

**Uttlesford District Council  
AQMA Action Plan**

## **2.8 Car sharing**

**2.8.1** A reduction in car use can be achieved through car sharing, where a passenger usually makes a contribution towards fuel costs. It is often promoted within residential and business travel plans; however there are opportunities for the extent of sharing to be increased. It allows people to benefit from the convenience of car travel, whilst alleviating the associated problems of congestion and parking, and reduces costs of travel for individuals who participate. It also retains the usefulness of car travel for those for whom walking, cycling or public transport may not be an appropriate or viable option. Use of car sharing on just one day per week would contribute to the overall reduction of vehicle usage. UDC already operates a scheme for sharing travel by car, and is in a position to encourage other employers within the town to develop their own car sharing schemes for journeys to and at the workplace.

**Proposed action 15:** To provide advice and raise awareness of car sharing and associated database software available to employers

## **2.9 Low emission vehicles (LEVs)**

**2.9.1** Increasing the proportion of vehicles on the town's road network which are considered to have low emissions is central to improving local air quality. Individuals and fleet operators making the choice to switch from diesel to petrol vehicles will assist in reducing emissions. Electric, hybrid when operated in electric mode and hydrogen fuel cell and LPG powered vehicles produce no or low emissions at point of use. Standards for what constitutes a LEV will evolve as technology develops.

**2.9.2** In addition to the development control policy provisions related to LEV's, other measures are likely to be needed to implement greater uptake, aimed at convenience and cost benefits. The current government has committed to an "Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill" which will require the installation of charge points at existing motorway services and fuel stations.

**2.9.3 Car parking incentives:** The provision of priority spaces or lower parking fees for LEVs at UDC car parks should be evaluated, with those spaces located at the areas closest to the town centre, and for residential parking permits where these are available. Provision would require enforcement and clear signage, and the reduced revenue would need to be balanced against the need to protect public health.

**Proposed action 16:** To consider the provision of preferential charging for UDC controlled parking spaces for vehicles meeting low emission standards. To utilise legislative provisions to provide LEV infrastructure

**2.9.4 Taxi fleet:** Taxis provide an important flexible means of transport within the town, with a central rank located inside the AQMA. The majority are diesel engine vehicles, and the relatively large proportion of short journeys over a small area of the town makes taxis well suited to use of low emission vehicles

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as an alternative, such as full plug in electric, plug in hybrid or hybrid vehicles. With the high mileage covered, reduced fuel costs combined with income tax and vehicle tax incentives, the potential running cost savings could be significant. Taxis are also well placed to increase awareness amongst the public of this type of vehicle.

**2.9.5** A range of options to improve taxi emissions will be explored, including amending the taxi licensing policy to require any new or upgraded taxi to meet set emission standards, combined with fiscal incentives in the interim to encourage a switch to LEVs. The feasibility of providing a charging point at the town centre rank will also be assessed.

**2.9.6** Approximately 2000 vehicles are licensed by UDC, only a small portion of which will operate in Saffron Walden on a regular basis. Data on the fleet will need to be evaluated to assist in assessing whether controls should be applied to the full fleet or limited to those accessing the town centre. Liaison with the taxi operators will form an important part of the decision making process, and awareness of air quality issues will be communicated through the regular taxi chat bulletins issued by UDC.

**Proposed action 17:** To engage with the Uttlesford licensed operators' forum with the aim of introducing emission controls for licensed taxis

**2.9.7 Bus fleet:** Emissions from buses are estimated to be contributing 12% of NO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the town and there is evidence of vehicle drivers and passengers on older buses being exposed to as high or higher level of emissions inside the vehicle than outside. Measures to ensure emissions are as low as possible from the existing fleet should be considered. Standards can be set for minimum Euro engine designation (Euro V) for existing and newly introduced vehicles accessing the town centre. Buses operated under contracts procured by ECC should be included. Support for retrofit projects and bids through cleaner bus funding should be considered.

**Proposed action 18:** To encourage ECC to set emission standards for new and existing buses under contract operating within the town.

**2.9.8 Fleet LEVs:** Aside from the UDC fleet, support will be made available to businesses and other public authorities to switch to LE fleet vehicles in terms of signposting and provision of information on available models and financial incentives.

**Proposed action 19:** To work with operators of fleet vehicles within the town to facilitate the introduction of low emission vehicles.

**2.9.9 Infrastructure:** Convenience of use of LEVs can be facilitated through provision of charging facilities at UDC owned car parking spaces including UDC workplaces, and UDC owned leisure facilities, to supplement provision on new developments through the planning regime. Currently there are two fast charge points at the UDC owned Lord Butler Leisure centre on Peaslands