**Watford - Executive Summary**

**Introduction**

A series of town based evidence packs have been developed to support the emerging Growth and Transport plans. These include analysis of a range of socioeconomic, land use, demographic factors, and consideration of current transport provision and usage to identify issues and travel constraints to and from towns. An assessment also includes likely future transport pressures taking into account proposed growth and predictions from modelling work using the countywide transport model COMET. The key findings from the Watford evidence pack are outlined below.

**Background**

The town of Watford is situated in the South West of Hertfordshire County in the borough of Watford. The study area is located 17 miles northwest of Central London and within the M25 motorway. Watford is the largest urban centre within Hertfordshire, with a population of 131,982. The defined Watford ‘study area’ incorporates the surrounding urban areas of Bushey in the southeast, Oxhey in the south, Croxley Green in the southwest and Abbots Langley in the north.

**Community Characteristics**

The area has four defined employment centres; Town Centre, Business Park (Ascots Lane area), Watford Health Campus and North Watford. Most of the jobs within Watford are concentrated within the Town Centre, while industrial jobs are more concentrated in the Business Park and North Watford employment centres.

Watford has similar unemployment rates to Hemel Hempstead and Welwyn Garden City but there is variation within the study area ranging from between 0.5% and 1.5% in Knutsford and Croxley Green to over 4% in the Town Centre and South Oxhey.

There are eight declared Air quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in the area, with six of these occurring on local roads and two on trunk roads.

**Economic Portrait**

The borough of Watford has approximately 84,000 jobs. Watford has a significantly higher proportion of professional, scientific, and technical jobs compared to Hertfordshire and make up almost half (47%) of all Watford jobs. Gross Value Added (GVA) in Watford is £31,290 which is much higher than the UK average of £22,070. Most jobs are based in the Town Centre (17,761), with lower numbers in the other key employment areas such as ; North Watford (7,153), Watford Health Campus (4,916), the Business Park (Ascots Lane) (5,523) and Croxley Green (4,092).

**Transport Network**

The study area is served by Trunk, Primary, Main and Secondary Distributor roads. There are two motorways (M1 and the M25) just outside the study area, whilst the A41 and the A405 (both Primary roads) cut through the study area. Furthermore there are a number of important Main Distributor (A) roads within the study area such as the A411, A4125, A4145, A412 and the A4008.

There are eight train stations within the study area; Garston, Watford North, Watford Junction, Watford High Street, Bushey, Carpenders Park, Watford Metropolitan (U) and Croxley (U). Watford is connected to London Euston via London Midland Services on the West Coast Mainline, London Liverpool Street on the Metropolitan Line and St Albans on the Abbey Line.

Watford has a relatively dense bus network with connections to North and Central London, St. Albans, Hemel Hempstead, Rickmansworth and Central Bedfordshire.

There is some cycling provision throughout Watford including National Route 6, which passes through Watford and connects to Uxbridge in the south and Sheffield in the far north. However, cycle friendly routes are not connected in particular for east-west journeys.

**Network Analysis**

Inbound trips to the study area mainly originate from Dacorum, Three Rivers, Harrow, St Albans, Barnet and Hertsmere. The vast majority of inbound trips are made via Private Car (74%) with 21% of trips made using sustainable modes of transport (bus, walk, train and cycle).

Most outbound commuting trips are to Three Rivers, Harrow, St Albans, Dacorum, Barnet and Hertsmere as well as Central London. A lower percentage of outbound trips are made by private car (63%) compared to inbound trips, whilst 32% of outbound trips are made by sustainable modes, which is particularly high compared to other areas in Hertfordshire, reflecting the high rail and underground mode share.

Almost half of all trips (47%) within the town are made in a car, while pedestrian trips make up just under a third of the total.

Within the study area, excluding motorways, traffic volumes are highest on the A41, Stephenson Way and on the M25 spur connecting to Junction 19. Congestion occurs on the majority of the strategic road network with traffic travelling much lower than the speed limits on, the A412, A41, A404, and along many Town Centre approach roads.

**Future Transport**

The district of Watford is set to experience a 15% growth in population over the next 15 years and a 16% growth in employment. The main growth is predicted in the Professional & Scientific, Real Estate and Transport and Communication sectors.

Significant growth is proposed in the town centre area placing additional pressure on transport networks. By the year 2031 average journey times from the study area to key destinations are expected to increase in both the morning and evening peaks, particularly to destinations to the north and east,