

# TRANSFORMING TRAVEL IN WATFORD:

the strategy for 2021-2041



**WATFORD**  
BOROUGH  
COUNCIL

[www.watford.gov.uk/futuretravel](http://www.watford.gov.uk/futuretravel)



Hertfordshire

# Why changing the way we travel benefits us all

Everyone benefits when there is a greater choice of greener ways to travel, and we know that just by making a few changes to some of our journeys in and around Watford, we can all have a big impact. This Sustainable Transport Strategy set out how, by making it easier for people to make green travel choices, we can cut congestion, enjoy cleaner air, reduce our carbon footprint and feel healthier.

In the strategy, you will see how Watford Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council have been working together to find practical ways to make a real difference to travel in the town. Both councils declared a **Climate Emergency in 2019**, setting a goal of being carbon neutral organisations by 2030 and looking at ways to support both the town and the county transition to carbon neutrality. Developing this new strategy is one way to help achieve this goal.

Our new shared vision for travel in Watford shows how we propose to offer more ways to get around the town that are kinder to our local environment and often quicker and more straight forward, looking at better walking and cycling routes as well more accessible public transport. We can all play our part in making our town less congested, healthier and cleaner and we recognise the importance of involving our residents, businesses and community in shaping these positive changes.

We consulted on a draft strategy in autumn 2021, finding significant support for implementing changes to how we travel. The strategy has now been finalised, including our priority objectives for action, based upon this feedback. We will continue to engage with residents and businesses to now design and implement the solutions.

In delivering the strategy we also commit to:

- Ensuring equality of opportunity in all our schemes
- Collaborating with our neighbours
- Leading by example in making both councils' travel more sustainable

Thank you for taking the time to read our strategy, which we hope will inspire us all to see how we can make greener travel choices. You can find more information at: [www.watford.gov.uk/futuretravel](http://www.watford.gov.uk/futuretravel)



**Elected Mayor Peter Taylor**  
Watford Borough Council



**Councillor Phil Bibby**  
Executive Member for  
Highways & Transport  
Hertfordshire County Council

# Reasons to change

## Quality of life

- On average, Watford residents spend 58 minutes a day commuting to work by car<sup>1</sup>, covering 3.4 miles each way. That's eight and a half days a year lost in traffic! With more walking, cycling and public transport options available, you can make life easier, save time and cut time spent on congested roads
- By getting rid of a car you could save an average of £1,154 a year on fuel<sup>2</sup>

## Town on the move

- The majority of current journeys made by Watford residents are by motor vehicle, contributing to traffic congestion and making journeys both longer and more unreliable. As many as 1 in 5 car journeys in Watford are less than one mile, and by reducing these short car trips we could help make our town's traffic flow better
- Our roads are full and these problems will only worsen if we don't change our behaviour
- This means we need more efficient and green travel options

## Health and wellbeing

- Nationally, a lack of physical activity is responsible for one in six deaths<sup>4</sup>, and obesity and inactivity are major problems for Watford
- Physical exercise is a key component of maintaining good mental health
- We could get most of the exercise we need by walking or cycling short, everyday journeys. It will make us healthier and happier and will result in cleaner air, reducing the illness and death caused by pollution



On average, in 2019, people in the UK wasted **115 hours** each in traffic congestion, costing the country **£6.9 billion**<sup>3</sup>

According to our travel survey **over 70%** of you think that travelling around Watford is difficult in peak periods

<sup>1</sup>Modal comparisons (TSGB01). [gov.uk](http://gov.uk). Retrieved 15 May 2020.

<sup>2</sup>Average Cost of Petrol for a Car 2020. NimbeFins. Retrieved 15 May 2020.

<sup>3</sup>2019 INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard. [inrix.com](http://inrix.com) Retrieved June 2021.

<sup>4</sup>Gear Change: a bold vision for cycling and walking, Department for Transport, 2020.

# The objectives of the strategy

We have identified six objectives for the strategy.



**Cutting congestion:** Reducing the number of car journeys by making cycling, walking or public transport the natural first choice for local trips.



**Providing for future journeys:** Investing in efficient and green ways to travel for both current and future residents and businesses.



**Boosting health and wellbeing:** Encouraging healthier travel choices that keep people physically fit and active, promote positive mental health, improve air quality, and make our streets safer.



**Ensuring all our community benefits:** Offering equality of access to transport for all.



**Making best use of new technology:** Providing green and environmentally friendly travel solutions.



**Delivering a great customer experience:** Promoting high quality, easy-to-use travel options.

These objectives have been used to guide the selection of actions that make up our strategy for the future of transport in Watford.



