

# 1 Transport

## 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Barton-le-Clay is well situated, between Bedford and Luton with road good connections to/from the M1 and A1(M) and a direct line rail into London via the nearby Harlington and Flitwick stations.

1.1.2 Connecting businesses and residents to services in and around Central Bedfordshire is important and offering alternatives to commuting by car will be key to a sustainable future.

1.1.3 From consultations with villagers that, despite the A6 bypass which diverts traffic travelling between Luton and Bedford, around the village, traffic in and out of the village, causes residents significant issues. For example:

1.1.3.1 84.6% of responses to the resident's survey stated that traffic was their key concern and 26% said that they have serious concerns over the traffic in the village, e.g., vehicle volume, particularly lorries, transiting through the village between the M1 and A1(M) and congestion at the roundabout near the Royal Oak (a root cause of this is illegal parking outside of the post office which is located between the Royal Oak roundabout and pedestrian crossing).

1.1.3.2 In addition, Better Transportation "to grow business" was also repeatedly raised in the business survey.

1.1.4 The CBLP 2015 - 2035 highlights three main transport concerns:

1.1.4.1 Capacity. There is a concern that the current road network in the Village does not have the capacity to cope with the commercial, leisure and business traffic going to and from the M1 to the A1(M). This has been exacerbated with the opening of Junction 11A on the M1 - 'Dunstable (N)' which has caused an increase in commuting traffic between the M1 and A1(M).

1.1.4.2 Connectivity. In common with many Central Bedfordshire communities and despite the recent trend of Working from Home (WFH), many village residents travel significant distances to work and for shopping. Sustainable transport e.g., bus services and cycle paths, are limited and paths, bridleways, and footpath provision are often in a poor condition. Links to other villages and service centres could be better.

1.1.4.3 Communities. Transiting traffic, particularly HGVs, through the historic centre of the Village (the Royal Oak roundabout) is causing wide-scale concern around safety, speeding and congestion. Particularly at peak times as traffic transits past Arnold Academy on the B655 Hexton Road, as well as concerns over poor air quality. There is reliance on car use by residents due to lack of appropriate alternatives, as mentioned above.

1.1.5 The CBLP 2015 - 2035 is supported by the 'Heath and Reach, Toddington, and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan (LATP)' which sets out the key transport issues in the area and a programme of measures through which they will be addressed. It forms part of the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3)<sup>1</sup> for Central Bedfordshire and covers the period between April 2011 and March 2026.

1.1.6 The LATP recognises that the area is characterised by high levels of out-commuting, with many residents commuting to Luton and into major towns in Hertfordshire such as Hitchin. Over 80% of these commuting trips are undertaken by private car. This is reflected in the car ownership of the area, with around 50% of households owning 2 cars or more.

## 1.2 LATP Priorities in Barton-le-Clay<sup>2</sup>

1.2.1 The LATP identifies several priorities to improve the villages' sustainable transport links to other areas (see Map 1):

1.2.1.1 Improving the walking and cycling routes to nearby villages, particularly the A6 and Sharpenhoe Road, are felt to be particularly poor, with routes often overgrown, and of poor quality where they are provided.

1.2.1.2 The Village benefits from an hourly commercial bus service, but the limited types of stops, poor connectivity to e.g., Harlington railway station, and poor service reliability means the service does not reach its potential.

1.2.1.3 Within the Village, the general good variety of walking routes e.g., pavements and the footpath network mean that walking is an attractive option for local trips.

