

COMMITTEE: ENVIRONMENT & NON-EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS
SCRUTINY

DATE: 24TH JANUARY 2003

SUBJECT: DELIVERING BETTER TRANSPORT IN LUTON

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IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	COMMUNITY SAFETY	
EQUALITIES	ENVIRONMENT	✓
FINANCIAL	CONSULTATIONS	
STAFFING	OTHER	

WARDS AFFECTED: All

PURPOSE

1. To provide Members with a complete overview of the key transportation issues which the council is either directly responsible for or has an input to.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. Environment & Non-Executive Functions Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the contents of the report and use it as a basis for determining which areas of transportation should be considered in more detail at subsequent meetings of the Committee.

BACKGROUND

3. Most journeys cover relatively short distances: about 70% of all trips are less than five miles in length. These local trips are a necessary part of people's daily lives: travelling to work and school, visiting friends and family, and accessing shops and other facilities.
4. Compared with a generation ago, the average length of journeys has increased. And the balance between the modes of transport now used has also changed.

Whether by choice or necessity, national statistics show that over half of all trips under five miles are now made by car. And the total number of car journeys under five miles has increased by 15% over the past 15 years. At the same time, as ownership of cars has become more widespread and their use has increased, so levels of walking and cycling have been falling for many years and there has been a long-term decline in bus use.

5. The impact of these trends varies by region, area-type and social group. But in Luton and across the country, transport is consistently cited by people as one of the most important local issues of concern. The government's 10 Year Plan acknowledged that tackling traffic congestion is a priority for many people – particularly in urban areas. Reducing the impacts of traffic on local neighbourhoods, in terms of air pollution, noise, danger and disruption, is also a key concern. So is social inclusion. Better quality public transport services and better facilities for cyclists and pedestrians are needed.

REPORT

TRANSPORT STRATEGY

6. In recent years the government has provided increased funding for local authorities to tackle transport problems at the local level. Outside London, Local Transport Plans (LTPs) provide the framework through which these local improvements are funded and implemented, reflecting the need to develop local solutions to local problems.
7. The Transport Act 2000 placed LTPs on a statutory footing. Each local transport authority is now required by law to produce a comprehensive transport strategy for its area, incorporating a costed programme of improvements for the five years ahead.
8. The transport strategy for Luton Dunstable is set out in Chapter 4 of the Local Transport Plan published in July 2000. This includes schemes of all sizes, though with a strong emphasis on packages of smaller schemes, and covers all local transport modes.
9. In formulating the strategy account has been taken of both local and national transport objectives and targets, and the need to work in partnership to provide an integrated transport system that is attractive, reliable, makes best use of resources and supports the economy and environment of the area.
10. The components of the strategy are designed to contribute to the following:
 - better public transport – boosting patronage through better quality services and greater choice;
 - increased accessibility, especially for those who rely on public transport;
 - reduced traffic congestion particularly in town centres
 - reduced environmental impacts from local traffic;
 - roads maintained in optimum condition, with no backlog;
 - safer roads;

- improved facilities to encourage more cycling and walking; and
 - better co-ordination between services and better information.
 - reduced need for the movement of people and goods.
11. The implementation programme for the package of measures for Luton for the 5-year period 2001–2006, is set out in Chapter 5 of the Local Transport Plan.

FUNDING FOR LOCAL TRANSPORT PLANS

12. The first LTPs were submitted in July 2000 and in December 2000, on the basis of those plans, the government announced capital allocations for the five-year period from 2001/02 to 2005/06. The introduction of the LTP process was the precursor to a substantially increased package of public investment in local transport. In real terms, funding in the 10 years of the 10 Year Plan period equates to more than double the local transport capital provision for the 10 years immediately preceding the Plan.
13. The current Luton Dunstable LTP seeks support for a number of separate integrated transport projects including safety schemes, capital maintenance of roads and bridges and a small number of major projects across the conurbation. It includes 3 major schemes, Translink, East Luton Corridor Improvements and Luton Town Centre Improvements. Specific financial approval is required for such individual projects costing over £5 million. To date only the East Luton Corridor Improvements scheme has been approved 'in principle' for funding. The other two schemes have been designated 'work in progress'.
14. The vast majority of schemes in the LTP are smaller projects aimed at delivering local improvements to congestion, safety, environmental quality or accessibility. A substantial proportion of the LTP funding is also allocated for tackling the maintenance backlog for local roads and bridges.
15. Authorities are required to report annually on progress in delivering their LTPs. Annual Progress Reports (APRs) must report on progress made towards achieving local targets and objectives, and give details of schemes delivered in the preceding year. APRs covering 2000/01 and 2001/02 were submitted in July 2001 and July 2002 respectively. In 2002, for Luton-Dunstable, we were able to report that we were on track to meet three-quarters of those targets for which a clear assessment of progress could be made. However, no assessment was possible for the remainder, mainly because monitoring regimes were not yet in place or only baseline data had been established.
16. For 2003/04, government has targeted additional funding towards authorities whose APRs have demonstrated good progress – those who provided good evidence of delivery of schemes, achievement against targets, an effective spending programme and improvement on their previous years' performance. In respect of Luton Dunstable, progress and performance was judged below average compared with other authorities and no new money was added to previous indicative levels of funding (£3,950,000) save that an additional £360,000 was secured for improving airport surface access by more sustainable