# How travel in Watford will become more sustainable

**We have developed a series of key actions that set out how we plan to make transport more sustainable. These will be phased in over the next 20 years and are grouped into the following themes.**



# Theme 1: Active travel

For the shortest trips, making it easier for people to walk, cycle, scoot or wheel their way to their destination is not only the greenest option, but one that brings significant physical and mental health benefits.

## The key actions to support active travel are:

1. We will install new cycle lanes on the roads where people are most likely to want to cycle.



2. We will improve footways and pedestrian crossings on busy streets.



3. We will increase the amount of secure cycle parking.



4. We will maintain our existing bike-share scheme and consider expanding to serve more places.



5. We will explore schemes to create healthier streets by slowing vehicles and reducing traffic, particularly outside schools.



6. We will look for opportunities to make streets more welcoming for all users by adding new seating areas, plants, cycle parking where appropriate.



Through these actions we will help create a town where people will walk and cycle more, particularly for short trips, and parents will feel comfortable allowing their children to walk, cycle or scoot to school.

*“Regular physical activity reduces the risk of mortality and developing depression by around a third.”*



**1 in 3**  
car trips in  
Watford are less  
than 2 miles



# Theme 2: Longer journeys

To maintain and enhance our position as a place people visit for work and leisure, it is important that travel in and out of Watford is easy and efficient.

## The key actions to support sustainable trips in and out of Watford are:

1. We will introduce more bus lanes and other measures to give buses priority on key routes, as well as improving our bus stops. We will push for better ticket options using smart technology, and look at options to reduce the cost of journeys.



2. We will look for opportunities to enhance our rail stations and rail services, including Watford Junction, and make sure they are easy to get to by walking, cycling or public transport.



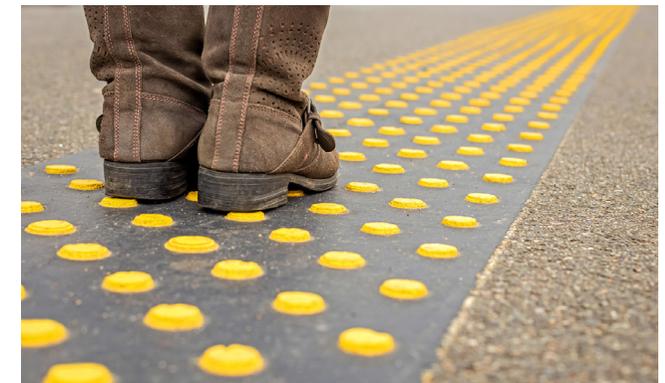
3. We will support the development of a new green rapid transit system including the cross county HERT system and Watford to Croxley public transport link.



4. We will investigate the feasibility of two locations with potential for Park and Ride services, in close collaboration with our neighbours.



Through these actions we will provide better alternatives to driving for longer journeys and encourage people to use public transport instead.



**Over 60%**  
of consultation  
respondents thought  
Watford would be  
a nicer place to live  
with fewer cars



# Theme 3: Alternatives to car ownership

We understand that not all trips can be made by walking, cycling or public transport. We will offer a variety of choices, so for any journey, you can choose the one which will work best for you.

## The key actions to support more travel choices are:

1. We will create a Watford car club that allows people and businesses to borrow a car as and when they need it<sup>5</sup>.



2. We will work with our taxi fleet to make sure it has well-trained drivers in environmentally friendly vehicles.



3. We will continue to install electric vehicle charging points, with more charging at places people visit regularly.



4. We will monitor the use of our on-demand transport service and make sure it is helping people move around the borough.



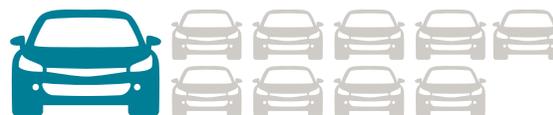
5. We will explore ways to put the new travel options on a Watford smartphone app.



6. We will explore the creation of hubs around the borough where different transport options can be found in one place.



These actions will help us provide alternatives to driving for many trips in the borough, as well as making sure the cars on our roads are as green as possible.



**1 car club car**  
replaces 9 privately owned cars



# Theme 4: Town Centre

Many of our shops, businesses, and leisure spaces are in the town centre, so we want to make sure it is easy to travel to, from and around. To do this, we need to give more space to walking, cycling and public transport.