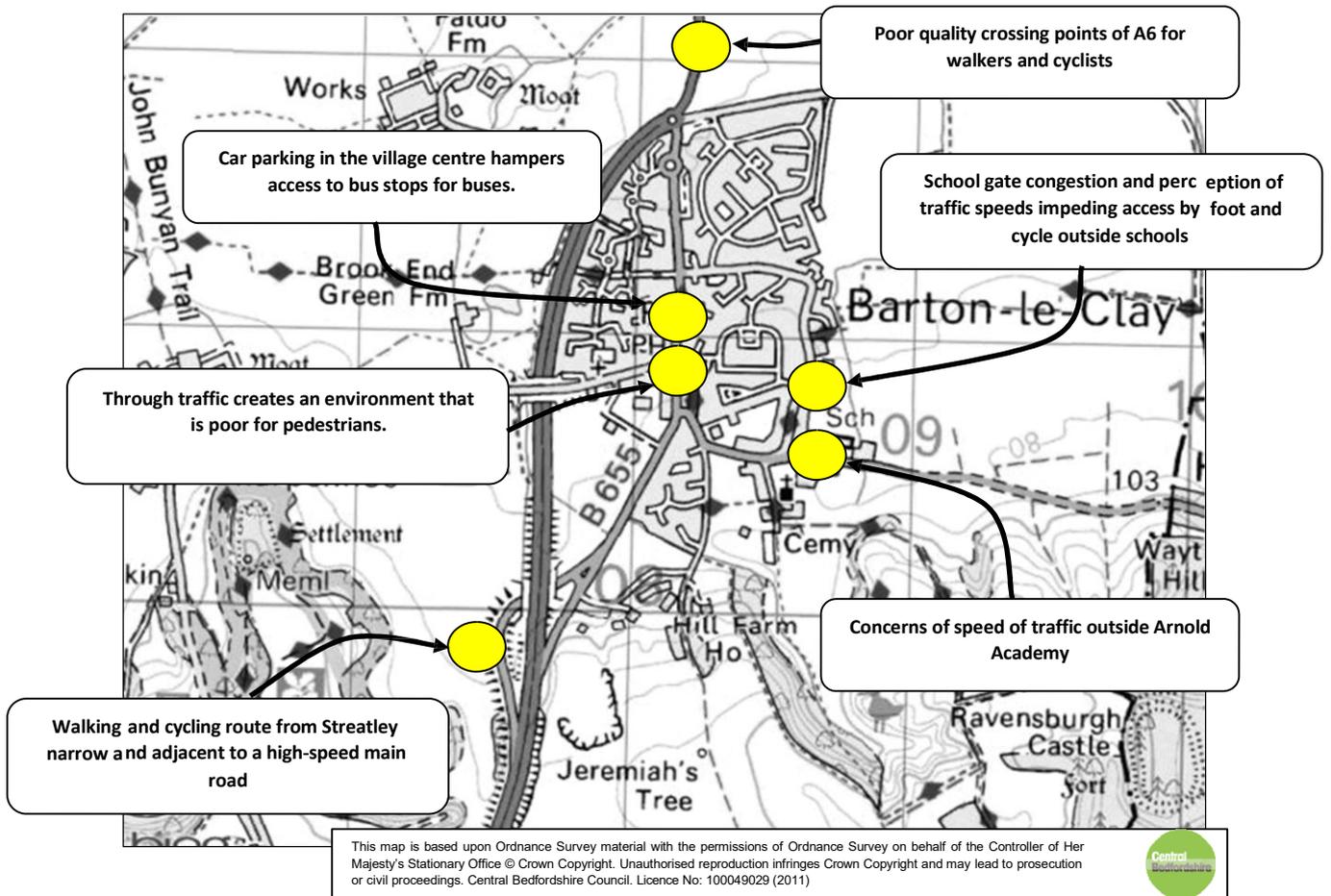
1.2.1.4 Conflicts with through-traffic in the centre of the village make for an intimidating cycling environment, but the development of off-road routes and the compact nature of the village also mean that cycling has real potential as a mode of local transport.

1.2.1.5 Address concerns about the safety and speed of traffic outside both schools in Barton-le-Clay. Whilst speed reduction measures have recently been made outside Arnold Academy, and the traffic speeds outside Ramsey Manor Lower School are low, conflicts between vehicles and children walking to school creates a perceptual safety issue.

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<sup>1</sup> CBC has begun work on LTP4 which will update the LATPs and include new Government guidance e.g., Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design.

<sup>2</sup> [Heath and Reach, Toddington, and Barton-le-Clay Local Area Transport Plan](#)



Map 1 – LAMP Areas of Concern.

## 1.3 Pedestrian Priority

1.3.1 There is only one managed pedestrian crossing point across the Village main road, the Bedford Road, and this is located at the bottom of the Village close to the Royal Oak roundabout – Photo 1. There are several other crossing points, particularly to link the many footpaths in the village, many of these are unmanaged.



Photo 1 – Pedestrian Crossing.

1.3.2 Pavement widths in the Village centre are generally adequate, enabling two pedestrians to pass in most places. However, there are locations where pavements are narrow, notably near the junction between Bedford Road and Hexton Road.