transport modes. Additionally the indicative maintenance allocation (£867,000) was increased to £1,020,000.

17. Local authorities are expected to make the best use of resources available by sharing and learning from good practice. Centres of Excellence have been identified around the country under a government initiative whereby authorities can share the lessons of good performance with others. Luton officers have attended presentations on developing interchanges and guided busways in West Yorkshire, on joint working, partnerships and innovative delivery techniques in Hampshire, on modelling and monitoring of targets in Surrey and on safe routes to school, travel planning and TravelWise in Hertfordshire. In addition to attendance at specific formal seminars, officers meet and share experiences and good practice at regular meetings of Eastern Region cycling, bus and rail officers.

IMPROVING LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

18. Better, more reliable public transport options help reduce congestion and pollution. They also contribute to meeting wider aims of reducing social exclusion and promoting urban regeneration, both of which are particularly important in Luton.
19. A new Public Service Agreement target has been set in the government's Spending Review 2002 White Paper to 'secure improvements to the accessibility, punctuality and reliability of local public transport (bus and light rail), with an increase in use of more than 12% by 2010 compared with 2000 levels'. This brings together, and is consistent with, previously separate targets for bus and light rail. At the end of 2001/02, patronage on bus and light rail combined had increased by 1.1% compared to the previous year but this was mainly due to an increase in London. Outside the capital, over the same period, there has been a decrease in bus patronage.

Buses

20. Buses are, and will continue to be, the most important public transport option for most local journeys. The objective is to drive up standards to provide a better service for those who already use buses, and a more attractive alternative for those who currently drive for short journeys. Increasing overall patronage is a key aim. But we also need to ensure improved access to employment, services and leisure opportunities for those without ready access to other forms of transport.
21. Bus based public transport therefore forms the cornerstone to the Luton-Dunstable LTP, taking priority over all other sustainable modes. The majority of local bus services in Luton are provided commercially by two private companies; Arriva the Shires & Essex and Lutonian Buses, other services are provided by Dunn Line, Grant Palmer, Jetlink (part of the National Express Group), Red Rose, Sovereign Bus & Coach and Stagecoach East.
22. All local bus services must be registered with the Traffic Commissioner for the region. For services in Luton this is the Eastern Traffic Area, the office of which is in Cambridge. Standards for the operation of local bus services came into effect in April 2002, the most significant requirement of which is that 95% of

services shall operate within a six minute “window”, defined as one minute early and five minutes late, with regard to the registered timetable. The Traffic Commissioner has a quasi-judicial role and has the powers to impose penalties for operations not in accordance with registered details.

23. The Eastern Traffic Area employs a Bus Monitor to survey local bus services, when there are specific complaints. Arriva’s services were surveyed in March 2002 and found to be operating within the required standards.
24. Through a number of different mechanisms including the LTP, the government seeks to improve bus services. These are summarised below (see box).

