



Luton, Dunstable
& Houghton Regis
local transport plan
2006-2011



Progress Report
November 2008

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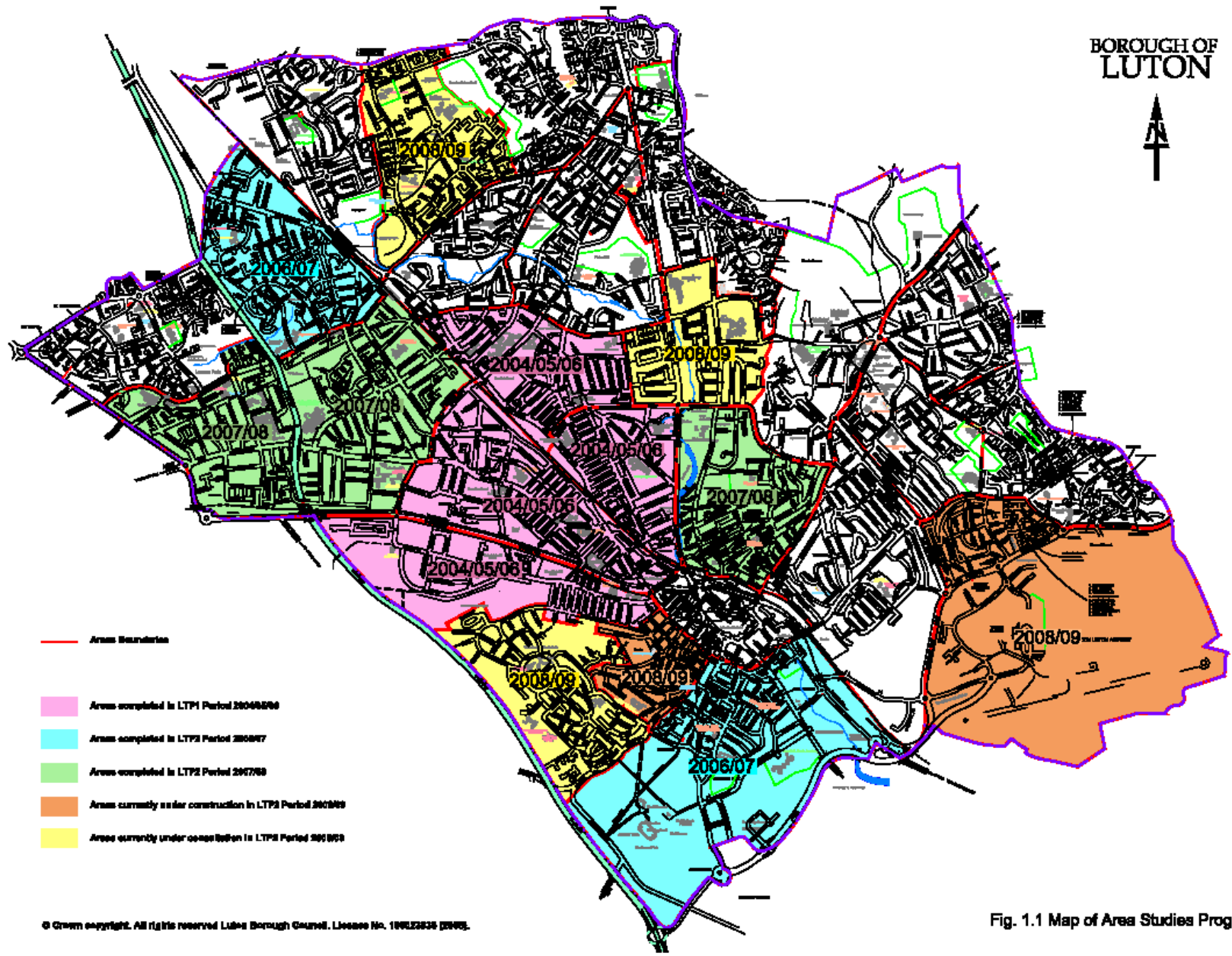
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document, which is structured in accordance with Department for Transport guidance, sets out a review of the performance of the second Luton Dunstable and Houghton Regis Local Transport Plan (LTP2) at a mid point in its five year delivery.
- 1.2 The LTP2 clearly sets out the importance of a cross cutting and diverse delivery programme to tackle the needs of the conurbation's communities in:
- Improving road safety
 - Increasing accessibility
 - Improving air quality
 - Cutting congestion
 - Maintaining the transport infrastructure
- 1.3 The document is designed to openly challenge and debate key issues related to the delivery of the LTP2 programme, and its associated outcomes. At the heart of this process is an independent SWOT assessment of the key strengths and weaknesses of the current approach to delivering local transport schemes and initiatives. The headline results of each workshop are summarised for each of the aforementioned LTP2 themes; the importance of each issue is shown on a three point scale, with the bold and underlined text considered the most important, the underlined text the next level of importance, and the plain text the next important.
- 1.4 During October 2008 the Borough Council carried out consultation on the LTP2 Interim Delivery Report with the South Bedfordshire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Board and the Environment and Economy Board of the Luton LSP together with the two sub groups. There were a number of issues raised by each LSP, in particular with regard to action that needed to be taken over the next two years to ensure that those Core and Local indicators not currently on track would be on track by the end of the LTP2 period. These actions have therefore been added to the relevant SWOT assessment and are shown as underlined italicised text.
- 1.5 This SWOT assessment is complemented by evidence collected through a robust monitoring programme to highlight the most (and least) effective elements of the LTP2 programme, and makes recommendations for future changes to maximise effectiveness of funding to achieve wider policy goals during the remaining term of the LTP2. Chapters 2 to 6 deal with each of these thematic areas in turn, followed in chapter 7 with a review of the financial performance of the LTP2 programme.

Area Studies Programme

- 1.6 Whilst the report is structured in accordance with the shared priorities, it is worthy of note within this introduction of the role that the *area studies programme* plays in providing a cross-cutting platform for coordinated delivery across all shared priority areas. It is a data-led approach, which provides the opportunity to target areas of Luton, based upon a transparent scoring system which takes account of each of the shared priorities. As such it sits at the heart of the LTP2 delivery programme.
- 1.7 Figure 1.1 overleaf shows the extent of the area studies programme, demonstrating that 5 discrete areas were tackled during the first 2 years of the LTP2 period, giving a total of 9



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Fig. 1.1 Map of Area Studies Programme

areas completed since programme inception. The prioritisation of the areas is updated annually, to ensure that investment is targeted in the areas of most need.

- 1.8 The area studies programme is directly related to all aspects of the LTP2, and provides a cost effective and coordinated approach to delivery. The current programme suggests that all areas will have been treated by 2012/13, at which stage a fully coordinated and joined up network of safe communities will have been created (with extensive 20mph zones, internal walk and cycle routes, safe crossings, home zones and other supporting measures).

2 SAFER ROADS

Background

2.1 A key focus of LTP2 was to continue to:

‘reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured, especially children and those in vulnerable and disadvantaged groups’

2.2 The strategy was based upon sound evidence and continuous and progressive improvement during LTP1 period, taking due regard of national experience. As such the strategy comprised a balanced mix of ‘engineering’, ‘education, training and publicity’, ‘enforcement’ and ‘encouragement’ measures to deal with the complex behaviours contributing to road safety issues across the conurbation. It was recognised that strong performance of the road safety strategy would have a direct positive influence on the achievement of each of the other ‘shared priorities’ outlined in LTP2.

Objectives

2.3 Table 2-1 summarises the relevant strategic LTP2 objectives, and the progress that has been made to date.

Table 2-1: LTP2 Safer roads strategic objectives

LTP2 Objectives	Progress
Improve the safety of the travelling public, especially children and those in vulnerable and disadvantaged groups	Outcome performance indicators, and peer group benchmarking exercise, demonstrates strong progress in achievement of Child KSI statistics and All KSI statistics are significantly below baseline figures. Deprived communities have been specifically targeted through the prioritisation of the ‘area studies programme’ delivering holistic treatment of road safety measures.

Targets & Indicators

2.4 Table 2-2 summarises progress to date on each of the core and local indicators relevant to the road safety strategy, followed by a commentary on the key performance issues affecting each.

Table 2-2: LTP2 road safety indicators

	Data Type	Baseline 94-98	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Status
<i>BVPI99x All KSI</i> Conurbation	Forecast				69	68	67	66	65	
	Actual	108	73	70	73	75				On track (see para 2.5)

	Data Type	Baseline 94-98	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Status
BVPI99y Child KSI Conurbation	Forecast				17	17	16	15	14	
	Actual	27	17	17	13	11				On track
BVPI99z Slights Conurbation	Forecast				549	540	530	521	511	
	Actual	859	568	672	702	737				Not on track

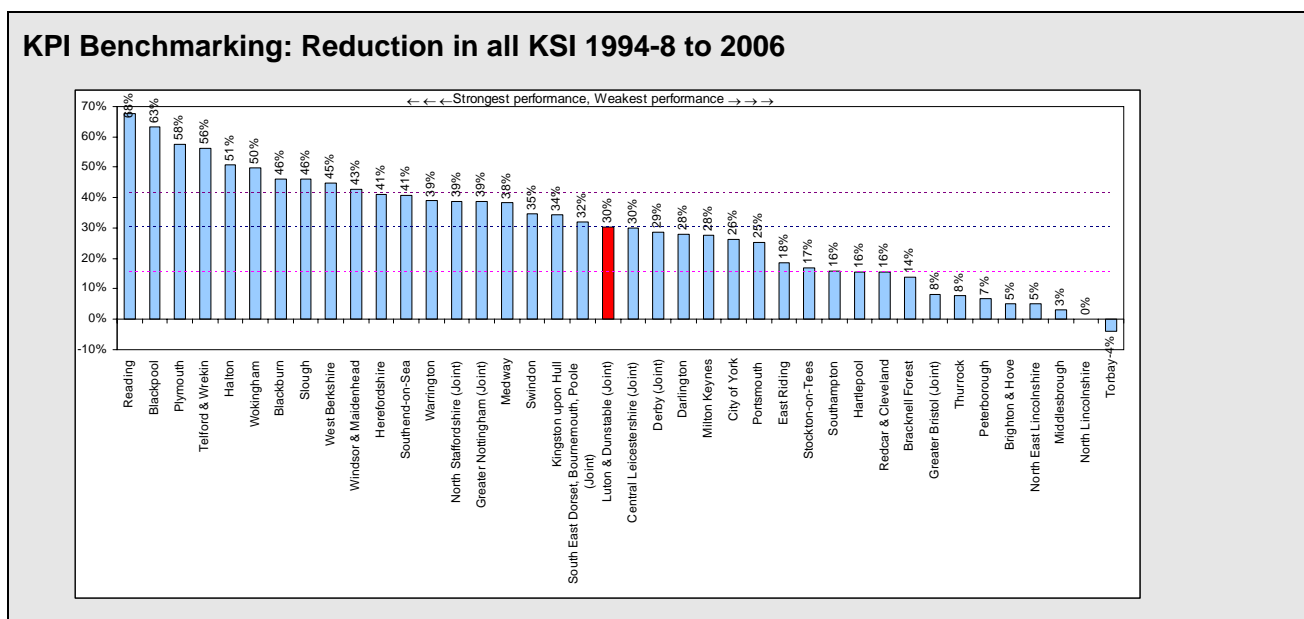
Commentary on performance indicators

Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI)

2.5 The KSI for the conurbation show a slight increase since 2005, although the overall trend is downwards, and the overall target to achieve a reduction to 65 by 2010 remains on track (the current forecast line based on historical data from the 1994-98 average suggests the 2010 figure will be between 54 and 58).

2.6 Closer examination of the data reveals that accidents involving car occupants and powered two wheelers increased by 19% and 20% respectively from 2005/6 to 2007/8. As a result, the road safety strategy has evolved during the first half of LTP2 to better reflect the need to further target these specific groups, through initiatives such as:

- ❑ RoadSkills;
- ❑ Belt up for Life;
- ❑ Motorcycle Training Matters; and
- ❑ Specific wider publicity.

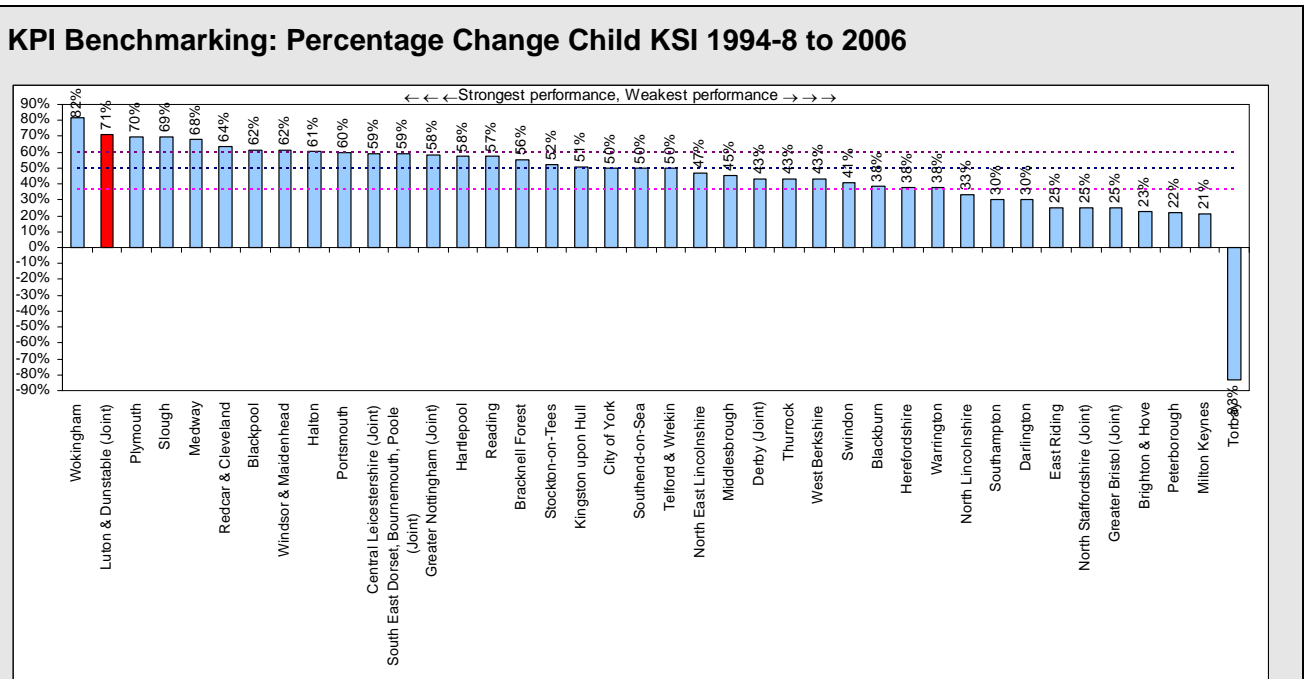


Commentary: The authorities are showing average performance when compared against similar peer group authorities. The graph is based on 2006 data as reported in LTP2, and since then the levels have risen slightly – further benchmarking will continue during the latter stages of LTP2 to assess whether this trend is consistent across other areas.