## Our key actions to enhance the sustainability of transport in the town centre are:

1. We will make it easier to get across the ring road by improving the existing pedestrian and cycle crossings and adding new ones.



2. We will seek funding to improve provision for cycling and buses on both the ring road and Dalton Way.



3. We will explore a sustainable transport hub in the town centre. This will make it easy to switch between different types of transport.



4. We will continue to reduce the number of private vehicles allowed on the High Street.



5. We will improve cycling, walking and public transport routes between the High Street and Bushey Station.



6. We will analyse the use of our car parks and ensure that the number of spaces is appropriate for a sustainable travel town, whilst encouraging operators to improve the quality of these.



With these actions we will help make the town centre and routes to Bushey Station easy for travel using green transport options.



# Theme 5: Supporting change

We know that to make all these new options the best they can be, it is important that we involve our community in helping decide how they will work.

It can be difficult to make the decision to change to a more green way of travelling, so we will look to reward people who do so.

## Our key actions to involve our community and reward them for using our green travel options are:

1. We will involve Watford residents in designing our new projects.



2. We will consider rewards for people to encourage change, such as when they take the bus or use a cycle instead of driving, or for choosing to give up their car.



3. We will work with businesses to understand what will help their employees to commute and make business trips in greener ways.



4. We will ensure that new developments are designed to encourage sustainable transport from the start.



5. We will aim to make sure that everyone knows about the new travel projects and how they can use them.



5. We will support schools in planning a greener and safer school-run.



Through these actions we will make sure that everyone has a chance to have their say on our sustainable travel projects, and that their views will be taken into account when designing them.



## Theme 6: Moving goods

As well as moving people, our transport network must move goods – such as stock for shops, online deliveries to people’s homes and materials for construction sites. We will therefore aim to increase the efficiency of such movements and limit their negative impacts.

### Our key actions to improve how we transport goods are:

1. We will encourage the use of e-cargo bikes by both delivery companies and our businesses for the final part of journeys and local deliveries.



2. We will investigate options for freight consolidation centres.



3. We will examine how we can manage loading and the movement of lorries throughout the town.



4. We will work with partners to install parcel lockers at our key transport hubs.



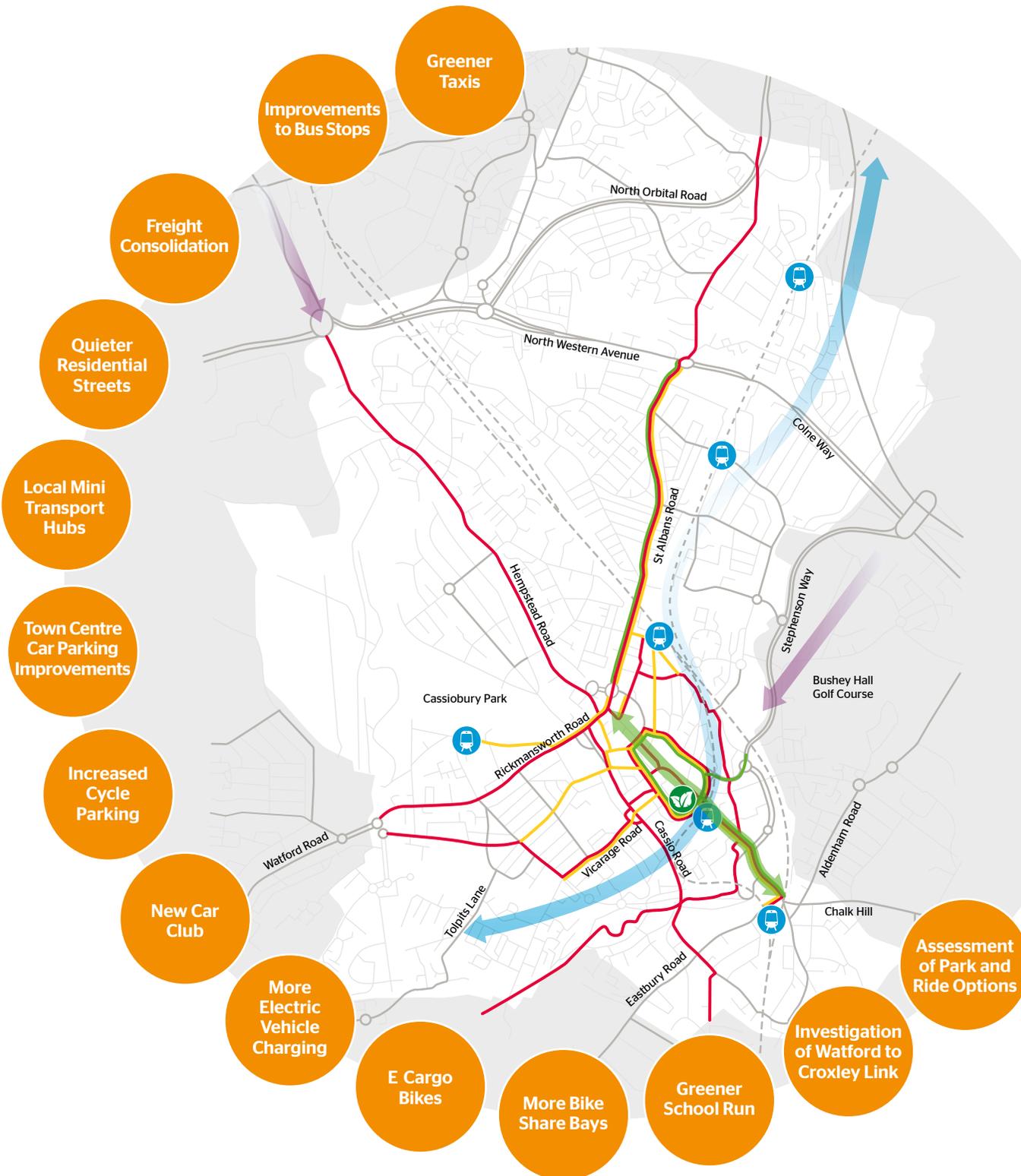
5. We will ensure developers manage the impact of construction sites on traffic and people.