Programmes supporting better bus services
<p>Capital funding through LTP: A significant part of the approximately £4 million per annum Local Transport Plan funding for the five-year period to 2005/06, is being used to deliver schemes aimed at improving bus services – bus lanes and other bus priority schemes in the most important bus corridors, better interchange facilities with other modes and development of proposals for the Translink guided busway (see box),.</p> <p>Bus Service Support: In 2001/02 the Borough Council spent approximately £430,000 (net) on tendered local bus services. This expenditure comprises expenditure on services provided by Luton Borough Council and contributions to Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire County Councils for some, but not all, services they provide which operate into Luton.</p> <p>The £345,000 (net) spent on contracts administered by the Borough Council includes 19 evening services, eleven operating during all or part of Sundays, two ordinary daytime services (to Park Town), six Access Bus services and one school-days only service mostly used by non-entitled children attending St. Joseph’s and Cardinal Newman Schools.</p> <p>Urban Bus Challenge: The government’s 10 Year Plan contains a commitment to introduce a programme of Urban Bus Challenge competitions. The aim for 2001/02 to 2003/04 is reducing social exclusion by improving transport provision for urban deprived areas. The Borough Council applied for Urban Bus Challenge funding for two services in 2001 and, having been unsuccessful that year, applied again in the second round of the competition in 2002. Funding (£223,000) was awarded in November for three years commencing in 2003/04 for one of the services - the “Stoplinter” town centre circular services linking principal bus stop locations with the bus and railway stations, designed to facilitate public transport interchange and help bus users with mobility difficulties access facilities across the town centre.</p> <p>Real-time information for passengers: £400k of LTP funding is being spent in Luton to trial RTPI on two routes between Luton and</p>

Dunstable and between Luton Centre and Lewsey Farm

Concessionary fares: The government's 10 Year Plan commitment to introduce guaranteed half-fares on local bus services and a free bus pass for all older and disabled people in England was implemented in June 2001. The Borough Council operates two concessionary fares schemes; one for people of state retirement age or with specific disabilities for travel on local bus services; the other for users of South Beds. Dial-A-Ride services. During 2002, a new style photocard permit was introduced and everyone entitled to a permit visited the Town Hall to verify their eligibility, have their photograph taken and obtain their new permit. There are approximately 15,000 photocard permits in circulation. Approximately 400 people have (old style) permits for use on South Beds. Dial-A-Ride services. In order to protect South Beds. Dial-A-Ride from excessive and possibly seasonal demand beyond their capacity, the Borough Council has resolved that a person obtaining a "South Beds. Dial-A-Ride" permit shall waive their entitlement to a permit for travel on ordinary local bus services. Reimbursement to operators and other expenditure on the two Schemes amounted to approximately £762,000 in 2001/02.

With effect from April 2003, men will become eligible for a concessionary fares scheme permit on their sixtieth birthday. This will equalise eligibility with women. There are an estimated 4,000 men aged between 60 and 65 years in Luton and arrangements are being made for approximately one third of them to obtain a permit during the first two weeks of April.

The Borough Council's Scheme for travel on local bus services is better than the Government's commitment in that the half-fare is capped at 40 pence for single journeys up to 14 route miles, the Scheme is valid outside the Borough boundary and at all times that buses operate.

Bus Service Operators' Grant: The Bus Service Operators' Grant (BSOG – formerly Fuel Duty Rebate) is paid to all operators of local bus services available to the general public, reimbursing 80% of the fuel duty on ultralow sulphur diesel (100% for new cleaner fuels), amounting to £304 million in England in 2001/02. This reduces operators' costs, making more services available and helping to keep fares lower. Earlier this year BSOG was extended to many Community Transport services, to support their contribution to improving accessibility. The government is currently working on extending BSOG to scheduled long-distance coach services, in return for the operators providing concessionary half-fares to older and disabled people. The amount of BSOG supporting local bus services in Luton is not known

25. The government has announced that it is undertaking a Review of Bus Subsidies in England. The review will focus on BSOG but will also consider other forms of support for buses, including tendered services, rural and urban schemes, and concessionary fares. It is understood this will not lead to any reduction in the

amount of support currently provided, but will help to ensure that it is used in the best way to deliver objectives for bus policy. A consultation paper on possible options was issued in August 2002. The review will consider the responses received as well as reports by the Commission for Integrated Transport and the Social Exclusion Unit and other relevant research.

The Translink Guided Busway

Guided bus systems are particularly appropriate solutions for intermediate size urban areas such as Luton Dunstable. They have many of the advantages of a light rail system (which are more appropriate for large urban areas), but can be installed more cheaply and easily. By reducing congestion, improving road layouts, and making better use of the road space, they can benefit all road users.

Guided busway systems already operating in Leeds and Bradford are proving successful in cutting journey times and attracting new custom from former car users. The systems in Leeds have generated a patronage increase of over 50%, including growth of 6% on the new East Leeds scheme. The scheme in Bradford, which opened in January 2002, has already increased bus patronage by 8%, and by over 10% for evening peak journeys.