A high level review of the strongest performing authorities has shown that Reading’s road safety programme (where the greatest improvement has been reported) is very heavily based on data (similar to that deployed in LDHR), with improvements being targeted at accident black spots (such black spots are no longer evidenced in LDHR having been largely treated during the LTP1 period, with accidents more widely and randomly dispersed). In addition the Road Safety education programme in Reading is focussed upon the individual groups that have been identified as being most at risk – the young motorcyclists and disadvantaged communities – this approach is common with that adopted in LDHR through the area studies programme.

Child Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI)

2.7 Exceptional progress has been made in continuing to reduce the number of children killed and seriously injured across the conurbation. The figure for 2007 was 11, and work will continue to ensure that the road safety strategy addresses the needs of the young. This is clearly a significant challenge given such low levels of serious accidents amongst the target group, and the road safety teams will monitor activity and outcome levels closely to ensure that any potential diversion of funding towards attainment of All KSI figures does not have any detrimental effect on the impacts of road accidents on children.



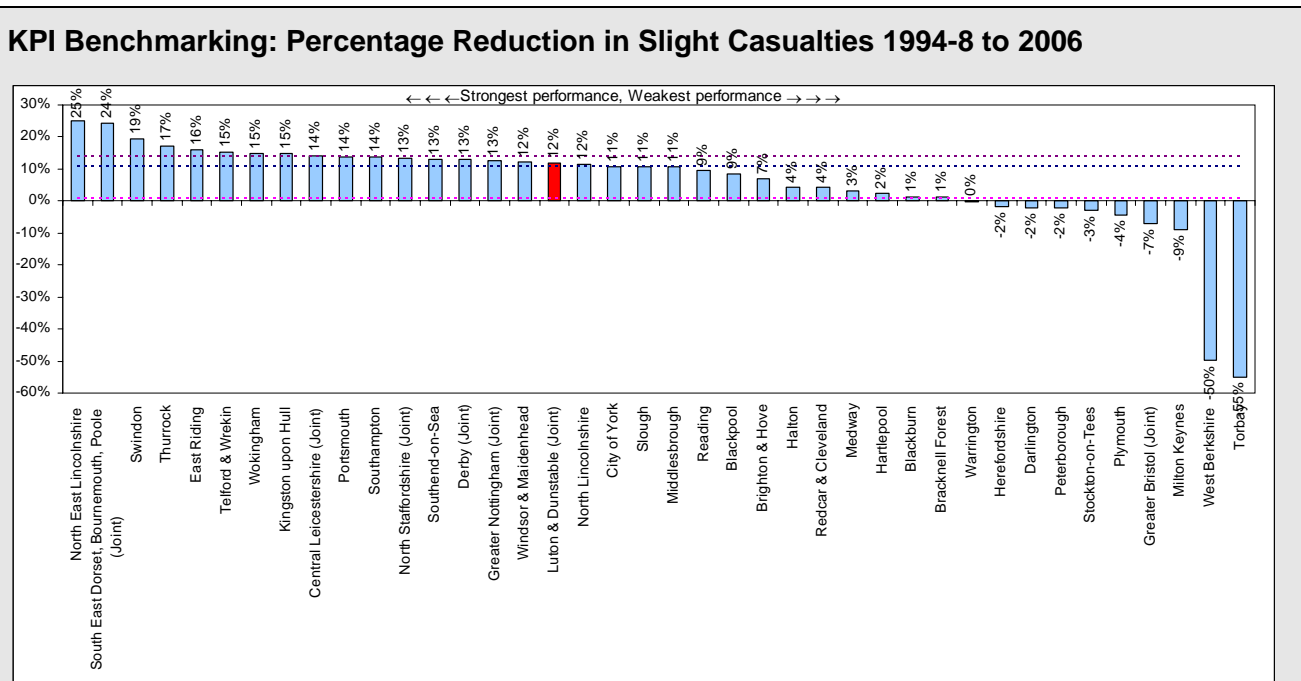
Commentary: The authorities are one of the strongest performers in terms of a reduction to the Child KSI levels (71%). The graph is based on 2006 data as reported in LTP2, and this is a trend that is continued in the 2007 figures, with the levels of child KSI being below the final 2010 target in 2006.

Slight

2.8 The last year continued a recent trend of an increasing number of slight casualties, though still significantly below the 1994-1998 baseline. The increase is predominantly amongst:

- car occupants in Dunstable and Houghton Regis, and
- vulnerable road users in Luton (pedestrians, cyclists and powered two wheelers).

The former will be addressed through the same measures as set out for the KSI indicator (see above). The latter is because of an increase in the number of people in these groups, but cycle and pedestrian training will continue and P2W will be addressed through the Motorcycle Training Matters programme.



Commentary: In the period 1994-2006 the two authorities achieved an above average reduction in the number of slight injuries. The graph is based on 2006 data as reported in LTP2, however since 2004 the evidence indicates that the figures have begun to rise (from 568 in 2004 to 737 in 2006), and the cause of this is currently being examined, and if appropriate, remedial measures incorporated within the road safety strategy.

A high level review of the strongest performing authorities has shown that those that have achieved the greatest percentage reduction in slight casualties are also amongst the lowest performing authorities in terms of the reduction they have achieved in All KSI casualties. This is interesting given that at least one of these sites has the highest level of KSI's per million vehicle kilometres of any of the LTP areas included in the comparison, and may indicate that the measures that the authority are implementing are targeting or impacting upon the slights rather than the intended KSI's. This demonstrates the need to understand the full impacts of the road safety strategy, and to carefully consider any re-deployment of resources to address the slight casualty rate if this is likely to have a detrimental impact on KSI and Child KSI.

Commentary on delivery of schemes and actions of partnersActions of partners

- 2.9 The road safety teams have worked closely with the Police, Fire and Ambulance services. The Bedfordshire and Luton Casualty Reduction Partnership has widened its remit to include all aspects of road safety since the launch of the Road Safety grant. In particular the following summarises some of the key partnership projects and actions.
- ❑ Motorcycling – pilot pre-Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) courses have been delivered in partnership with Smart Motorcycle Training and the motorcycle forum.
 - ❑ RoadSkills – a day course for young drivers, just before they take their driving test, delivered in partnership with Luton and Dunstable Driving School Association.
 - ❑ Operation Pride – a specific speed initiative in partnership with the Police.
 - ❑ Congestion / parking around schools – a dedicated programme has been established in partnership with the Police, the Borough Councils Children & Learning Department, and Parking Services, to reduce inconsiderate and unsafe parking near schools.
- 2.10 For all significant road safety schemes the delivery team hold traffic liaison meetings, where partners (the Police, Fire and Ambulance services, bus companies, and representatives of motorcycle users and driving schools) are consulted on the background, approach, expectation and anticipated impact. This proactive approach ensures a broad consensus buy-in to the delivery of road safety schemes, and is responsive through the consultation to suggested scheme modifications to better reflect local needs. These stakeholder meetings are in addition to the comprehensive public consultation carried out for all such schemes.

Impact of actions, link between intervention & outcome

- 2.11 There has been significant progress on specific schemes to target road safety during the LTP2 period, as evidenced by the progress made in achievement of performance measures. The following provides a brief summary of three specific schemes and their impact on local communities:
- ❑ Leagrave High Street - The scheme aimed to reduce the speed of traffic and improve the facilities for cyclists and pedestrians by installing mandatory cycle lanes and mini-roundabouts. In the 3 years prior to implementation (early 2007) there were 40 accidents (5 serious and 35 slights). There have been 4 slight accidents in the 12 months since completion, suggesting a 95% reduction in accidents (monitoring will continue for 3 years after scheme implementation).
 - ❑ New Town Area Scheme - The scheme was to reduce the speed of traffic in the area and improve the environment. There were 35 accidents (5 serious and 30 slight) in the three years before the scheme was introduced in late 2006. There were 6 slight injuries in the 12 months following completion, suggesting a 91% reduction in accidents (again, monitoring will continue for 3 years after scheme implementation).
 - ❑ Hatters Way - The scheme was to reduce the speed of traffic and improve the safety of cyclists by widening the 1m hard strip, reducing the speed limit and deterring overtaking. There were 25 accidents in the three years before the scheme was introduced. Although the overall number of accidents has not reduced during the 12 month period after

implementation, the severity of accidents has reduced, with serious accidents falling by nearly 50%.

- Tithe Farm - The scheme introduced a Safer Routes to School / Local Safety Scheme in Houghton Regis in 2007. This cost £90,000 and introduced a 20mph zone. Speeds have dropped markedly on Tithe Farm Road (up to 11mph in the vicinity of calming features) and accidents have fallen from an average of three per year to none in the first year since construction.

Barriers to delivery

- 2.12 The main barriers to delivery relate to funding constraints, in particular revenue funding to support the infrastructure programme. Lack of revenue funding and staff availability reduces the amount of education, training and publicity that can be undertaken, and whilst revenue challenge funds are welcome, they are time-consuming and expensive to bid for, and do not always guarantee access to funding.
- 2.13 Luton BC are having to cancel cycle training courses due to the lack of casual cycle trainers, and as such the feasibility of a wider programme of training cycle trainers is currently being examined. This is being addressed through the appointment of a part time cycle trainer to offer continuity of skills.
- 2.14 A further example of funding difficulties relates to the Telford Way/Dunstable Road roundabout. This site has a poor accident record but the only real solution is to signalise the junction, which needs compulsory purchase of some land and, as a result, means the scheme would cost in excess of £750,000 and is therefore currently not affordable. The scheme would have the added benefit of contributing to the congestion and accessibility strategy objectives, reducing congestion in the area, and thereby also reducing accidents along the adjacent Dunstable Road, Hatters Way and Telford Way.

Embedding road safety in wider policy areas

- 2.15 Road safety sits at the heart of the delivery of transport schemes across the conurbation, and more widely across broader service sectors. For example:
- Accident data and analysis forms a core component of the ranking system associated with the area studies programme, prioritising investment in the areas with the greatest road safety problems.
 - Road safety presentations, pedestrian training and cycle training are offered (and delivered) as an integral part of each School Travel Plan, which in turn is also an important part of the local Healthy Schools and Sustainable Schools programmes delivered by education services.
 - The CabSafe project has ensured road safety is embedded within the taxi licensing procedures.

Using data for targeting interventions

- 2.16 Effective data analysis is central to the road safety strategy, used to inform and independently assess prioritisation of investment. All local safety schemes are data led, ensuring that investment is targeted on the greatest need, and not necessarily influenced by the loudest local voice. This includes an assessment of the impact of accidents on the most deprived and disadvantaged communities.
- 2.17 The Area Studies Programme is a particularly strong example of how accident data is used to inform the wider transport delivery programme. Each area across Luton Borough is prioritised for investment each year based on a series of performance measures, of which the most significant criteria and weighting relates to accidents (combined with other indirect measures of road safety including traffic flow and speed, and the relative levels of deprivation).
- 2.18 A casualty report is prepared annually, and is used to objectively target road safety where it is most needed during the following 12 months. Gaining political support to this programme prevents any diversion of funds into less targeted road safety areas.
- 2.19 Due regard is also taken of ‘perceived problem areas’ through a direct link between the road safety and school travel plans delivery teams. This enables any measures which might prevent more sustainable behaviour (for example perceived unsafe or badly lit pedestrian walkways) to be identified through pupil and parent surveys (and workshops / coursework), and to be highlighted to the relevant transport officer for consideration within the future year’s programme. Whilst this does not directly target existing known accidents, it does ensure the elements of the LTP2 strategy work together to better enable both sustainable and safe transport networks for the future.

SWOT analysis

2.20 The headline results of the independent SWOT assessment are shown in the following table:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Continued innovation and pushing boundaries, for example:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In car safety – Belt Up for Life project, changes the way Luton BC deliver road safety message through local trusted sources • Involvement of fire and driving instructors through ‘road skills’ and ability to target young drivers • ‘Motorcycling Training Matters’ spans across all levels of training and focuses upon attitudinal change • Pedestrian training for children through parent and teacher training • Cycle training - very high levels of demand and growing staff base of trained trainers • SOLUTIONS - community safety led crime reduction project combining road safety and police enforcement functions • <u>Partnership working – proven to work well at grass roots</u> • <u>Education, training and publicity adopts a cradle to grave approach which seeks to target all opportunities</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Adult road safety education - KSI is made up of 80% adults yet most effort is placed on children due to easier communications channels</u> • <u>Parents and teachers not fully engaged across all schools</u> • <u>Limited revenue funding has an impact on the ambition of road safety team, and ability to achieve higher levels of accident reduction</u> • Partnership model is <i>nearly there</i> but still needs some tweaking

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Recent grant from DfT enables cycle instructor to be appointed</u> • <u>New road safety web-site and communication channels</u> • <u>Speed management enforcement to be undertaken by neighbourhood police (rather than traffic department), which is expected to increase enforcement levels</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Perception that revenue grant from road safety cameras could be compromised if a road safety target is not adopted as one of the priority 35 LAA targets</u> • <u>Continued emphasis on LTP capital investment – revenue funding bids are welcome, but very time consuming to complete</u> • <u>Bedfordshire Unitary status and changing views on how the existing partnership should operate</u> • Training staff are generally appointed on a casual basis, and their availability could be compromised in future if guaranteed workloads cannot be offered.

Note: Items in bold and underlined text considered the most important, in underlined text the next level of importance, and in plain text the next important. Text underlined in italics is a comment from the LSP.

Implications / proposed changes to strategy

2.21 The review of performance data, combined with the SWOT analysis and latest national best practice, has led to a number of key recommendations regarding the future direction of the road safety strategy, as follows:

- It is clear that road safety engineering will increasingly become less prevalent, as clusters of the same accident-type become less clear. This will make continuing reductions in accident numbers more challenging, and will be likely to result in a shift towards greater use of education, training and publicity, combined with more proactive safety treatment of the network. As identified above, one of the ways in which this will be informed is through the use of school travel plan and employer travel plan surveys, which identify perceived barriers to greater sustainable travel use.
- Although safety cameras have achieved a great deal, it is believed that they are unlikely to further reduce accident levels. However, it must be stressed they have a very important enforcement role to play and, as such, must be maintained to ensure driving behaviour does not revert to previous ways.
- Appointment of a part time cycle trainer to offer continuity of skills (over and above the previous approach of appointing casual trainers).

Implications / proposed changes to targets and indicators

2.22 There are no proposed changes to the road safety targets for the remainder of the LTP2 period. The data will continue to be monitored on an annual basis, and re-appraised to ensure the overall objectives of the road safety strategy are being met.

Plans for mitigating risk or exploiting opportunities

2.23 There are a number of ways in which the authorities are seeking to mitigate risk and exploit opportunities during the second half of LTP2, namely:

- Promotion and increasing use of a soon-to-be-launched road safety web-site (late 2008).

-
- ❑ Better integration between employer travel plans (which themselves will see an intensification of activity) and road safety campaigning, bridging the gap that is emerging (and funding imbalance) between the KSI statistics for children and adults.
 - ❑ To work closely with the new administrations in Bedfordshire to ensure the smooth transition of the exemplar work being undertaken by the joint authority's road safety partnership.
 - ❑ To continue to ring-fence the revenue from the road safety grant for road safety activities.
 - ❑ To consider the pooling of revenue resources to ensure longer term continuity of cycle training staff.

3 DELIVERING ACCESSIBILITY

Background

3.1 A key focus of the LTP2 accessibility strategy was to:

‘ensure education facilities, healthcare facilities, jobs and food shops are accessible to all, particularly those in disadvantaged groups’

3.2 The accessibility strategy was prepared as a stand alone document covering the conurbation. It was based on sound evidence regarding improving accessibility and built on the importance of accessibility which is already well grounded in the authorities strategic planning.