These actions will help businesses make and receive the deliveries they need more efficiently, whilst contributing to making our transport network more sustainable.



# Our plans for Watford at a glance



-  New Public Transport Link
-  Sustainable Transport Corridor
-  Improved Bus Route
-  Improved Cycle Route
-  Improved Pedestrian Route
-  Town Centre Sustainable Transport Hub
-  Enhanced Rail Stations
-  Potential Park and Ride

# Implementing and funding the strategy

## The timeframe for transformation

It will not be possible to complete all our actions overnight, particularly those that which involve major new infrastructure or transformed road layouts. Our strategy is for the short to long term - for the next 20 years and beyond. By providing practical alternatives to driving, the car will become the less attractive option for travel as other ways of travelling become easier, cheaper and much more pleasant.

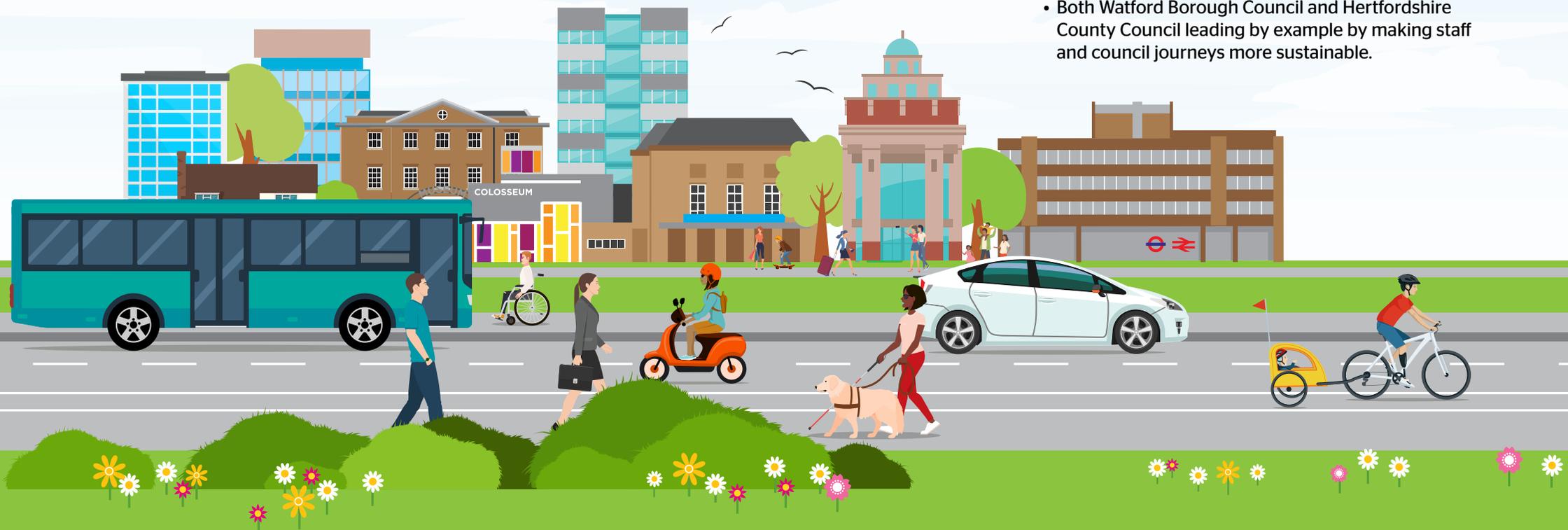