The Translink guided busway scheme in its present form, has been under development since 1998. It has reached the stage where, subject to approval in principle for funding from central government, an Order under the Transport and Works Act providing the powers to build the scheme, can be published. Subject to satisfactory completion of these statutory procedures, construction could start in 2005.

26. In seeking to improve services for existing bus users and to attract new users, it has been recognised the importance of creating effective partnerships in which all the major stakeholders work more closely together. A local bus quality partnership is close to being signed based on established liaison with the main bus operator Arriva. The Council holds regular public transport liaison meetings, which bring together senior local representatives from the public transport industry and Luton Officers and Members.
27. The government is currently carrying out a programme of work to address problems that may hinder further potential growth and identify practical solutions, including:
 - understanding customer needs;
 - making buses run faster and more reliably;
 - new partnership approaches;
 - network (ie route and timetable) stability;
 - performance monitoring and publication of performance data;

- information, marketing and competitively priced integrated ticketing;
- social inclusion and innovative transport; and
- schools transport.

A Luton Borough Council officer represents the Association of Transport Co-ordination Officers on the Department for Transport's "Making Buses Run Faster" Task Group, one of a number of groups set up by John Spellar, in 2002, to bring together industry and local government representatives with the aim of finding ways to improve bus services.

28. In 2001/02 buses carried 3.8 billion passengers nationally. London saw an increase of 6% in bus patronage during the year. There were also significant increases elsewhere, such as in Brighton, York and Southend, although metropolitan areas outside London taken together recorded a 2% fall and non-metropolitan areas a 1% fall. Altogether the number of bus passengers rose by 1% in 2001/02 compared to the previous year. Steady growth has been seen in the previous two years after many decades of decline and stagnation. The overall number of bus kilometres run – one indicator of the level of service provided – remained broadly constant at 2.1 billion km.
29. In Luton, bus journeys into the town centre during the am peak fell by 10% between 2000/01 although the mode share fell by only 1.5%. The total number of journeys made throughout the borough appears to be increasing but this will only become clear once the figures for the 2001/02 have been assessed.
30. The 10 Year Plan included a commitment to review the former bus industry targets relating to reliability and fleet age, which expired in 2001. A new set of supporting targets and indicators has now been agreed with the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) to measure progress towards improvements in service quality. These cover reliability, age of fleet, vehicle accessibility, and passenger information:
 - On reliability, CPT members will work towards a target that requires them to run 99.5% of scheduled mileage, except where this is affected by factors beyond their control. In the period April to June 2002, operators ran 98.8% of scheduled mileage. This compared with 98.6% the previous year.
 - On fleet quality, the CPT has committed its members to achieve and maintain an average fleet age of eight years, during the 10 Year Plan period. The average age of the bus fleet fell to 8.4 years during the final quarter of 2001, and remained at 8.4 years in mid-2002
 - A new indicator will be introduced to track the proportion of the full-size bus fleet that is fully accessible for disabled people. The provisional aim is to ensure that 50% of vehicles are fully

accessible by 2010. Around 29% of the full-size bus fleet is currently fully accessible.

- A new target has been agreed with bus operators according to which they will seek to achieve year-on-year improvement in information at bus stops during the 10 Year Plan period. This will be measured through the new passenger satisfaction survey(see below). Bus stop information had a rating of 62 out of 100 in April to June 2002 compared with 60 in April to June 2001.
31. A new national survey was introduced in April 2000 to measure passenger satisfaction with bus services. Latest results covering April to June 2002 show an average satisfaction rate of 81 out of 100 across the country as a whole. For individual aspects of the service, ratings vary from 88 for on-bus safety and security to 62 for information at bus stops. Luton plans to run its own customer satisfaction surveys from 2003.
32. Criminal and anti-social behaviour acts as a barrier to travelling on buses and coaches. The Department for Transport is working with other government departments, local authorities, the police, the bus industry and unions to identify ways of reducing crime on buses and at bus stops, and to produce advice for operators and local authorities. The government has published Get on board: an agenda for improving security in bus travel, providing guidance and good practice case studies aimed at operators and local authorities with the aim of spreading best practice in bus service provision to tackle crime and the fear of crime, and a Safer Travel on Buses and Coaches panel, involving key players, has been established to take this work forward.
33. Generally, crime and vandalism is not a major problem in Luton. However, there have been occasional "high profile" incidents involving attacks on bus drivers and vandalism problems in the Lewsey / Houghton Regis area have caused Arriva to cease using the busway linking these places.