Objectives

3.3 Table 3-1 summarises the relevant strategic LTP2 objectives, and the strategic progress that has been made to date.

Table 3-1: LTP2 Accessibility strategic objectives

LTP2 Aim / Objectives	Progress
To ensure that residents of and visitors to Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis can easily gain access to the essential facilities that they need, in reasonable time, and at a reasonable cost.	Overall levels of accessibility (by sustainable modes) are increasing. Good progress in delivering Accessibility Action Plan, in particular the Post 16 Education partnership. Major schemes are on track for successful delivery during the LTP2 period, significantly enhancing the quality of the public transport network.
Reduce dependency on the private car	Car use accessing the central areas of the conurbation is declining, combined with strong growth in cycling use.
Increase the choice of transport available to all	Significant increases in the extent of dedicated cycle network resulting in growth in cycle use. Public transport satisfaction levels increasing. Dramatic increases in 20 mph zones and in area-wide treatment to ensure neighbourhoods are appropriate for walking, cycling and public transport.
Make services more accessible so that people have a real choice about when and how they travel	Greater flexibility in the provision of Council services. Increase in the uptake of employer travel plans, promoting sustainable travel and flexible working practices.

Targets & Indicators

3.4 Table 3-2 summarises progress to date on each of the core and local indicators relevant to the accessibility strategy, followed by a commentary on the key performance issues affecting each.

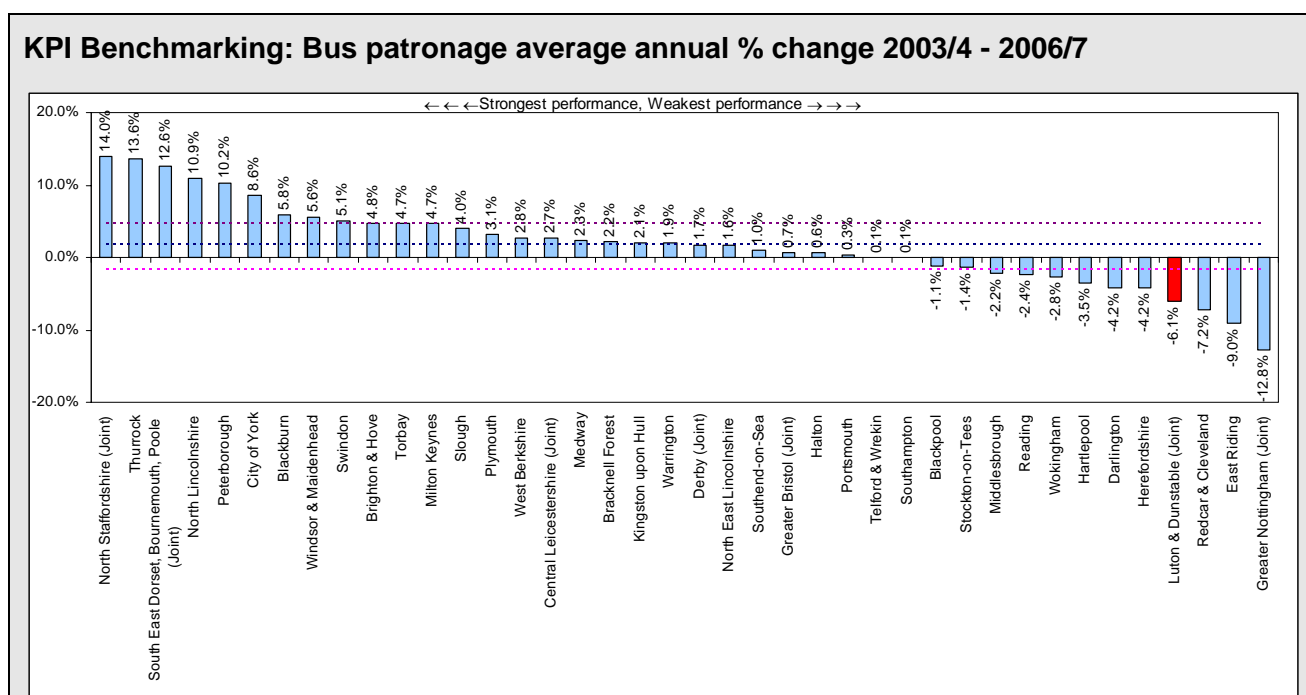
Table 3-2: LTP2 Accessibility indicators

	Data type	Baseline 03/4	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Status
<i>BVPI102 Bus Patronage (Millions)</i> Luton only	Forecast		8.7	8.6	8.4	8.4	8.6	9.2	9.4	
	Actual	9.1	8.8	8.6	8.0	7.9				Not on track
<i>BVPI104 Satisfaction with local bus services</i> Luton only	Forecast	49%	-	-	50%	-	-	55%	-	
	Actual	49.3%	-	-	53%	-				On track
<i>LTP1 % of population within 20 minutes of local employment centres by public transport</i> Conurbation	Forecast	-	64%	64%	64%	64%	65%	69%	70%	
	Actual	-	-	64%	68%	58%				On track (see para 3.51/2)
<i>LTP3 Index of cycling trips</i> Conurbation	Forecast	-	100	100	100	102	104	106	110	
	Actual		100	110	119	137				On track
<i>LTP5 Bus punctuality (Timetabled services)</i> Luton only	Forecast	-	-	55%	55%	55%	60%	65%	65%	
	Actual	-	-	60%	68%	53%				On track
<i>L1 number of air passengers using public transport (millions)</i> Luton only	Forecast	-	1.9	2.4	2.7	3.1	3.4	3.7	4.0	
	Actual	-	1.7	2.3	2.7	n/a				On track
<i>L2 Number of rail passenger journeys (000's)</i> Luton only	Forecast	16.5	17	17.2	17.3	17.3	17.4	17.4	17.5	
	Actual	16.5	17.1	17.0	20.7	n/a				On track
<i>L5 BVPI165 % accessible road crossings</i> Conurbation	Forecast		94	96	98	100	100	100	100	
	Actual		94	96	98	100				On track

	Data type	Baseline 03/4	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Status
L7 Accessibility to post 16 education (%) Conurbation	Forecast	-	69	69	69	69	70	72	73	
	Actual	-			68	68				On track
L8 % accessible buses in PTU fleet Conurbation	Forecast	-	66	68	70	72	73	74	75	
	Actual	-			75	85				On track
L9 Bus punctuality – frequent services (excess waiting time - seconds) Luton only	Forecast	-	-	42.5	42	41	38	36.5	36	
	Actual			138	90	78				On track

Commentary on performance indicators

- 3.5 Good progress is being made across the majority of the accessibility indicators, most notably in the field of cycling, where levels have increased dramatically during the first 2 years of the LTP2 in direct response to infrastructure provision supported by extensive marketing and training programmes.
- 3.6 The only area of concern relates to bus patronage, which continues to show a decline, despite the introduction of the concessionary fares scheme (which had been predicted to increase numbers in 2007/08 in line with the experience in other parts of the country).



Commentary: Luton experienced a 6.1% fall in bus patronage for the period 2003/4-2006/7. This was the fourth largest fall of all the authorities included in the comparison above and is the opposite of the general national trend shown in the graph. The more recent data indicates that bus patronage levels are still falling, and therefore it is looking unlikely that the target will be met (without some significant remedial action). The Luton Dunstable Busway major scheme will provide a major opportunity to improve both the quality and the visibility of public transport locally.

A high level review of the strongest performing authorities has shown that the largest increases in bus patronage are reported in North Staffordshire and Thurrock, although it should be noted that these areas have levels of bus patronage per head that fall in the lower half of the authorities included in the benchmarking. However they have managed to produce a much greater increase in journeys per head than LDHR, and hence are worthy of consideration.

In North Staffordshire much emphasis has been placed upon improving the experience for the bus passenger and making the journey process, from planning to undertaking, as pleasant an experience as possible. In Thurrock the increase in patronage shown in the benchmarking graph has continued, and the authority is now reporting an increase in patronage of 25%. This is attributed to some restructuring of the bus services in the area, mainly by the commercial providers, supported by additional local authority funding on key routes and a strengthened partnership with operators. This has included the local authority specifying high quality vehicles with wide doors and no steps, improving bus stops with higher kerbs and producing better publicity for bus services. These two examples indicate that there are clear benefits associated with improving the overall quality of the public transport experience through strong partnerships with operators.

- 3.7 An important relationship is the one that exists between declining bus patronage and journey time (both absolute and levels of reliability), allied to public perceptions of satisfaction. Although the journey time indicators are reported under 'Congestion' they are believed to be a key underlying contributor to declining patronage. As such, a renewed emphasis is in place through the newly adopted congestion strategy (see later sections), to ensure absolute journey times by bus are reduced, and reliability improved, and that the bus journey (and cost) is advantageous in comparison to use of the private car.

Priority for buses: extract from Luton's newly adopted Congestion strategy

Public transport has been afforded the top priority in the hierarchy of travel modes in the LTP2. The potential for mode shift through bus priority will be the first consideration in addressing the congestion hot spots. The dense urban area and the local demography offer real potential for maximising bus use and a shift of travel mode from the private car could result in significant reductions in congestion. A programme of work to improve bus stops has been prepared, to complement bus priority and improved reliability, along specific bus corridors. This includes measure such as; real time passenger information, better road marking, signing, timetables, shelters, seats, litter bins, accessibility etc.

Every effort will be made to make bus services more attractive. Traffic management improvements and targeted enforcement of parked vehicle blocking key bus routes will be a high priority. The most important links for bus services will be selected for improvement. These will be constantly monitored using tracking technology to report performance.

Traffic control and enforcement will support each Punctuality Improvement Partnership between the Council

and the local bus operators to achieve the targets for bus service reliability. Where possible late running buses will be afforded priority at traffic signals through a system shared with Bedfordshire, Peterborough and Cambridgeshire. This will enable the seamless supply of information across authority boundaries. Real time information about departures will be provided at key bus stops in order to increase confidence and boost passenger numbers. The business case for the use of smart cards for purchase of bus tickets and other Council services will be investigated.

Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles play an important role both in terms of accessibility and, with good integration with other modes of transport, in tackling congestion. The Council's Bus Strategy includes policies on the provision of taxi ranks at key public transport interchanges and in the town centre.

Park and Ride can have significant benefits and could play an important role in managing congestion. The Council will be carefully examining opportunities for potential sites. In particular, it is felt that sites around M1 junction 10A and to the northern edge of the conurbation could provide viable Park and Ride locations in the medium to longer term. Good bus priority measures on routes into the town centre will be essential for these sites to be viable, and the Luton Dunstable Busway and East Luton Corridor will help to provide the required fast routes into Luton town centre.

It is likely that such sites will be developed with partners such as London Luton Airport. We have also already taken the first steps in terms of park and ride by safeguarding the land for construction of a 900 space park and ride facility at the Butterfield Park site on the A505 Hitchin Road at the Luton/Hertfordshire boundary.

Commentary on delivery of accessibility schemes and actions of partners

- 3.8 The accessibility strategy is the most diverse of the LTP2 shared priorities. In addition to the overarching accessibility planning work to define each of the four strategy themes, it covers separate mode strategies relating to walking, cycling, buses (and bus information), motorcycling, school and employer travel plans, and the street scene.
- 3.9 As such, this section presents a brief commentary on the overall success (and, where relevant, failings) of the accessibility strategy, drawing upon case study experience of each of the different modal strategies to highlight key issues where appropriate.

Accessibility planning

- 3.10 At the heart of the strategy is a coordinated approach to the delivery of measures that enhance accessibility for all. The development of the accessibility strategy, the four themes of which are summarised in the LTP2, required greater levels of partnership working than had previously been required (for example dealing with the location and timing of services as well as the transport connections between them). It was envisaged within the LTP2 that an over-arching accessibility partnership would oversee delivery of the strategy.
- 3.11 On reflection, the practicalities of regularly convening a separate partnership were considered too onerous, so an alternative and successful model has been developed which relies on existing project specific partnerships and sub-groups to deliver the strategy. These specific partnerships have greater local control, and are coordinated in their actions with the wider LTP2 delivery team, to ensure that complementary measures to support sustainable travel are scheduled to be delivered alongside specific accessibility initiatives. The result is focussed project partnerships, delivering to target-led outcomes, without compromise to other LTP2 shared priority areas. Example of specific action plans and successes arising from this approach are provided later in this section.

Cycling

- 3.12 Significant progress has been made on the delivery of the cycle strategy, in particular the completion of the National Cycle Route through the conurbation, supported by extensive on and off road links. Most importantly, the infrastructure investment, supported by targeted promotions (of which the range is extensive), is showing significant increases in cycle use across the conurbation, exceeding the expectations set out in LTP2.
- 3.13 The table below shows the extent of the cycle infrastructure that has been delivered during the LTP2 period. A conscious effort has been made during the LTP2 period, following the completion of the National Cycle Network, to redress the balance in Luton between on-road and traffic-free facilities (the former of which are well received by confident cyclists, and are generally preferred by experienced cycling commuters). The following table summarises the network enhancements during the first 2 years of LTP2.

Cycle Network	Luton		Dunstable/Houghton Regis	
	Off-road	On-road	Off-road	On-road
Total Network (March 2006)	44.9 Km	10.9 Km	17.5 Km	11.6 Km
2006/7 & 2007/08 schemes	5.5 Km	19.4 Km	5.5 Km	4.8 Km
Total Network (March 2008)	50.4 Km	30.3 Km	23.0 Km	16.4 Km
Percentage increase	12%	178%	31%	41%

- 3.14 During the first 2 years, it is estimated that cycle parking capacity has also increased by 40 spaces (12.5% increase). Infrastructure has also been supported by extensive campaign work and cycle training, maximising exposure to cycling, and stressing different motivational aspects for different target groups (for example, the *women on wheels* initiative).
- 3.15 A scheme that resulted from a number of local requests is the development of a new commuter cycle route linking Dunstable to the Woodside industrial estate. No usage or 'before and after' figures are yet available.
- 3.16 The result of all this investment is a significant increase in cycling numbers, provided by a comprehensive network of automatic continuous cycle counters and annual cordon surveys covering 69 sites across the conurbation. The baseline index for cycling has risen from 100 (in 2005/06) to 137 (in 2007/08), exceptional growth against a target index of 110 to be achieved by 2010/11 and, therefore, a new target will be set (see below).
- 3.17 Detailed analysis continues to inform the future direction of the cycling strategy. Figure 3.1 overleaf illustrates the impact of infrastructure provision on cycle use. It does this by showing a comparison at monitoring points between the current cycling numbers and those surveyed two or three years ago using a green circle to indicate an increase, a yellow circle to show a decrease of between 0% and 50%, and a red circle to show a decrease of more than 50% over that period. In those areas where cycle activity has decreased on a particular route, this is usually mirrored by an increase on a parallel or adjacent route.