## How we fund this

Watford Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council will work collectively to deliver this strategy. We will continue to seek funding so that we can invest in sustainable travel. Along with financial contributions from developers who build in the borough, we will also lobby Government to pay for some of our bigger schemes. Having this strategy puts us in a strong position to bid for such funding.

## Our commitments

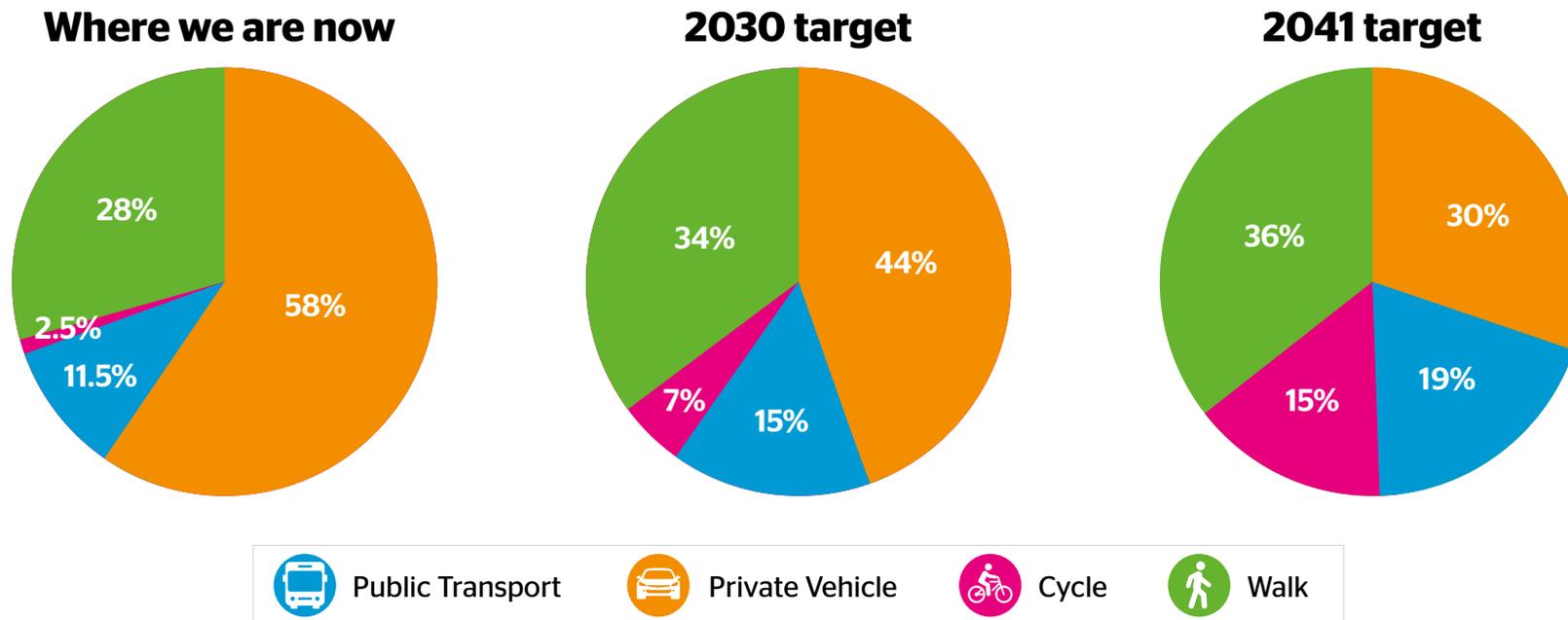
In delivering this strategy we will commit to;

- Ensuring that the benefits of the strategy will be experienced by all the community, including those with a disability.
- Collaborating with both our community and our neighbours in developing the schemes, making sure we hear a wide range of views.
- Both Watford Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council leading by example by making staff and council journeys more sustainable.



# What we want to achieve

To see how we are doing against our objectives we will monitor how people change their travel behaviour.