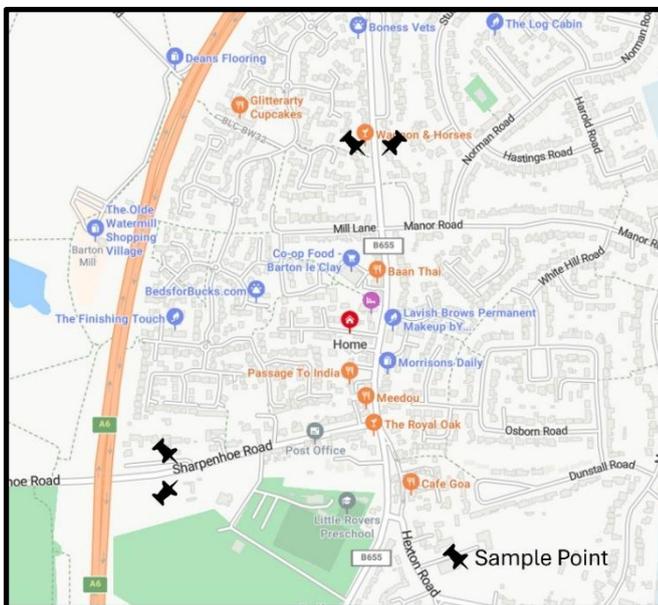
1.3.3 Traffic speeds on other roads are generally low, with some safety issues for parents and children wishing to cross close to schools around school start and leaving times.

## 1.4 Rural Match Fund

1.4.1 The CBC Rural Match Fund helps local town and parish councils to fund small highway improvement schemes in their area, with matched funding from CBC. The Rural Match Fund aims to deliver a broad range of schemes to improve health, safety, and wellbeing, enhance sustainability and the overall environment.

1.4.2 In 2022, the Parish Council applied to the CBC Rural Match Fund to fund Vehicle-Activated Signs<sup>3</sup> (VAS) and/or Speed Indicator Devices<sup>4</sup> (SID) and as part of the application process, a traffic speed survey was carried out in two locations, both sides of the road – see Map 2. The results of the traffic surveys showed that only westbound traffic, leaving the village, along Sharpenhoe Road, is driving above speed tolerances. North and south bound traffic along the Bedford Road were below the minimum criteria for a SID (above 35mph).

1.4.3 CBC agreed to install a SID device on Sharpenhoe Road in March 2023, funded by a grant from the Police & Crime Commissioner's Road Safety Fund. This is situated facing the eastbound traffic entering the Village but can be changed to occasionally capture traffic westbound, to discourage speeding.



Map 2 – Traffic Speed Survey Points.

<sup>3</sup> Vehicle-Activated Signs (VASs) are an electronic sign which only become visible when approaching motor vehicles are exceeding a certain speed.

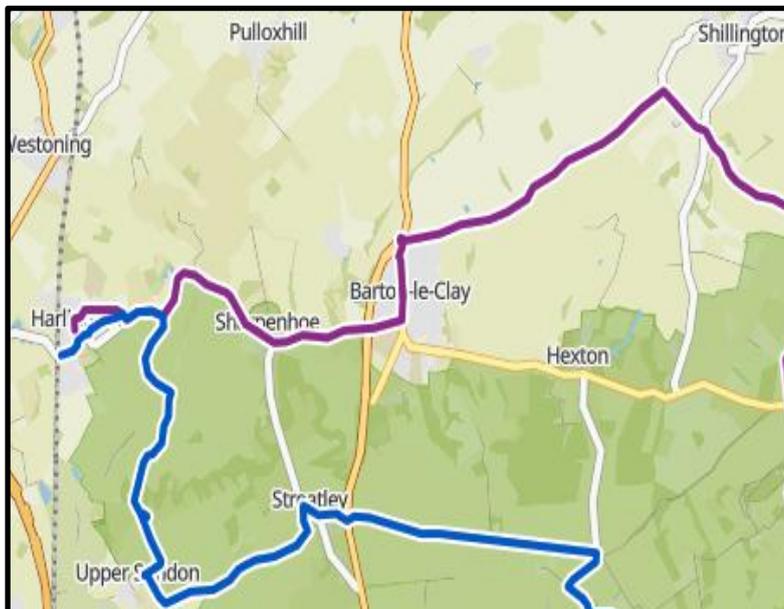
<sup>4</sup> A Speed Indicator Device (SID) has a LED display that will show the exact speed of oncoming vehicles, along with e.g., a 'SLOW DOWN' message or a happy / sad face.

## 1.5 Cycling

1.5.1 The Chilterns Cycleway is a 183-mile (296 km) circular loop running the length of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The route passes through Barton-le-Clay (see Map 3) and neighbouring villages e.g., Harlington, Sharpenhoe, Streatley and Higham Gabion (see Map 4). Whilst this route is well-signed throughout, its purpose is primarily leisure and therefore provides no links from these villages to key employment and service centres. This route is also provided on fast, rural roads, many of which are heavily trafficked.



Map 3 – Chiltern Cycleway through Village



Map 4 – Chiltern Cycleway Surrounding Villages

1.5.2 Access to the traffic free multi-user cycle route heading from Streatley towards Luton is via the busy Luton Road and access to Silsoe from Barton-le-Clay requires cycling along the narrow, shared use, pathway, alongside the A6/Bedford Road.