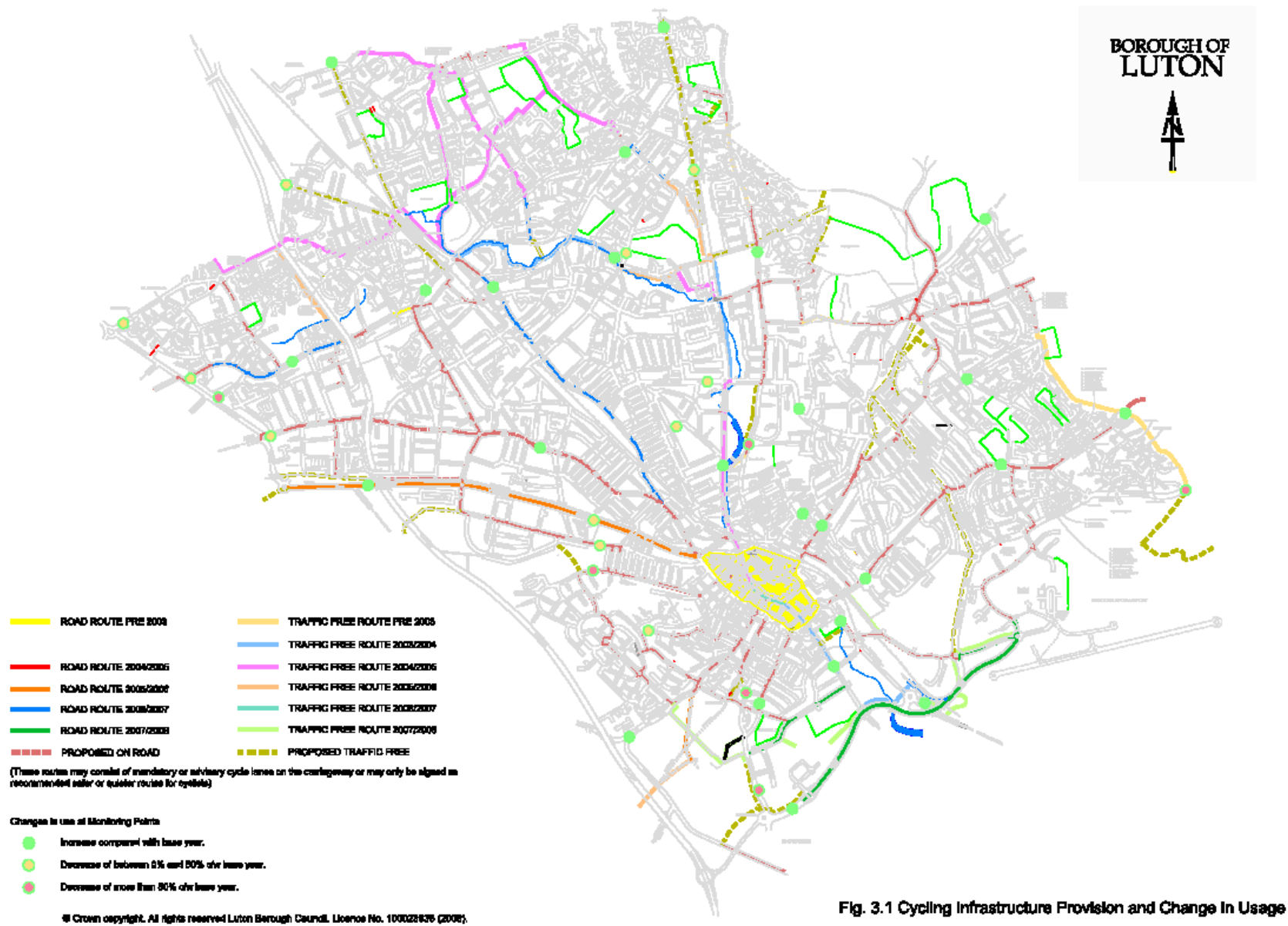


Fig. 3.1 Cycling Infrastructure Provision and Change In Usage

Walking

- 3.18 The walking strategy remains robust and relevant, with walking schemes generally embedded within other parts of the delivery programme (for example, due regard is taken of the needs of pedestrians as part of the vulnerable road user audit for all infrastructure schemes).
- 3.19 The walking strategy has also been complemented by the production of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP - see below), which has been the subject of extensive consultation and highlighted the valuable role that good walking infrastructure has in enhancing quality of life and enabling access to outside recreational resources.

Progress on developing the ROWIP

- 3.20 Significant progress has been made on the ROWIP during the first 2 years of the LTP2 period. A draft ROWIP was prepared in September 2007, with a wide consultation programme which included an extensive questionnaire on key issues and priorities. The document was formally adopted in July 2008.
- 3.21 The results of the consultation has shown that although three quarters of Luton's adult residents make use of the rights of way network, the frequency with which they do so could be higher. Additionally, use by certain under-represented groups could be encouraged, such as Black and Minority Ethnic groups, together with elderly and disabled people..
- 3.22 The priorities emerging for the public rights of way network include:
- ❑ Developing and safeguarding a rights of way network which is more accessible to all sectors of society;
 - ❑ Encouraging use among those who currently use paths and parks infrequently, or not at all, in order to enhance health and well being;
 - ❑ Making using the rights of way an altogether safer and more pleasant experience; and
 - ❑ Achieving improved access whilst fulfilling obligations relating to green spaces and biodiversity.
- 3.23 The development of the ROWIP has identified the following priority themes for the network:
- ❑ A better signed, maintained and accessible network for the whole community;
 - ❑ Improved promotion of rights of way;
 - ❑ Health and well being;
 - ❑ Improved safety and security;
 - ❑ Enhanced management of greenspace and rights of way, and an updated definitive map.
- 3.24 A particular scheme worthy of note is the 'Multi-User Route' that has been constructed linking the Dunstable/Houghton Regis urban area to Dunstable Downs to improve accessibility to the country-side for all users by all modes.

Public Transport - Bus

- 3.25 Whilst the focus of much of the public transport activity was envisaged to relate to the Luton Dunstable Busway major scheme, there has been a great deal of wider activity relating to the provision of services. The use of dial a ride vehicles to transfer shopmobility customers during the off peak period has proven to be particularly popular, maximising the use of the

vehicle resource - 120 customers per week now use this service that had previously used taxis, providing a positive example of partnership working where social services provide funding for the administration requirements of the scheme.

- 3.26 A number of bus stops in Dunstable have benefited from improvements to provide level access to buses.
- 3.27 In partnership with Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, the concessionary fares scheme has been extended to the 24hour period. This is having an impact on stabilising what had traditionally been declining patronage numbers on local buses. Two 60 seater yellow school buses have been purchased and are in operation - half of the seats are filled with statutory children, i.e. those attending their nearest faith school, for example, and the rest are proving particularly popular offered as paid seats. The most important aspect has been the ability to overcome parental safety fears of public transport. Similarly, a progressive CCTV initiative has also been delivered on public transport across the conurbation to address both perceived and actual crime on buses.
- 3.28 The rail to airport shuttle services were enhanced during early 2008 with four brand new air-conditioned road vehicles being introduced to operate a higher frequency shuttle service, every ten minutes between 5 a.m. and midnight, between Luton Airport Parkway Station and the airport terminal. The train operating company, First Capital Connect has made considerable investment in both vehicles and people, employing 19 drivers and extra staff to sell tickets and to assist customers boarding and alighting the vehicle with their luggage. Patronage numbers on this link continue to show strong growth (the number of air passengers using public transport grew to 2.7 million during 2007/08, on track to meet a target of 4 million by the end of the LTP2 period).
- 3.29 Supporting economic regeneration and development remains a key driver for growth in the conurbation, and there is a growing responsiveness of the public transport operators, supported by the authorities, to meet the changing needs of employment patterns. For example, to tie in with demand and shift patterns at the Butterfield employment site, some of the Hitchin bus services now loop through the site to ensure that it is well served by bus.

Public Transport - Rail

- 3.30 Due to the impending redevelopment of Luton station and its surrounding area as part of the Luton Gateway Project and the £5.5bn Thameslink programme which commenced in October 2007, only cosmetic improvements have been made to Luton railway station. These improvements have been in the form of:
- i) Improved train information indicators showing the expected arrival times of the first, second and third trains, including a running display of individual calling patterns. A much easier to read digital time display has also been installed in the booking hall area at the entrance to the platforms.
 - ii) The erection of an information kiosk near the ticket barriers for the dissemination of travel information.
 - iii) Within the last 12 months the Metro free newspaper has been made available in Luton's main ticket office area.
- 3.31 In October 2007 the first stages of the Thameslink Programme commenced with the lengthening of the platforms at Luton Airport Parkway Station, the first of twenty-three

stations to have platform lengths increased in order to accommodate twelve-car trains, a key factor in providing extra capacity and reducing over-crowding on trains.

3.32 Service levels at both Luton Central and Luton Airport Parkway stations remain at an all-time high with a total of 200 northbound and southbound trains per day calling at both stations, a level which cannot be exceeded due to current network capacity restraints.

Motorcycle strategy – update on progress

A specific requirement of the delivery report guidance, and requested by the DfT, is to report progress on the Motorcycle Strategy. The Bedfordshire and Luton Motorcycle Strategy was published Summer 2006. The following progress has been made towards encouraging greater motorcycle use, but with a significantly improved road safety record.

- ❑ the 3 year average (2005 to 2007) of Motorcyclists killed and seriously injured is 5.33, up by 7% compared with the 2000 to 2002 average
- ❑ the 3 year average (2005 to 2007) of Motorcyclists slightly injured is 70, up by 6% compared with the 2002 to 2003 average
- ❑ Modal share is 40.62% down in Luton compared with the 2000/03 average
- ❑ Theft of motorcycles down by 54% in Luton in 2007/08 compared with 2006/07

The Bedfordshire and Luton motorcycle forum continues to be active. A website (www.motorcyclingmatters.org) was launched in May 2007 and this has been very successful with 150 people subscribed and more than 600 hits a month. Two pilot pre-CBT courses were run in Luton in October 2007 in conjunction with Smart Motorcycle Training. The courses are aimed at giving initial safety information and a taster of what it is like to ride in a safe, controlled environment to school children who are thinking of riding a moped/motorcycle when they are old enough. These courses are set to continue with funding being received from the Department for Transport's Road Safety Partnership Grant for a combined Bedfordshire and Luton project entitled Motorcycle Training Matters.

The use of bus lanes by motorcycles in Luton was reviewed in 2007. However, the Council decided not to allow motorcycles to use bus lanes because there was no evidence available at the time to counter the concerns of Bedfordshire Police and the independent safety auditors about the safety implications.

Secure motorcycle parking has been installed in one car park in the Bury Park area of Luton and more are proposed for this financial year in the Town Centre.

Consultation

3.33 Consultation sits at the heart of the LTP2 process, and is particularly relevant for new and innovative techniques to support the accessibility strategy. As such, the authorities continues to support active forums in the areas of local transport planning, traffic management, public transport, cycling, and motorcycling, which provide valuable contributions on locally relevant matters to inform the LTP strategy. In addition the area committees provide a strong community consultation platform for issues relating to local schemes.

Action plans implemented and their impact

3.34 The Council has removed its local LTP2 indicator on access by foot to shops selling fresh food (see para. 3.46). However, access to fresh and healthy food remains an important priority for the accessibility strategy that supports the LTP2. For example, over the last two years the Council has been working in partnership with the Marsh Farm Food Action Group to develop various initiatives to improve access to fresh and healthy food for residents / organisations in the area. The key objectives of the group, consistent with the LTP2 action plan on access to fresh food, are to:

- ❑ Increase awareness of good nutrition and low cost healthy eating;
- ❑ Support residents at risk or suffering from diet related disease;
- ❑ Disseminate information on healthy eating and local food / nutrition initiatives;
- ❑ Improve access to affordable healthy food;
- ❑ Ensure multi agency working and community engagement in delivering strategies.

3.35 The main progress made in the Marsh Farm area has been the setting up of community-wide nutrition courses led by the Primary Care Trust's dietician and the Links lunch club for older people. A breakfast club has been set up at Whitefields Primary school, and cooking clubs are run for children and the parents of under 5's at Gill Blowers nursery, and for primary school children at Lea Manor and Wauluds. The Council's transport officers are liaising with the Marsh Farm Food Action Group to improve access to fresh food stores by public transport, walking and cycling.

Post 16 Education Partnership

3.36 The following table summarises the progress made in each of the actions specifically set out with LTP2 regarding the Post-16 Education Partnership.

LTP2 Actions	Progress 2006/07 & 07/08
Introduce independence and mobility training for students with special needs	Partnership is actively working with colleges to encourage independent travel, assessing students needs while seeking to reassure parents of their safety concerns (can be difficult as some parents see this as cost cutting rather than an investment to improve life skills and their children's career choices)
Improve information provision on transport	College specific literature has been produced and widely distributed for bus services to college sites.
Improve the image of public transport	To be addressed through convening of <i>sustainable travel partnership</i> during second stage of LTP2
Provide cheaper travel on an equitable basis for students	Savercard scheme is equitable (available to all students irrespective of income - other than those who need specialised transport).
Consider measures to encourage walking and cycling	Education providers are encouraged to deliver sustainable transport infrastructure through adoption

LTP2 Actions	Progress 2006/07 & 07/08
	of site specific travel plans.
Assess and review administrative arrangements	Regularly reviewed and good working arrangements exist between passenger transport unit and colleges. Minimal administration is required, college staff and students provide feedback, and the application process is continuously improved where required.

3.37 The following table presents the partner contributions to date (as set out in LTP2).

Lead Responsibility	Task	Progress
SEN Schools	Mobility training	Mobility and independence training should lie with SEN schools, but in practice they have focused on life skills with less emphasis on using public transport. The PTU recognises this, but have not yet secured engagement from schools to rectify.
Colleges	Information on public transport, publicity on sustainable modes, on-site measures	Colleges hold and distribute public transport information. Active support is offered to develop site specific travel plans.
Schools	Promoting sustainable modes	Promoted through the adoption of school travel plans at each specific site
LBC (LEA and passenger transport unit)	Administrative support, liaison with bus operators, distribution of passes	The PTU is the main point of contact between the authority, schools and colleges. It undertakes all admin, bus pass distribution, schools co-ordination, and negotiations with bus operators.
Connexions, LSC	Information and publicity on public transport	Connexions and LSC were original post-16 partners but have been less active of late.
Bus operators	Provision of services, corresponding actions to implement discounted fare arrangements	Close working relationship with operators enabled LBC to address a potential financial barrier to the savercard scheme (school can no longer use LSC for block scheme therefore bus operators were going to increase fares but then brought price down as a commitment to the project)

Embedding accessibility planning within wider policy delivery

3.38 Since the launch of the accessibility strategy there has been significant progress in converting the strategy into action. Of particular note is that the responsibility for coordinating the actions has been devolved to the lead partners associated with specific areas, and this has contributed significantly towards accessibility planning becoming more

embedded within wider policy areas, as they have direct responsibility for delivery. Although this approach has some weaknesses (not least the challenge associated with overall coordination without an over-arching accessibility partnership), the strengths associated with local ownership and delivery are believed to significantly outweigh these. For example, as a result of the Post 16 Access to Education partnership, some 1,200 students have benefited from reduced public transport fares, and this has been made possible through a pooled contribution from each of the colleges that have actively contributed (financially) to the scheme (having each seen the importance of ensuring sustainable access to the long term vitality and viability of their own operations).

- 3.39 Accessibility considerations are now embedded within the planning process locally, not only through the reactive requirement for accessibility audits as part of the statutory transport assessment requirements, but proactively through the use of accessibility mapping to inform the Local Development Framework for Luton and South Bedfordshire influencing the scale and nature of development (to the most accessible locations by sustainable modes).