As well as these targets for different transport modes, we will monitor the impact our strategy has on:

-  **Reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads**
-  **Improving our air quality**
-  **Progress towards carbon neutrality**

We will continue to ask residents, local businesses and visitors for their views on our programme of actions so we can track the impact of the strategy on their journeys and make any necessary adjustments.

# Seeing the changes in travel

## Sean and Esha's travel story

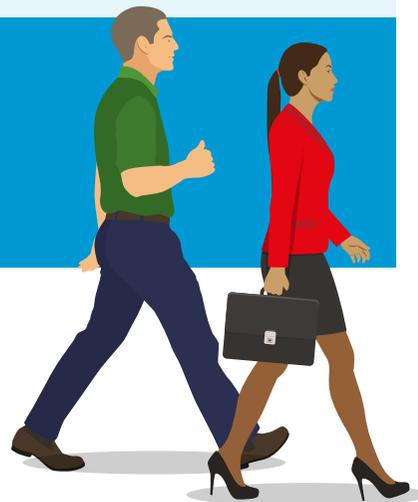
Early 30s commuters living in Stanborough Park, North Watford

### Currently...

- Esha works in central London and Sean works for the NHS and is based in Watford town centre.
- The couple have a car which Sean parks at the Town Hall after dropping Esha off at Watford Junction station for her train into central London.
- They have a parking ticket for the Town Hall, and Esha pays for a monthly train ticket.
- Sean hates sitting in traffic every morning, which means they set off earlier to ensure they catch Esha's train.
- Sean knows the NHS is encouraging its staff to travel into work sustainably to help reduce parking issues and the borough's environmental impact, but he can't see how else their commutes would work. He would be open to cycling but doesn't have anywhere to store his bike in their flat.

### Monthly travel costs:

Parking pass for Watford Town Hall: **£110**  
 Car running costs (inc. petrol): **£150**  
 Train tickets from Watford to London: **£325**  
**Total: £585**



### In the future...

- Sean applies for a bicycle hanger to be placed on their street, giving him somewhere safe and easy to store his bike.
- Esha has switched to working from home three days a week, and uses a flexible rail ticket for her journey into London.
- Sean now cycles to the Town Hall using new segregated cycle lanes which also give him priority at junctions. He makes his other regular journeys by bike due to the improved cycle infrastructure across town.
- He no longer buys a parking ticket for the Town Hall, saving him money each month.
- Esha walks or uses a Beryl Bike to travel to Garston Station where she takes the new more frequent trains on the Abbey Line. Her journey time is similar to when they drove and more reliable due to not getting stuck in traffic.
- They decide to sell their car, which grants them mobility credits which they use to join the local car club. This means they still have access to a car when they need one.

### Monthly travel costs:

Bike Hanger: **£6**  
 Bike running costs: **£5**  
 Beryl Bike costs: **£10**  
 Public transport (Abbey Line) costs (£4 x 8 days): **£32**  
 Typical spend on Car Club service: **£50**  
 Flexible train ticket from Watford to London **£144**  
**Total: £247**                      **Saving: £338**

# Amir's travel story

18 year old student at Westfield Community College

## Currently...

- Amir lives with his parents in Oxhey.
- He walks to college, which takes 30 minutes, or his parents give him a lift when it's raining.
- After college he takes the bus into town where he works part time at Primark. It takes 22 minutes.
- He has a bus pass which costs £49 per month.
- The bus is usually full by the time he gets on, meaning he has to stand for the whole journey.
- He then takes the bus home from work, a 14 minute journey.

**Total daily travel time: 66 minutes**



## In the future...

- There is now a bike-hire bay near Amir's home. He gets reward points when he cycles through the app he uses to book the bike, and spends the points on coffee when he meets his friends. He no longer needs his parents to drive him around.
- Amir now jumps on a hire bike on the way to college, taking 12 minutes.
- He has stopped buying a bus pass, and buys minute bundles for the bike hire service.
- For the journey between college and work, he takes the new Watford - Croxley public transport service (10 minute journey), which is quicker and more comfortable than taking the bus.
- He usually cycles home after work as he now feels safe using the improved cycle lanes, a 9 minute journey, leaving the bike in a docking station near his house.
- On the days when he feels a little more tired - he uses the electric bikes or similar.

**Total daily travel time: 31 minutes**

**Saving: 35 minutes**

For more information visit:  
[www.watford.gov.uk/futuretravel](http://www.watford.gov.uk/futuretravel)



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