## 1.6 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

1.6.1 CBC is developing a series of LCWIPs for delivering a high-quality, accessible, and safe infrastructure aimed at making towns and villages more cycling, scooting, wheeling and pedestrian friendly.

1.6.2 By prioritising cycling and walking infrastructure, LCWIPs should create a network that encourages residents to choose active modes of transportation for their daily commutes, errands, and recreational activities. Increased wheeling, walking, cycling improves the health and wellbeing of the individual and reduces the dominance of cars, improving air quality and road safety in the local area, and making the life easier for users of mobility scooters, wheelchairs, pushchairs, and prams.

1.6.3 The Parish Council, through its BLCNP, aims to fully engage with the LCWIP consultations to improve local cycling and walking routes.

## 1.7 Bus Services

1.7.1 Local bus services provide the main strategic sustainable transport links in the Village but are fragmented with only one regular service between Bedford, Luton and Milton Keynes, and an ad-hoc service provided by Wanderbus 51F and Flittabus52F to e.g., Hitchin.

1.7.2 Bus routes:

1.7.2.1 Stagecoach East MK1 - Bedford - Clophill - Barton (the Bull hourly) - Luton Bus station - Luton Airport - Milton Keynes. It will take 2hr 54mins for someone to travel, by bus, from the village to Milton Keynes. A round trip of almost 6 hours.

1.7.2.2 Grant Palmer 69 – Shefford – Meppershall – Shillington – Barton (Windsor Parade & The Bull daily) – Streatley – Luton.

1.7.2.3 Wanderbus W5 Every Friday - Barton (Waggon & Horses PH 0935hrs) - Shillington - Meppershall - Biggleswade. Return departs Biggleswade 1210hrs, stops on request.

1.7.2.4 Wanderbus W8A 1st Wednesday of each month - Meppershall - Upper Stondon - Lower Stondon - Shillington - Barton ((Waggon & Horses PH 0910hrs) - St Albans. Return departs St Albans 1400hrs, stops on request.

1.7.2.5 Wanderbus W12/12B Every Tuesday - Meppershall - Campton - Upper Gravenhurst - Barton (Waggon & Horses PH 0936hrs) - Hexton -

Pegsdon - Hitchin. Return departs Hitchin 1210hrs, stops on request. Although the W12/W12B does provide bus transport for villagers to visit the weekly Tuesday Market in Hitchin, there are no buses to visit the Hitchin Craft & Farmers Market (last Saturday of every month), the Saturday General Market, the Sunday Market & Car Boot or the Friday Antiques, Collectables & General Market.

1.7.2.6 Flittabus FL4 Fourth Tues of the Month - Maulden - Barton (Opp the Pharmacy 0855hrs) - Silsoe - Flitwick - Milton Keynes. Return departs Milton Keynes 1300hrs, stops on request.

1.7.3 There are no bus routes to the two nearest train stations, Harlington, and Flitwick.

## 1.8 Rail Services

1.8.1 Harlington station benefits from a high frequency rail service, operated by Thameslink. Services operate at a 15-minute frequency, linking Harlington to Bedford, Flitwick, Luton (including the Airport), London, Gatwick, and Brighton. Reflecting the flow of commuters to and from London, additional services operate from Harlington to London during weekday morning peak hours, and from London during weekday evening peak hours.

1.8.2 Residents of Barton-le-Clay, Streatley, and Sundon also use Luton station, with services operated by Thameslink and East Midlands Trains. Up to 9 trains per hour operate in both directions to Bedford, Flitwick, London, Brighton, and Leicester among other places. Some residents also access Leagrave station, where trains from Thameslink operate every 15 minutes serve Bedford, Flitwick, Luton, London, and Brighton.

## 1.9 M1 to A6 Link Road

1.9.1 A new strategic road is planned to create a northern Luton bypass running from the A6 road to junction 11a of the M1, connecting with the A5 to M1 Link Road.

1.9.2 The new M1 to A6 link road will be 2.65 mile (4.4km) long with a dual carriageway to a new planned rail freight interchange at Sundon Park, and then single carriageway connecting to the A6 – see Map 5.

1.9.3 In terms of benefits to village, the bypass is likely to have limited effect on the volume of traffic transiting to the A1M either through the village to the B655 Hexton Road/Hitchen/A1M or onto the Barton Hill/Lilley Road to Hexton/ Hitchen/A1M at the Streatley Roundabout.



Map 5 – Route of Proposed Link Road.