SWOT Analysis

- 3.40 The headline results of the independent SWOT assessment are shown in the following table:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Development and delivery of innovative public transport schemes to make best use of resources</u> • <u>Schools are now more committed to the STP philosophy than 3/4 years ago – no longer seen as a tick box approach</u> • <u>School led initiatives are strengthening, such as school council involvement and increasing integration with school curriculum</u> • <u>CCTV on buses has had strong impact on confidence and reduced anti-social behaviour</u> • <u>On track to meet school travel plan targets by 2010</u> • <u>Bike-IT initiative is having big impact in selected schools</u> • <u>Good examples of effective partnership working, eg Icknield High with LBC, local cycling club, Sustrans, British Cycling.</u> • <u>Cycling training of engineers to influence design culture</u> • <u>Particularly strong results from walk to school week and Walk on Wednesday campaigns</u> • <u>Star challenge has been well received and ties together sustainable travel and physical activity</u> • <u>Innovation and willingness to test new ideas (eg Hatters Way cycling roundabout, and experimental cycling zebra crossing)</u> • <u>Independent and special schools much more challenging to engage, therefore flexibility is offered by focusing on life skills rather than sustainable behaviour</u> • <u>LBC offering packages of measures to staff to encourage sustainable behaviour e.g. discounted PT tickets</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Disbandment of over-arching accessibility partnership developed during LTP2</u> • <u>Delivery of measures is often reactive to need rather than strategy led</u> • <u>No coordinated (effective) employer travel plans for Luton or Bedfordshire Councils</u> • <u>Difficulty in obtaining reliable information on bus patronage</u> • <u>Smarter choices programme is narrow – for example, no consideration of car sharing, car clubs, personal and residential travel planning, teleworking.</u> • <u>Staffing problems for all aspects of the smarter choices programme – no coordinated team responsible for delivery</u> • <u>Limited revenue funding</u> • <u>Tendency to Adopt a leaflet culture to behavioural change (primarily as a result of funding limitations)</u> • <u>Travel to school by car continues to increase</u> • <u>Walking bus campaigns require long term commitment from parents – difficult to secure longevity of schemes</u> • <u>Parental choice and school overcrowding is resulting in longer journeys less susceptible to sustainable travel</u> • <u>Vulnerable road user audits still not always comprehensive in support of sustainable modes</u> • <u>Innovation only tested on few occasions</u> • <u>Accession not being used to it's full potential.</u> • <u>Lack of skilled resources on accessibility mapping</u> • <u>Limited resources makes close monitoring of each school travel plan impractical, therefore rely on school census and hands-up survey</u> • <u>Perceptions of stranger danger by parents continues to limit significant shifts in behaviour</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited enforcement and monitoring of development led travel plans • <i><u>Apart from NCN6, cycle network in Dunstable/Houghton Regis is fairly limited</u></i>
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Potential for a new sustainable travel partnership (Autumn 2008) to strengthen smarter choices delivery</u> • <u>To consider reconvening an accessibility partnership group with strong and clear leadership</u> • <u>Introduction of a child based concessionary fares scheme</u> • <u>Increasing involvement of elected members</u> • <u>Closer alignment of STP activity with curriculum and Ofsted appraisal</u> • <u>Strengthen sustainable travel audits and tightly monitor</u> • Clearer definitions of locally registered bus services to strengthen concessionary fares offer • New school 'sustainable travel' starter packs • More robust monitoring and enforcement of development led travel plans • <i><u>Developing the new National Indicators for climate change will be a focus for taking a more proactive stance on travel planning, thereby improving accessibility by sustainable modes</u></i> • <i><u>National changes to education, with secondary schools offer a range of diplomas etc. will result in the need to take a more holistic view of school travel planning</u></i> 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Staffing difficulties for all aspects of the smarter choices programme</u> • <u>Funding for STP officers post 2010 when central funding is removed</u> • If colleges do not continue support for saver cards then difficult to move back to a statutory scheme • Risk of fraud from concessionary fares scheme – currently a fixed annual re-imburement which places risk on operator, although could mean authority is over-paying without access to good quality data

Note: Items in bold and underlined text are considered the most important, in underlined text the next level of importance, and in plain text the next important. Text underlined in italics is a comment from the LSP.

Implications/proposed changes to strategy

3.41 The accessibility strategy will continue to be implemented in accordance with the revised delivery structure (i.e. through bespoke project partnerships reporting directly to the LTP2 delivery team manager), rather than an over-arching accessibility partnership as envisaged when the LTP2 was adopted. There are no proposed changes to the overall strategy approach. The Luton RoWIP was adopted by the council in July 2008, and a review of the walking strategy is currently underway. The council have also prepared a draft sustainable modes of travel to school strategy (in accordance with education legislation) that will inform the on-going school travel planning process.

Plans for mitigating risk or exploiting opportunities

3.42 The biggest risk to the accessibility programmes relates to the availability of revenue funding, allied to skills availability, associated with the delivery of behavioural change programmes. As can be evidenced from the work completed to date, the LTP2 programme is providing extensive infrastructure improvements to lever a change in behaviour, although it is

recognised that such improvements would be maximised if a greater programme of behavioural change could be delivered alongside. This has been tested through a benchmarking exercise with similar authorities, who have maximised capital spend by offering area-wide revenue based campaigns (for example Nottingham who have launched a city wide personal travel planning (PTP) campaign, Brighton and Hove who have delivered both PTP and area wide publicity, and Reading who have undertaken focussed bus passenger campaigns).

3.43 The funding risk is currently being examined in more detail, and a business case will be considered which sets out how such long term revenue funding can be maximised. A likely source will be development contributions associated with the growth agenda.

3.44 For example, moneys from Section 106 agreements totalling almost £326,000 in the period 2006-08 have contributed to a number of measures to improve road safety and other transport-related works in the Dunstable/Houghton Regis area, including:

- ❑ Park and ride schemes
- ❑ Safer routes to school
- ❑ Traffic surveys and traffic monitoring
- ❑ Transponders for buses
- ❑ Junction improvement schemes
- ❑ Pedestrian and cycle facilities
- ❑ Provision of bus shelters.

3.45 Other risks are set out in the SWOT analysis above, although none are deemed significant in terms of their impact on the LTP2 programme and associated outcomes.

3.46 The opportunities are also set out in the SWOT analysis, with a brief commentary on each as follows:

- ❑ Reconvening the accessibility partnership with strong and clear leadership – an assessment of the pros and cons of this has been undertaken, which concluded that whilst there would be some advantage in terms of strategic direction and leadership, it was considered that the disbenefits would outweigh this benefit (associated with extra resourcing required to maintain partnership, and potential lack of commitment by partners given other similar work streams). It has therefore been decided to continue with the existing arrangement (project specific partnerships coordinated by the LTP2 delivery team);
- ❑ Introduction of a child based concessionary fares scheme – work is currently underway to assess the feasibility of this, with a benchmarking review of the work of TfL and Kent County Council (both of whom have recently introduced similar schemes);
- ❑ Increasing involvement of elected members – there is on-going work to strengthen the relationship between officers and members, in particular to improve the knowledge flow in both directions in relation to the promotion of sustainable travel. It is considered that there are likely to be greater opportunities to further this work as the national pressures to address climate change and natural resource depletion become stronger;
- ❑ Closer alignment of STP activity with curriculum and Ofsted appraisal – the STP package will be reviewed to better align the work of the STP officers with wider school initiatives.

Whilst the STP process has improved greatly during the LTP2 period, and is no longer seen as a box ticking exercise but a genuine travel management tool for schools, there remains further work to truly embed the STP within the school ethos and community;

- ❑ Strengthen sustainable travel audits and tightly monitor – whilst vulnerable user and sustainable travel audits are an integral part of the scheme design process, these will be strengthened to ensure the ability to capture sustainable trips is maximised. Greater consideration will be placed upon the Manual for Streets design approach to ensure places are created which focus on people rather than cars;
- ❑ To develop a clearer demarcation of locally registered bus services to strengthen the concessionary fares offer – i.e. making it more transparent for passengers to determine which services are eligible;
- ❑ More robust monitoring and enforcement of development led travel plans – related primarily to the lack of resources for monitoring and enforcement of travel plan outcomes. The authorities will scrutinise the current process and examine how best to maximise the quality and quantity of travel plans delivered through the planning process. A key issue for Luton BC will be how to appoint a suitably qualified travel plan coordinator (previous recruitment attempts have failed to secure this post).

Barriers to Implementation

3.47 The main barrier to implementation remains the lack of access to sustained revenue funding, aligned to a corresponding staff and skill shortage in the field of sustainable behavioural change.

New targets and changes to indicators

3.48 Following consultation with Go-East the Council has removed its local LTP2 indicator on access by foot to shops selling fresh food, principally because of the lack of influence the Council has on the location of, these shops.

3.49 It is proposed that the cycling indicator is replaced with a more realistic target – to increase cycle use (indexed figure) to 145 by 2010/11. The original target was to increase to 110 from a baseline of 100 by 2010/11, but this has already been substantially surpassed (the 2007/08 figure was 137).

3.50 The accessibility indicator LTP1 (% of population within 20 minutes of local employment centres by public transport) has been recalculated using an updated methodology. This is for a number of reasons:

- ❑ Accession software has been updated and improved;
- ❑ LBC skills and training has been improved to better interpret the outputs from Accession;
- ❑ The model has been updated using OS ITN data rather than OSCAR which had been used previously (hence junctions and turning movements are modelled with a far greater degree of accuracy);
- ❑ ATCO.CIF files have been sourced internally from within the Council, and provide greater local precision than the previous centrally held data set.

3.51 As such, without any changes that are likely to affect accessibility, the baseline level has reduced to 58% (from 64% reported in LTP2). It is therefore proposed that 58% forms the new baseline figure, with a revised 2010/11 target of 65%.

4 TACKLING CONGESTION & NETWORK MANAGEMENT DUTY

4.1 A key focus of the LTP2 was to:

‘manage congestion and traffic growth’

4.2 The strategy for dealing with congestion within the conurbation was developed in order to meet the growing needs of a population which is expected to exceed 250,000 by the next LTP period. It is based on a number of approaches: implementation of committed major schemes; encouraging viable alternatives to the car; road space management and information; effective use of the land-use planning process; and gradual disincentives for cars in the town centres (post 2010). It was recognised in the strategy that there is a desire across the conurbation to manage congestion and stop it becoming a larger problem and that the congestion strategy would have a positive impact upon the other shared priorities.

Objectives

4.3 Table 4-1 summarises progress to date on each of the core and local indicators relevant to the network management and congestion strategy, followed by a commentary on the key performance issues affecting each.

Table 4-1: LTP2 strategic congestion objectives

LTP2 Objectives	Progress
Improve the efficiency of the transport network	A key aspect of the newly adopted network management and congestion strategy is to maximise the efficiency of the transport network as a whole.
Manage congestion levels and accommodate future growth, through the short term provision of effective alternatives to the private car and the longer term controlled management of demand	The network management and congestion strategy was formally adopted by Luton Borough Council in June 2008, and sets out a comprehensive and committed approach to dealing with existing congestion levels and planning for future development pressures.
<i>Sub objectives:</i>	
To establish reliable journey times on key route corridors	Journey time reliability has been monitored and mapped on key route corridors for the first time as part of the development of the network management and congestion strategy. Key corridors will form the basis of early investment in the congestion strategy during the second half of LTP2, and will be monitored annually to assess on-going performance and provide valuable adaptive learning evidence data.

LTP2 Objectives	Progress
Increase the use of public transport, walking and cycling	Cycling has shown dramatic increases in response to sustained infrastructure investment. Pedestrian activity, particularly for the journey to school, has also increased. Use of the rail network continues to show growth. Further work is required to stem the decline in bus patronage – the on-going development of the Luton Guided Busway is an important milestone due for completion in 2011.
Accommodate planned developments in a sustainable way	The joint committee for the growth area have agreed a preferred core strategy covering strategic planning and transportation.
Provide better information on transport options	Roll out of RTPi is progressing, with contracts being signed with each of the lead partners and neighbouring local authorities.
To implement major projects to help manage congestion hot spots and congestion generally	All three of Luton's committed major schemes are progressing well.
To assist in fulfilling our duties under the Traffic Management Act 2004	The congestion strategy sets out a clear response and delivery mechanism for TMA duties.

Targets & Indicators

4.4 Table 4-2 summarises progress to date on each of the core and local indicators relevant to the congestion strategy, followed by a commentary on the key performance issues affecting each.

Table 4-2: LTP2 congestion indicators

	Data type	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Status
<i>LTP2 Change in area wide vehicle KM (Million VKM)</i> Luton only	Forecast	827	833	872.3	879.2	885.3	891.5	896.9	901.8	
	Actual	827	833	821	798	n/a				On track
<i>LTP4 % of children travelling to school by car</i> Conurbation	Forecast				28	27.4	26.7	26.1	25.5	
	Actual				28	29.1				Not on track
<i>LTP6 Change in peak period vehicle flows towards Luton town centre (x1000)</i> Luton only	Forecast	-	-	19.6	20.0	20.3	20.7	21.0	21.4	
	Actual	-	-	19.6	19.4	19.3				On track
<i>L3 Number of</i>	Forecast	39	49	57	66	75	84	93	102	

	Data type	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Status
<i>schools with travel plans</i> Conurbation	Actual				39	67				On track
<i>L4 Number of employers with travel plans</i> Conurbation	Forecast	-	8	8	11	14	18	21	25	
	Actual	-			13	16				On track
<i>L10 Network Average Journey Time/Mile (mm:ss)</i> Luton only	Forecast	-	-	-	-	6 min 31 sec	7 min 10 sec	7 min 53 sec	8 min 40sec	
	Actual					6 min 31 sec				New indicator

Commentary on performance indicators

4.5 There is growing evidence that traffic levels in Luton are reducing (indicator LTP6 above), and importantly that this is not compromising mobility, as activity levels are not showing similar levels of decline. Further monitoring work is required to examine the detail of this, but it is understood that it is likely to be a combination of:

- Travel behaviour change (shift from cars to sustainable modes – reinforced by the recent growth in cycle use across the conurbation).
- Peak spreading – lessening the impact of the peak through motorists choosing to travel outside peak hours
- Increased home working and shopping – reducing the need to travel to/from key destinations each day

4.6 As investment continues in the sustainable travel infrastructure it is encouraging to note this consistent trend across the conurbation.

4.7 The only underperforming indicator relates to the school journey. Despite growing numbers of school travel plans, the number of pupils travelling to school by car has grown in recent years. Closer examination of the data for the conurbation suggests that this is particularly acute in Dunstable and Houghton Regis. There are a number of possible reasons for this trend:

- Growing parental fears about the safety of the journey (particularly related to unaccompanied journeys rather than to road safety fears).
- Lack of true engagement of the whole school community through the STP process (as highlighted in the accessibility SWOT analysis).
- Growing parental choice in school location, thus increasing overall travel distances and making walking and cycling less viable.
- Unreliable data collection methods (both hands-up and parentally-completed surveys are known to be prone to error).

4.8 Further work will be undertaken during the remainder of the LTP2 period to examine each of these (and others arising) in more detail, and reflect these findings within the school travel plan programme. This is particularly relevant for LBC for whom this is also a locally agreed LAA target. Although the trend is currently not favourable for the attainment of the LTP2 target, an increased focus on the indicator (with the possibility of additional funding and scrutiny) will assist in tackling this area with more rigour during the second half of the LTP2 period.

