in contact with each other to contact over specific operational issues such as route strategies, ETP work, parking management and maintenance. These officers would meet on an adhoc basis when specific issues occur or are likely to occur. Each authority should be involved in any consultation work that is likely to have an impact on cross-border routes.