Impact of actions taken by LBC & delivery partners

- 4.9 During the first two years of the LTP2 the main focus has been on developing and adopting the congestion strategy, which is now fully adopted. This is consistent with the LTP2 timescale, and will enable a series of congestion related measures to be formally implemented during the second half of the LTP2 period. These will be closely monitored against the baseline data established through an area-wide monitoring programme established to inform the strategy with robust baseline data on journey time reliability.
- 4.10 Figure 4.1 overleaf demonstrates the variability of reliability of journey times on key sections of the network; the three colours illustrate the degree of difference between free flow traffic condition journey times and maximum journey times found during a survey of morning peak inbound journeys. A green tab indicates a difference of up to 500%, a yellow tab a difference of between 500% and 1000%, and a red tab a difference of greater than 1000%. These also provide an indication of those areas prone to congestion.
- 4.11 However, in tandem with progress in adopting the congestion strategy, there has also been significant delivery of initiatives targeting congestion, summarised as follows:
- ❑ On-going delivery of committed major schemes (Busway, East Luton Corridor and Town Centre Transport Scheme)
 - ❑ Real time passenger transport information (RTPI) contracts are being signed by all lead partners and neighbouring authorities, enabling the quick roll-out of RTPI infrastructure during the second half of the LTP2 period.
 - ❑ A special maintenance bid has been successful for Kimpton Road / Osborne Road (£2.5m)
 - ❑ UTMC regions have been established.
 - ❑ Parking management has been strengthened, with strong political support for congestion management measures (most notably car parking and bus priority).

Network Management Duty

4.12 Since the publication of the LTP2, Luton Borough Council have produced a Network Management and Congestion Strategy in line with the requirements of Section 17 (Traffic Management Act (TMA) 2004) and, in line with the TMA, LBC have appointed a Traffic Manager.

Delivery of Congestion Delivery Plans

4.13 In accordance with the LTP2, the focus to date has been upon:

- the delivery of the three relevant major schemes,
- encouraging viable alternatives to the private car
- road space management and information systems, and
- effective use of the land-use planning process.

4.14 The latter three of these are covered within the Accessibility Strategy (as they have common shared objectives). Progress on the delivery of major schemes is briefly outlined below.

East Luton Corridor M1 Junction 10a to Airport

4.15 The issues in relation to a section of reinforced earth embankment between Gipsy Lane and Park Street have now been resolved. The Contractor, Birse Civils, has now submitted a revised programme that anticipates completion of the works in late 2008.

Luton Dunstable Busway

4.16 The updated Business Case to achieve Conditional Approval was submitted to the DfT on 29 February 2008. Further supporting information was supplied between April and June, and in August the Government confirmed that Conditional Approval for the scheme had been awarded.

4.17 It is planned to issue the Tender documents in September. On this basis, it is expected that the preferred contractor will be announced in March 2009 and that design and construction work will commence in Spring 2009.

Luton Town Centre Transport Scheme

4.18 Following public consultation on the scheme held in November 2007, the preferred route has now been agreed by the Borough Council. The scheme is different to that for which Programme Entry status was achieved in December 2003, as it now includes the dualling of the south end of Crawley Green Road between Crescent Road and the St Mary's Gyratory.

4.19 A planning application for the scheme was submitted in July, and the Highway and Compulsory Purchase Orders will be published in the Autumn. Subject to completion of the statutory procedures and full approval of the scheme, works are expected to start in early 2010.

4.20 Construction of a new multi storey car park for Luton Station has commenced, and this scheme complements and facilitates both the Luton Dunstable Busway and parts of the Luton Town Centre Transport Scheme. The car park is due to be completed by mid 2009.

SWOT Analysis

4.21 The headline results of the independent SWOT assessment are shown in the following table:

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Resistance to additional car parking capacity in town centre</u> • <u>Strong policy stance on maintaining bus priority for boarding within the carriageway</u> • <u>Political support for congestion and traffic management strategy</u> • <u>Newly adopted congestion and traffic management strategy</u> • <u>Newly developed and accepted strategic plan of the town centre</u> • <u>RTPI contracts signed with all lead partners and neighbouring authorities</u> • UTC regions, SCOOT, MOVA, RTPI and possibility of combining with CCTV in traffic control centre • Simple practical and deliverable ideas are being deployed in short term, for example revised dustbin collection scheduling outside peak hours • Success of special maintenance bid £2.5m for Kimpton Road 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Economic development is seen as the political driving force, with a strong emphasis on car based access to employment</u> • <u>Existing levels of congestion seen as acceptable, yet could compromise ability of PT network to deliver growth due to reliability problems</u> • <u>Lack of genuine behavioural change resulting from smarter choices measures</u> • <u>PT priority determined by land opportunity rather than genuine requirement to improve PT opportunity</u> • <u>Contractual problems is leading to some delays in minor repairs to the carriageway</u>
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Bus operator willing to pay for car parking attendant to alleviate reliability problems on key corridor</u> • <u>New core team structure with flexible pool of call-off consultancy support</u> • Possible new traffic management solutions being developed to alleviate worst parts of the network • <i><u>Developing the new National Indicators for climate change will be a focus for taking a more proactive stance on travel planning, reducing car travel thereby reducing congestion</u></i> 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Economic development is seen as the political driving force, with a strong emphasis on car based access to employment</u> • <u>Growing skills shortage – recruitment problems</u> • <u>Location of future development and dominance of ‘in-fill’ which is more difficult to constrain and secure funding.</u> • Restructuring of Bedfordshire removes in-house highways resource • Recent vandal attacks on buses during service

Note: Items in bold and underlined text are considered the most important, in underlined text the next level of importance, and in plain text the next important. Text underlined in italics is a comment from the LSP.

Implications / proposed changes to strategy

4.22 The strategy for dealing with traffic management and congestion has been re-focused following the adoption of the Congestion Strategy in June 2008. This heralds a new approach to the management of traffic within Luton. Full details are provided in the Congestion Strategy.

Implications / proposed changes to targets and indicators

4.23 The implication of the congestion strategy is that a new congestion target will be established. This will be based around journey time reliability and is defined as follows:

.... journey time reliability will be the principal indicator to demonstrate excellent performance. To recognise the increasing demand for travel the number of trips will be based on the total number of people travelling along the link and not just the number of vehicles. To give a strong positive message the target will be to achieve 95% of all trips within the target time with, if possible, a small reduction in the average journey time. Ultimately the aim is to monitor reliability per person seamlessly across all modes

- 4.24 The baseline average journey time per mile over the twelve selected key routes (see Figure 4.1 on p. 32) in the morning peak period is 6 minutes 31 seconds.
- 4.25 The travel to school indicator will be updated during 2008/9 to reflect the target set out in the local LAA indicator.

Plans for mitigating risk or exploiting opportunities

- 4.26 The biggest potential risk is a deviation of political support, combined with a strengthening focus upon economic development and significant growth. As a result the pressures to provide car based accessibility will require the authorities to remain strong in the pursuit of LTP2 objectives and targets. Evidence of this can be found in the high level of support for the progressive congestion management strategy.
- 4.27 Growth will also provide significant opportunities, particularly allied to the delivery of the Luton Dunstable Busway and the Town Centre Transport Scheme during the second half of the LTP2 period. Well planned development has the ability to significantly enhance the attractiveness of public transport walking and cycling, offering a new opportunity to capture new trips by sustainable modes from the outset of occupation of these sites. The authorities will ensure design criteria are adhered to, and that appropriate provision is made for sustainable modes (in terms of layout and design, physical infrastructure, priority for sustainable modes, development density and mix, and supporting promotion and marketing measures).

Barriers to delivery

- 4.28 The main barrier relates to staff resources for the delivery of the congestion strategy (relevant also to the accessibility strategy), in particular the ability to recruit and retain staff with the skills necessary to deliver complex behavioural change programmes. Recruitment of such staff has already proven problematic, against a background of a national shortage of similar skills, and as such, the authorities will seek to work more closely with partners to identify how capacity building in these areas might best be achieved.

5 BETTER AIR QUALITY

5.1 A key focus of the LTP2 was to:

'to minimise the impact of transport on the environment'

5.2 The strategy for dealing with the Air Quality shared priority comprises of a mix of transport related and wider proposals, primarily focussed on the declared air quality management areas, but also having due regard for emerging air quality issues, particularly where they impact vulnerable groups.

Objectives

5.3 Table 5-1 summarises the relevant strategic LTP2 objectives, and the progress that has been made to date.

Table 5-1: LTP2 air quality strategic objectives

LTP2 Objectives	Progress
Sustain a thriving local economy whilst minimising the impact of transport on the environment	No new air quality management areas have been identified, existing AQMA's largely related to impact of Motorway and trunk road network through the conurbation.

Targets & Indicators

5.4 Table 5-2 summarises progress to date on each of the core and local indicators relevant to the road safety strategy, followed by a commentary on the key performance issues affecting each.

Table 5-2: LTP2 air quality indicator

	Data Type	2004	2010	Status
C14 Number of Air quality management areas Whole area	Forecast	-	2	
	Actual	2		On track

Actions taken by LBC & delivery partners

5.5 The following table summarises actions taken to address air quality issues.

Action Plan Measure	Original timescale	Progress with measure	Outcome to date	Comments
M1 J11				
Luton air alert	Launch Oct/ Nov 2008	On schedule	n/a	Patients with respiratory problems would be presented with information in a format accessible to them to help

				them manage their condition during predicted periods of poor air quality.
Dunstable				
Currently working on 2nd draft of the Action Plan alongside the Highways Agency and Beds County Council	1st draft submitted to Defra for comment in 2007. Feedback received and being actioned.	Actions currently being identified and prioritised and report being drafted.	Partnerships created with Bedfordshire County Council and Highways Agency, meetings held to discuss possible actions which might be implemented to improve air quality.	

Barriers to delivery

5.6 The main barrier relates to the challenges facing the conurbation to produce a robust air quality action plan, due to the fact that both declared air quality management areas are directly related to the impact of traffic on the strategic highway network (M1 and A5). The authorities continue to discuss options with the Highways Agency (HA), but to date, no (workable) solutions have been identified. The issue is further compounded by difficulties in engaging with the HA on these issues due to lack of continuity of their staff, and the difficulty of raising the profile of the AQMA with the HA at a time when the motorway widening programme is in place along the relevant sections of the M1.

New targets/indicators

5.7 The target remains robust, with no new AQMA's expected to be declared during the LTP2 period. This remains a challenging target, at a time when growth pressures are accelerating, but is deemed appropriate due to the excellent progress made in delivering the three major schemes, and the on-going traffic reduction levels being seen in the most sensitive parts of the conurbation (core town centre sites defined as the 'inner cordon').

Update on AQMA declarations

5.8 Both AQMA's remain active, with work on-going to identify suitable and agreed draft Action Plans.

Update on monitoring regime

5.9 South Bedfordshire have been monitoring air quality in Dunstable since 1993 via diffusion tubes, which highlighted raised levels of pollution in the town centre. A real-time analyser was installed in 2000, near the junction in the town centre where the A5, A505 and the B489 intersect.

- 5.10 Luton continues to continuously monitor air quality in the vicinity of M1 junction 11. Nitrogen dioxide monitoring by passive diffusion tube has also been re-introduced on both sides of the M1 in the area of the AQMA. This will assist in determining the status of the AQMA in the future.
- 5.11 Luton has commissioned an Air Quality Progress Report, to be delivered before the end of 2008. The report will indicate if a Detailed Assessment of Luton Airport will be required, and comment on the current situation with the AQMA. South Bedfordshire District Council are also carrying out an assessment in the vicinity of M1 at Chalton.

Measures to improve air quality

M1 J11

- 5.12 LBC has historically voiced its concerns about air quality, particularly in relation to the widening of the M1 Motorway. As part of the 4 Stage Review and Assessment (available separately), Luton was found to require an AQMA, and an Order was made in 2005, designating areas of land close to the M1 Motorway, which includes 431 dwellings. Accordingly, an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) was required to demonstrate how the AQMA would be mitigated. Since 2005, a further Air Quality Progress Report has been commissioned from a specialist consultant. It will consider the current state of air pollution in Luton, and predictions for 2010. It will also look at any detrimental contribution the airport may be making. It will be available later this year (2008) and published with other reports of relevance on the council web-site.
- 5.13 Whilst recognising the difficulties of developing an appropriate AQAP (given that the AQMA directly relates to traffic using the M1 motorway), the authority and its partners are making good progress at developing and delivering innovative approaches to dealing with AQ issues more widely (see partnership working section below).

A5 Dunstable

- 5.14 Reports produced as part of the review and assessment process concluded that an Air Quality Management Area was required to be declared in Dunstable. The order was made in 2005. An Air Quality Action Plan has been drafted and was submitted to Defra for comment. Currently work is progressing with the Highways Agency and Bedfordshire County Council to finalise the plan and re-submit it to Defra

Partnership working

- 5.15 The authorities continue to seek a suitable AQAP for the declared AQMA sites, and are working with Defra and the Highways Agency to determine a suitable approach.
- 5.16 For example, an initiative with Luton PCT, Sussex Air Quality Partnership, Environmental Research group of Kings College London, Herts and Beds Air Quality Monitoring Group and Luton & District Breatheasy Group, as partners has been established to help sufferers from respiratory diseases manage their condition and potentially reduce the burden on the NHS. This project will introduce predictive air quality warnings and make them available by SMS text, email and voicemail to people with respiratory diseases, reminding them to have their medication with them, and to take any other preventative measures they think appropriate. It builds on the air quality monitoring Luton Borough Council has been undertaking for the last 10 years, using the data gathered to predict events rather than just record the fact that they have occurred. The uptake of this service, expected to be launched in October 2008,

will be monitored together with the benefits derived in terms of behavioural changes and education of subscribers. Evidence from Sussex authorities already using this facility shows that 67% (year 1) and 73% (year 2) of people using the service changed their behaviour when they received the alerts.

SWOT Analysis

5.17 The headline results of the independent SWOT assessment are shown in the following table:

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated environmental officers well placed to deliver AQ improvements • Understanding of the relationship between LTP measures and wider contributions to AQ objectives (for example the changing role and type of the vehicle fleet) 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Engagement with partners:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty of engagement with Highways Agency who have key role to play in both AQMAs (M1 and A5) • HA don't accept responsibility that AQMA is their problem • HA staff changes make continuity of discussion very difficult • <u>AQAP not high on list of 'things to do' – competing pressures on a small team</u> • <u>Perception that we are not learning from experience elsewhere due to engrained practices</u> • <u>Market led approach to land use planning places greater pressure on highway network</u> • <u>AQAP considered as a tick-box solution to genuine AQ issues</u> • <u>AQMA does not appear on land search for new property</u> • Complexity of a 2 tier authority combined with involvement of DEFRA and HA • Environment Act only sets out a requirement to 'attempt to achieve objectives' • No known planning refusal on AQ grounds
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Behavioural change programme is seen as fundamental in relieving AQMAs</u> • <u>Changing perception of how engineers perceive transport solutions, for example shared use space rather than traffic calming</u> • <u>Engineering solutions relating to congestion strategy could improve traffic flow and reduce vehicle emission levels</u> • <u>Variable speed signing on M1 has potential to smooth traffic flow and reduce emission levels</u> • Northern link road could alleviate specific problems at existing AQMA sites • Requirement for a closer focus in future years on CO2 rather than air quality • To create and declare a bigger AQMA to raise profile • <u>Developing the new National Indicators for climate change will be a focus for taking a more proactive stance on reducing car travel and thereby improving air quality and Co2 emissions</u> 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Northern bypass could exaggerate problems of increasing car use and congestion</u> • <u>M1 widening combined with the A5-M1 link increases traffic volumes through the conurbation</u> • <u>Behavioural change programme is seen as fundamental in relieving AQMAs</u> • <u>Requires sustained and strong political leadership</u> • <u>Growth area and Northern Bypass</u> • <u>Improving AQ requires changes in disparate policy areas that aren't easily articulated or delivered</u> • Difficult to see a 'small scale solution' requires radical solution that will always be difficult to deliver on AQ grounds alone • Park and Ride for guided bus could increase traffic volumes through Dunstable • Closure of local services places greater emphasis on longer distance trips • Increased accessibility could come at a compromise for AQ

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Note: Items in bold and underlined text are considered the most important, in underlined text the next level of importance, and in plain text the next important. Text underlined in italics is a comment from the LSP.

Implications / proposed changes to policies

5.18 There are no proposed changes to policy.

Implications / proposed changes to target and indicators

5.19 There are no proposed changes to target and indicators.

Plans for mitigating risk or exploiting opportunities

5.20 It is clear that there are no quick or easy fixes to the AQMA's, and in both cases, they relate to strategic traffic on the trunk road network, over which the authorities have little direct control. The work associated with air quality therefore requires a broader base, and during the second half of LTP2 will seek to build upon the accessibility and congestion strategy work to identify more effective behavioural change campaigns. Whilst this will not in itself remove the AQMA's that are currently declared, it will contribute to overall levels of better air quality, and ensure future AQMA declarations are avoided.

6 ASSET MANAGEMENT

6.1 A key focus of the asset management strategy within the LTP2 was to:

'ensure fitness for purpose and extend the life of the highway and its related structures'

Objectives

6.2 Table 6-1 summarises the relevant strategic LTP2 objectives, and the progress that has been made to date.

Table 6-1: LTP2 Asset management strategic objectives

LTP2 Aim / Objectives	Progress
Improve the use of the existing transport network through effective management and maintenance	Development of the transport asset management plan (TAMP) is near completion. Indicators for road maintenance all showing strong signs of improvement.

Targets & Indicators

6.3 Table 6-2 summarises progress to date on each of the core and local indicators relevant to the asset management strategy, followed by a commentary on the key performance issues affecting each.

Table 6-2: LTP2 Asset management indicators

	Data Type	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Status
<i>BVPI223 Principal road condition (% in need of repair)</i> Luton only	Forecast						4%	4%	4%	
	Actual Scanner1 Scanner2		33%	6.3%	6.9%	4%				On track - Change of methodology, see para 6.4/5
<i>BVPI224a Classified road condition (% in need of repair)</i> Luton only	Forecast	-					4%	4%	4%	
	Actual Scanner		-	-	-	4%				On track - Change of methodology, see para 6.6
<i>BVPI224b Unclassified road condition (% in need of repair)</i> Luton only	Forecast	-	6.36				33%			
	Actual DVI		6.36							On track - Change of methodology, see para 6.7

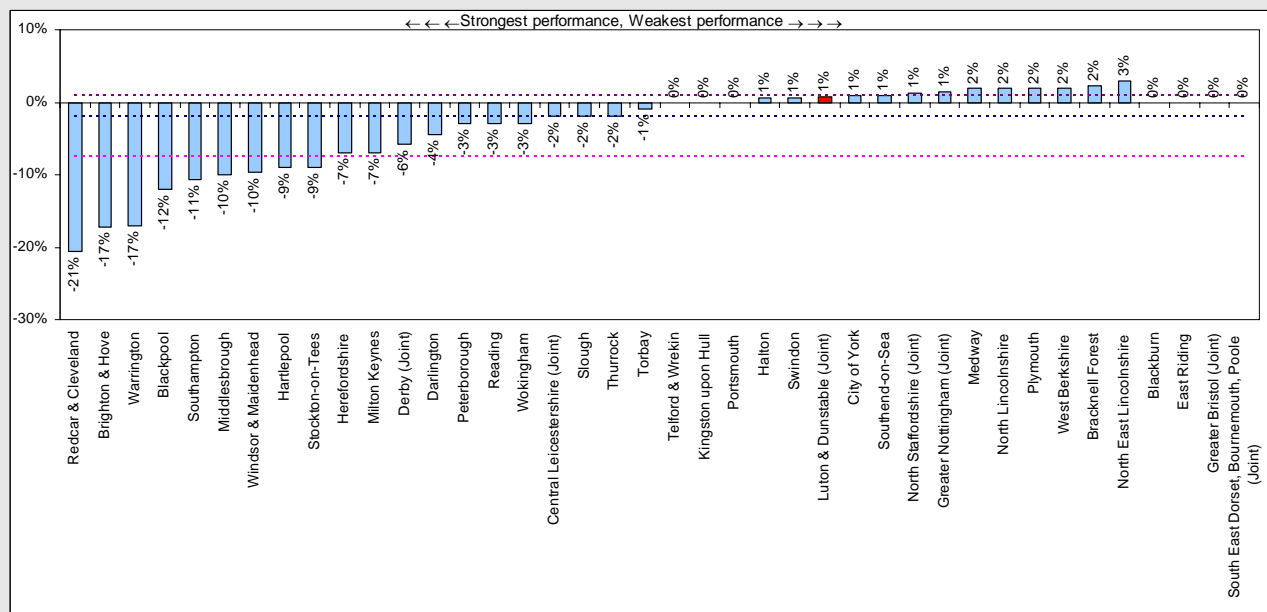
	Data Type	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Status
	CVI 1			-	47%	33%				
BVPI187 Footway condition (% in need of repair) Luton only	Forecast				47%	47%				
	Actual				47%	42%				On track - Change of methodology, see para 6.12

Condition of Principal roads

6.4 Since 2001 significant changes have been made concerning the recording methodology. During 2004/05 automated road condition surveys (called SCANNER) were a requirement for reporting on BVPI 96 (now 223). From 2005 to 2007 the reporting intervention levels developed by the DfT remained consistent and measurable year on year. Results obtained for 2005/06 were reported at 6.28% and results for 06/07 were reported 6.87%.

6.5 The reporting interventions and methodology for 07/08 have been amended by DfT and therefore figures derived for 06/07 are not directly comparable. The result of 4% obtained for 2007/08 will now be the benchmark for future years.

KPI Benchmarking: Change in % principal road length in need of repair 2005/6 to 2006/7



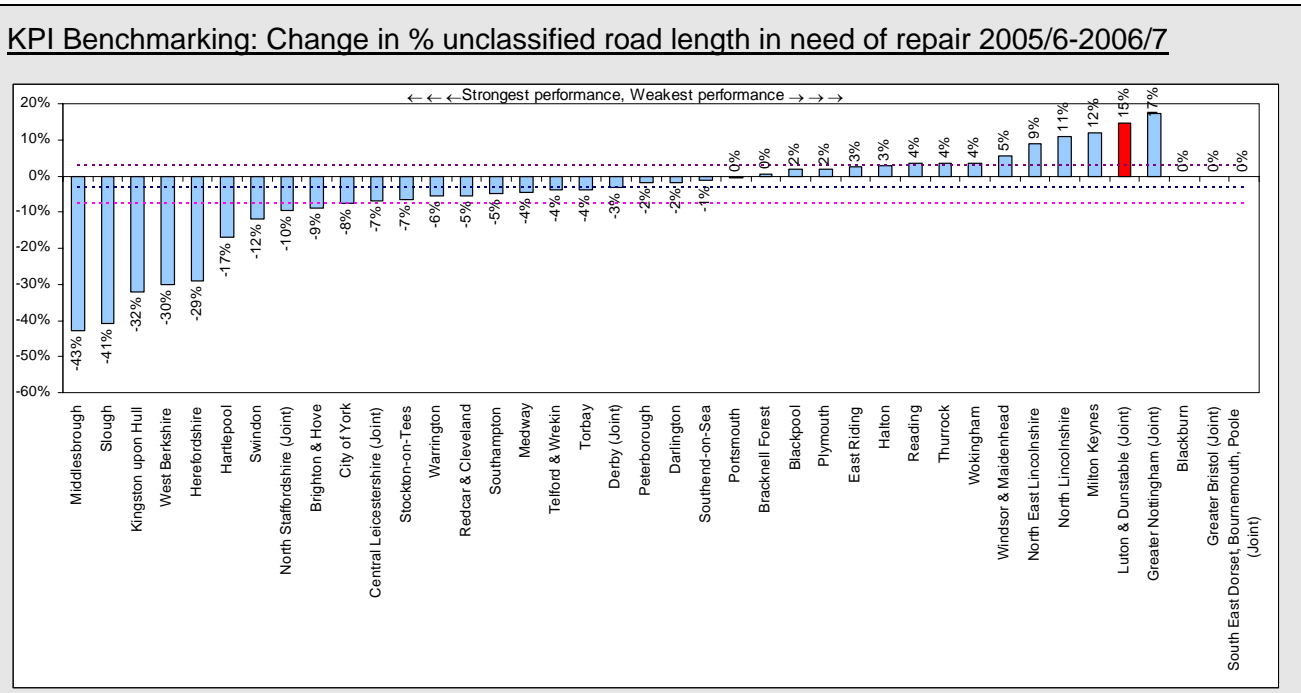
Commentary: Between 2006 and 2007, Luton’s performance in terms of principle road length in need of repair appears to be average, showing an increase of 1% in the length of road in need of repair. However this was based on small change from a low base (the indicator in 2005/6 was just 6.3%). Since then, the methodology has changed, and the figure has been reduced to 4%.

The best performing areas in terms of achieving a decrease in the % of principle roads in need of repair were Redcar and Cleveland and Brighton and Hove. Redcar and Cleveland have a historically good principal road maintenance record, with a good report on road condition from the Audit Commission in 2003. However this report did note that at the time the unclassified roads were suffering from lack of investment and ongoing maintenance. Brighton and Hove had one of the highest levels of expenditure per km of road between 2001/2 and 2005/6 at £42,000 as

identified in a comparison undertaken by CFIT¹ of metropolitan and non metropolitan areas_

Condition of Non – Principal roads

- 6.6 The assessment of the non–principal classified road network has been reported using SCANNER surveys. Again similar to the Principal network revised intervention levels have been introduced, and hence this current years results will form the benchmark for future years. Results obtained for 2007/8 are reported as 4%.
- 6.7 The assessment of the non-principal unclassified network were initially carried out based on Detailed Visual inspection (DVI) surveys which shows a steady improvement from 30.18% to 6.36% from 2002 to 2005. From 2005 to 2007 the assessment has been based on Coarse Visual inspection (CVI) surveys which, although the methodology gives a higher figure, demonstrates that a steady improvement continues. The results for 2006/07 indicated 47.4% of the network required attention, reducing to 33% in 2007/08.
- 6.8 The authority has been quick to respond to a sharp deterioration of the non-principal network that was caused by the prolonged wet weather experienced during 2002 and 2006. This severely affected the condition of the road network, and was most evident on previously overlaid roads carried out in the late eighties and early nineties. This resulted in the layers de-bonding and the surface stripping allowing water to penetrate the substrate. This, when combined with the effects of frost action, caused further damage and deterioration, evidenced by cracking and crazing.



Commentary: In terms of unclassified roads in need of repair, Luton was one of the worst performers (based on the change between 2006 and 2007), reporting an increase of 15% in road length in need of repair. However, since then, the figure has reduced from 47% in 2007 to 33% in

¹ CFIT, 2007. Moving forward, better transport for city regions. Available at <http://www.cfit.gov.uk/docs/2007/moving/>, cited 1st July 2008.

2008.

The best performers in this category, reporting a reduction in the length of unclassified roads in need of repair were Middlesbrough and Slough. Middlesbrough has a high level of expenditure (relative to the other authorities included in the comparison) of £29,000 per kilometre.²

6.9 Since 2006 Luton BC has reduced the amount of reactive maintenance through the implementation of the Highway Maintenance Service Plan, which sets out clearer guidelines and intervention criteria. As a result, the maintenance teams have been able to undertake more planned maintenance schemes.

6.10 The cost of planned works is significantly less, per unit area, than reactive works, enabling more work to be undertaken per £ spent. Table 6.3 below indicates the current trend.

Table 6-3: Maintenance Spend Comparisons

YEAR	REACTIVE (£)	PLANNED (£)	TOTAL (£)
2001/02	1,148,423	468,299	1,616,722
2002/03	1,258,464	735,025	1,993,489
2003/04	1,292,355	650,712	1,943,067
2004/05	840,515	1,003,892	1,844,407
2005/06	816,342	1,202,341	2,018,683
2006/07	802,650	1,285,290	2,087,940
2007/08	798,564	1,510,113	2,308,677
2008/09 proposed	700,000	1,700,000	2,400,000

6.11 During the current financial year a number of initiatives are being trialled to reduce the maintenance backlog on the unclassified network, and improve overall efficiency and cost effectiveness. They include:

- ❑ Area wide proactive carriageway patching programme
- ❑ Proprietary treatment programme for concrete carriageways.
- ❑ Micro- asphalt thin overlay programme
- ❑ Proprietary asphalt rejuvenating trial.

6.12 In this context BCC have also introduced a programme of 'thin-paving' of residential streets in Dunstable and Houghton Regis for 2008-09. This treatment is 75-80% cheaper than traditional resurfacing, and extends the life of the carriageway for 7-8 years. Under this programme expenditure of approximately £96,000 on 14 unclassified roads will be made in the area.

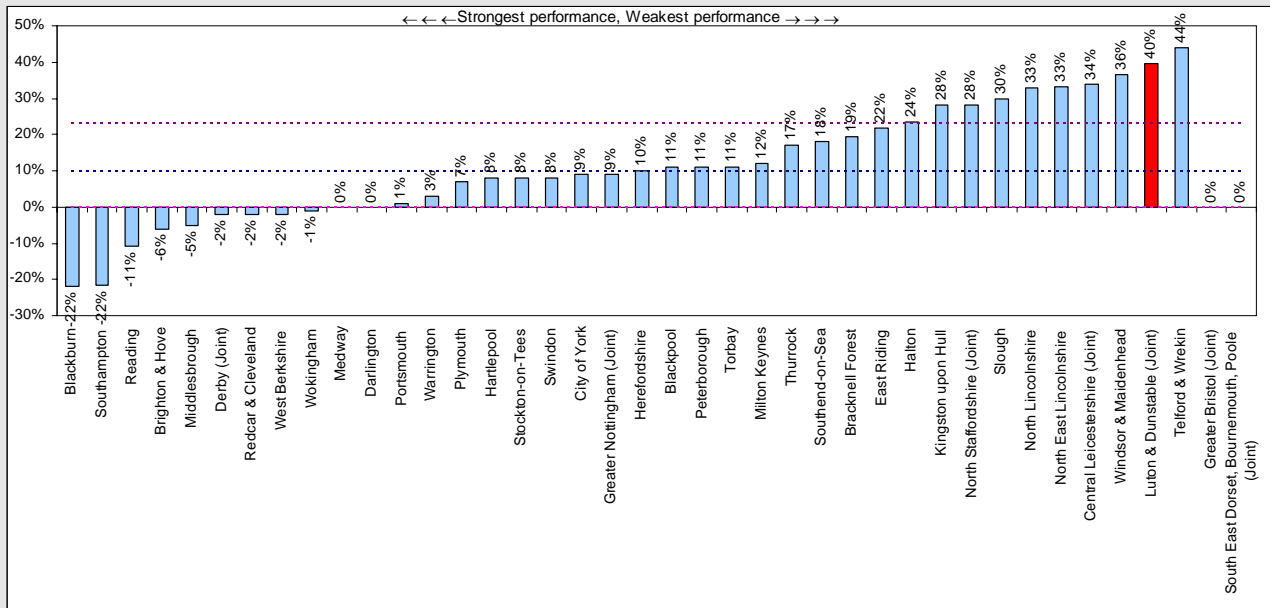
Condition of Footways

6.13 During the period the overall trend in condition is one of improvement. This reflects the continuing policy of replacing slabs with bituminous surfacing and an increased investment in footway maintenance. To reflect changes within the network, the current footway hierarchy has been reviewed, resulting in the creation of a new footway hierarchy. As a result the data

² *Ibid*

obtained for 2006/07 provides the baseline for future years. The results obtained for 2007/08 indicate an improvement from 47% to 42%. Whilst this only represents categories 1 and 2 of the footpath network, we are currently developing a local indicator based on a 'walked CVI' of the total footpath network - our current proposal will be to survey 50% of the network on an annual basis. The data obtained will assist in the preparation of a 5 year planned footpath reconstruction programme.

KPI Benchmarking: Percentage footway length in need of repair 2005/6 to 2006/7



Commentary: As with the previous benchmarking graph, Luton appeared as the second worst performer in terms of the percentage change in footway length in need of repair with an increase of 40% (between 2006 and 2007). However, this is largely based on changes to the methodology deployed between the years, and since 2007, the trend has been of improvement, reducing from 47% in 2007 to 42% in 2008.

The best performers in this category, both showing a decrease of 22% in the footway length in need of repair, were Blackburn and Southampton. Here the pattern identified in the previous two indicators continues, with Southampton having a high level of expenditure of £30,000 per kilometre of road³

Future Maintenance Aims and Objectives

6.14 The underlying purpose of highway maintenance is to extend the life of the asset, and to enhance the quality of the environment for users (especially for residents). The appearance of a street is a key concern to its residents - it matters what the street looks like. Its appearance affects the views of others about the desirability of being there. A well-designed and maintained street has a direct positive effect on economic activity and on feelings of

³ CFIT, 2007. Moving forward, better transport for city regions. Available at <http://www.cfit.gov.uk/docs/2007/moving/>, cited 1st July 2008.

safety and security. The highways maintenance strategy therefore serves people's aspirations for a better place to live and add to the economic well-being of the borough.

6.15 There are three key determinants that determine what, and where, maintenance is needed:

- What people want.
- The actual condition of the highway.
- The standards that should be achieved.

6.16 People frequently express their concerns about their street. The Council's Call Centre captures the comments directed at the Council. These comments provide an important source of information about preferences, but they rely on individuals taking the initiative to contact the Council. The Council has therefore established *area committees* with a special role to focus on the particular needs of their areas. These committees play an invaluable part in providing a focus for local preferences and choices to be articulated, and in giving timely advice on highway maintenance priorities.

Timing of Maintenance Decisions

6.17 In order to engage the public, and especially the area committees in the decisions about highway maintenance priorities, the process is planned to a regular and consistent annual timetable. People will be enabled to make a real contribution to the decisions and are able to positively influence the outcome. Further, the maintenance contractor will be better informed as to when works are to be undertaken and will arrange their resources accordingly.

6.18 Works programmes in future will make clear linkages between capital and revenue funding and the transport providers. This is achieved by integrating maintenance schemes with capital works such as traffic calming measures, cycle lanes etc wherever possible. This ensures that best value can be achieved from all expenditure by the council and hence that maximum benefits can be achieved.

Case Study: Deep Clean Initiative

6.19 In older parts of Luton, double parking has prevented effective street cleansing and Highway Maintenance. In 2003 Highway Maintenance undertook to deliver a project to close over 100 roads twice a year to facilitate a deep clean of the street.

6.20 Residents are requested to move their vehicles for the day to allow the Street Services division to undertake: a mechanical sweep of the road; the emptying of the road gullies; weeding and jet washing the footway; minor highway maintenance repairs; renewal of any lining in the road; and remove any graffiti in the street.

6.21 After-care leaflets were posted through doors detailing important council information including contact telephone numbers and education on waste disposal and fines for littering.

6.22 By carrying out a high profile initiative with co-ordinated works from different services of the Council, the local authority is demonstrating that it is willing to engage in looking after the environment in which local residents live.

6.23 The project is now in its fifth successful year with more streets being included annually. In line with our continued policy of proactive maintenance, every opportunity is made to ensure the required patching/repair works are undertaken to the highest standard during the closure period.

Street Lighting

6.24 Street Lighting has an important role in supporting sustainable transport objectives. Good street lighting:

- ❑ Enhances the night time scene.
- ❑ Reduces crime and the fear of crime.
- ❑ Promotes safe routes to and from schools.
- ❑ Allows visitors and residents to conduct their day to day business in safety.
- ❑ Encourages leisure activities such as walking, cycling and jogging.

Revenue Spend

6.25 The revenue budgets for the street lighting service funds all ongoing maintenance and energy costs. Maintenance activities are split into two streams, these being reactive maintenance and routine maintenance. Reactive maintenance is when faulty units are repaired as a result of a fault being identified by members of the public or those faults identified through Luton Borough Council's Night Scouts. Routine maintenance is when assets are maintained in a programmed fashion to keep them in optimum condition. Luton Borough Council's routine maintenance regime includes activities such as:

- ❑ Bulk Lamp Change
- ❑ Electrical Testing
- ❑ Structural Testing
- ❑ Bollard Cleaning
- ❑ Painting

Capital Investment

6.26 Capital budgets are used for column replacement schemes. As shown in the table below 26.6% of columns in Luton are beyond 30 years old and it would take a capital investment in excess of £6,500,000 to address this backlog.

Age range (years)	0 to 10	11 to 20	21 to 30	30+	Total
No of columns	5471	4569	1935	4857	18255
%	30%	25%	18.4%	26.6 %	100%

6.27 As well as the investment to address the backlog, a further investment of £1,000,000 will have to be achieved (year on year) through traditional local authority capital finance mechanisms to keep the lighting stock in a safe and effective operating condition. This would enable the existing column replacements programme to be transformed into a structured investment and improvement programme offering continuity of activity, economies of scale and clear performance targets. The pattern of spending over the last five years is shown in the table below.

Year	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Maintenance	£366,386	£346,640	£288,930	£335,500	£341,620	£448,680	£509,480
Energy	£282,440	£282,440	£282,440	£282,440	£282,440	£757,230	£699,420
Column Replacements	£500,000	£500,000	£500,000	£420,000	£378,000	£100,000	£200,000
Total Spending	£1,148,826	£1,129,080	£1,071,370	£1,037,940	£1,002,060	£1,305,910	£1,408,900

External Funding

6.28 During 2007/08, £2.5 million pounds were secured to upgrade lighting in the Marsh Farm area of the town. The money was secured through Go East via the Marsh Farm Community Development Trust. This will enable Luton Borough Council to install in excess of 1300 new lighting columns within this estate.

Barriers to delivery

6.29 The main barriers to deliver relate to funding availability. As demonstrated above, Luton have improved efficiency of delivery (for example through combined maintenance activities with the area studies programme), and continue to adopt a more proactive (rather than reactive) approach to maintaining the network. Efficiencies will continue to be gained as the TAMP is delivered during the second half of the LTP2 period and beyond.

6.30 Of potential concern is the increasing bitumen prices (linked to increasing oil prices), and efforts are being placed to mitigate this through continued innovation in the development of new techniques (for example see para 6.11).

Progress in developing & implementing the Transport Asset Management Plan

6.31 A draft Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) has been produced for LBC by Atkins and is due to be finalised and adopted during Autumn 2008. The TAMP serves to contribute to the four LTP2 shared priorities, and quality of life, health and education strategies.

Implications / proposed changes to policies

6.32 The adopted TAMP will form the basis for the on-going asset management strategy.

Implications / proposed changes to targets / indicators

6.33 Throughout the LTP2 period (and indeed the LTP1 period) there have been on-going changes to the methodology advised on the monitoring of carriageway condition. As a result it is has not been possible to accurately forecast future year targets as the change in values year on year has largely been attributed to methodology changes rather than actual physical changes to carriageway condition.

6.34 As set out in the paragraphs above, new benchmarks have been set for the following indicators:

Indicator	2007/08	2010/11	Commentary
Principal	4%	4%	Consistent Scanner methodology to applied for remainder of LTP2 period
Non Principal (classified)	4%	4%	Consistent Scanner methodology to applied for remainder of LTP2 period
Non principal (unclassified)	33%	To be agreed	New targets to be adopted once time series CVI data available for 3 years
Footway	42%	To be agreed	New targets to be adopted once time series CVI data available for 3 years

7 USE OF RESOURCES

Capital expenditure – has it been spent effectively & efficiently?

7.1 The LTP2 capital expenditure is closely monitored throughout the delivery period using proven financial management procedures. Each year the officers of LBC prepare a committee report clearly setting out the spend during the previous year, alongside budget figures for the future year for approval. These are directly aligned to LTP2 budgets, but also benefit from demonstrating the additional investment areas associated with LBC and other partner funding streams. As such they comprise a comprehensive and accountable review of the finances associated with scheme delivery. The committee report is also sent to the Government Office to keep them aware of progress. Similar procedures are in place in Bedfordshire for the reporting of spend within the Dunstable and Houghton Regis area, thus enabling the reporting for the conurbation.

Actual and planned expenditure

7.2 The following table summarises the actual and planned expenditure against each of the LTP2 thematic areas.

Thematic Area	Luton 2006/08 (£000)		DHR 2006/08 (£000)	
	Budget	Actual	Budget (from LTP2)	Actual
Safety	2,071	2,054	450	2,138
Accessibility	2,176	2,343	470	132
Air Quality	382	141	99	0
Congestion Management	615	748	133	154
Asset Management	1,915	1,873	n/a	1,241
TOTAL	7,159	7,159	1,152	3,665

Commentary

7.3 The above table demonstrates a strong adherence in Luton to the original LTP2 budgets. The main change has been a shift in expenditure from Air Quality towards the Congestion and Accessibility strategies. This is directly related to the inherent difficulties associated with identifying and delivering air quality action plans for the defined AQMA's within the conurbation (both of which are directly related to the impact of the motorway and trunk road network). The transfer of funding has therefore allowed greater levels of activity in relation to the behavioural change programme, which ultimately contribute indirectly towards improvements to air quality (although not targeted specifically at an AQMA), through a reduction in private car trips.

-
- 7.4 It should also be noted that there has been significant external funding by project partners, including money from the authorities themselves. For the two year period in relation to the Luton element of the programme, this has totalled £585,000 (excluding revenue spend on subsidised bus services).

Revisions to the LTP2 due to changes in funding

- 7.5 There are no immediate requirements to alter the LTP2 spending allocations. Chapters 2-6 have demonstrated that good progress is being made on the delivery of LTP2 targets, and these will continue to be closely monitored to ensure that the LTP2 spend is having the desired effects and outcomes to ensure the targets and objectives of the strategy are met. It is likely that air quality spend will continue to be diverted towards the congestion and accessibility measures during the second half of the LTP2 period, although this decision will be undertaken on an annual basis pending agreement being reached with DEFRA on a suitable air quality action plan for each of the AQMA's.

Practices to improve efficiency

- 7.6 LBC have implemented a number of different mechanisms to improve cost effectiveness and scheme efficiency. These include:
- Area studies programme – this effectively delivers measures addressing each of the shared priorities within a defined geographic area. As such the contracts can be centrally coordinated and planned, and consultation can be effectively delivered through a comprehensive local programme prior to full scheme design.
 - Annual Deep Clean Initiative – by undertaking a regular sweep clean of the highway, residents are able to plan the removal of their vehicles, thus demanding less time and effort on dealing with individual vehicles left parked on the street.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Across the five LTP2 themes (safety, improving accessibility, tackling congestion, better air quality, and asset management) performance against the Mandatory and Local LTP2 indicators is, in general terms, on track.
- 8.2 One target, relating to cycle use, has surpassed all expectations; the original target was to increase cycle use by 10% over the LTP2 period (2006/7- 2010/11), but the 2007/08 data shows a 37% increase). The interim report therefore recommends increasing the target for cycle use to a 45% increase by 2010/11.
- 8.3 The main areas where performance is not on track relate to the number of slight casualties, bus patronage, and the percentage of children not travelling to school by car. The main observations relating to why these indicators are not on track can be summarised as follows:

i) slight casualties

The increase in slight accidents is predominantly amongst car occupants in Dunstable and Houghton Regis, and vulnerable road users in Luton (pedestrians, cyclists and powered two wheelers). A high level review of the strongest performing authorities has shown that those that have achieved the greatest percentage reduction in slight casualties are often the lowest performing authorities in terms of the reduction they have achieved in All Killed and Seriously Injured casualties;

ii) bus patronage

It is clear that the local authorities with the greatest increases in bus patronage in recent years have achieved this by specifying improvement in the quality of buses and bus stops and in marketing/publicity, as well as improvements to the whole journey experience.

The main bus operators in Luton-Dunstable invested in new vehicles on some key routes about 2 years ago, and will continue to do so. The overall trend in bus patronage masks significant increases in bus usage in corridors where there has been such investment.

Whilst the Council has undertaken improvements to bus stops and in walking routes thereto as part of its area studies programme, progress in implementing such measures along specific corridors has been frustrated by the difficulties, until recently, of getting local operators to sign up to investment in RTPI systems. It is anticipated that the Council will start rolling out the provision of RTPI displays from early 2009, and a control room is in the process of being set up;

iii) travel to school by sustainable modes

Despite growing numbers of school travel plans, the number of pupils travelling to school by car has grown in recent years. Closer examination of the data for the conurbation suggests that this is particularly acute in Dunstable and Houghton Regis. Further work will be undertaken during the remainder of the LTP2 period to examine each of these (and others arising) in more detail, and reflect these findings within the school travel plan programme. This is particularly relevant for Luton Borough Council, for whom this is also a locally agreed LAA target.

8.4 In examining and challenging the barriers to delivery, the Councils have considered the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) associated with the existing processes for delivering transport schemes and initiatives in Luton Dunstable and Houghton Regis. The consistent message coming out of the SWOT analysis is that the continued innovation associated with delivering initiatives to achieve continued improvements in safety and to encourage travel by sustainable modes requires significant levels of revenue funding, and the ability for small authorities to recruit and retain staff with the necessary skill-sets.

Transportation strategy 2020

Accessibility strategy

Bus strategy

Road safety strategy 2005 - 2011

Speed management strategy 2005 - 2008

Employer travel plan strategy

Cycle strategy

Motorcycle strategy

Signing policy

School travel plan strategy 2005 - 2008

Bus information strategy

Asset management

Walking strategy

Co-ordinated street scene guide

Parking strategy

Freight strategy

Highway maintenance plan

Luton, Dunstable & Houghton Regis **local transport plan** 2006-2011

This document has been produced in 11 point Tahoma (a sans serif font for maximum legibility). Extracts of this document in large print are available on request.

For internet users a copy can be found on **www.luton.gov.uk**

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