Light Rail

34. Light rail schemes can play a significant part in improving public transport in larger conurbations. They can move large flows of passengers quickly and reliably and, for particular routes, can make a major contribution to reducing traffic congestion and pollution, especially where the system takes over existing heavy rail services. Studies for Luton Dunstable indicate that Light Rail is not a cost effective solution and Guided Bus represents the best proposition for meeting mass transit needs.

Heavy Rail

35. Luton has three railway stations, Leagrave, Luton and Luton Airport Parkway. Each station has frequent rail services to/from Bedford and through London to Brighton. Luton and Luton Airport Parkway Stations have Midland Mainline services to/from St. Pancras and Leicester, Nottingham and/or Derby. Some Sheffield services call at Luton Station.

36. Despite a frequency of up to ten trains per hour, Thameslink services suffer significant overcrowding during peak and some off-peak hours. Midland Mainline have, recently, doubled the frequency of their services but still experience overcrowding at certain times. To overcome this, they will be introducing new longer train sets.
37. For Thameslink services, the Thameslink 2000 project will provide for longer trains (a maximum of twelve car train sets) with additional paths in the peak periods. However, implementation has been delayed to at least 2007 and there are current uncertainties about the whole project.
38. As well as being important for London commuting, Luton's rail services have the potential to contribute further to social inclusion and modal shift targets for access to London Luton Airport and to employment and leisure facilities in Luton generally.

TACKLING TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND ITS IMPACTS

39. Surveys show that traffic congestion remains an important local transport issue for most people. In Luton congestion is at its worst in the town centre, on the main radial routes to the town centre and in the East Luton Corridor. Tackling traffic congestion and reducing its impacts on the quality of life is a key objective of the Local Transport Plan.
40. Measures which contribute to reducing local traffic congestion and its impacts currently being implemented include the following:

Promoting Sustainable Travel

41. A guidance and advisory service helps schools put into place travel School Travel Plans (STP's) that offer practical and realistic alternatives to driving alone by car and help make the journey to and from school safer. A key element has been the appointment of a school travel plan co-ordinator, via a Government bursary, to give impetus to the take-up of school travel plans. This has ensured we have met our targets in producing STP's and assisted our Safety Around Schools programme.
42. Some Schools have also achieved a degree of modal shift following the implementation of STP measures, in particular walking initiatives such as the walking bus, and cycle initiatives. The current funding for this post expires in March 2004.
43. Some employers notably London Luton Airport, have achieved significant reductions in the number of staff arriving as car drivers through a range of travel plan measures, mostly a combination of car parking charges, subsidies for public transport and car sharing schemes.

Road Improvements

44. The Local Transport Plan contains two major local road improvement schemes - East Luton Corridor Improvements Scheme and Luton Town Centre Improvements Scheme. These are respectively designed to facilitate surface access to London Luton Airport and other development areas in the East Luton Corridor, to help reduce congestion and improve conditions for more sustainable modes, to improve the attractiveness of public transport by re-routing traffic away from the town centre, to promote urban regeneration, and to deliver other local benefits.

Traffic Management

45. Luton is undertaking a wide range of schemes to reduce the impacts of traffic by better management of the road space. These include:
- the reallocation of road space, for example through bus priority, cycle and pedestrian schemes;
 - parking controls and enforcement;
 - junction changes;
 - traffic calming measures; and
 - urban traffic control systems (see box below).

Urban traffic control systems
Urban traffic control systems can co-ordinate traffic signals across a network to reduce delay and the stop-start conditions that can generate pollution. Modern real-time systems that respond to traffic demand can reduce delays from 10–30%.
A scheme to reactivate and improve UTC systems in Luton is included in the LTP.
Once up and running the traffic control system can be linked with other functions, such as providing traffic information to drivers through variable message signing.

46. Over the five-year period of the first LTP, it is estimated that Luton will deliver over 55 traffic management schemes, including improved signalling controls, and up to 5 new or improved road junctions. Luton has traditionally supplemented funding made available by central government to do more of this type of work and these numbers depends on LBC funding being maintained over the full five-year period of the LTP.

Parking

47. Parking management is an integral part of the local strategy to tackle congestion; both by preventing the obstruction of traffic and by managing overall transport demand and mode choice through the availability and price of parking.

48. Luton is one of 60 local authorities outside London who have taken on decriminalised parking enforcement powers. Luton is able to retain the penalty charges, enabling them both to increase the level of enforcement – making it more effective – and to target that enforcement where it can best help to achieve local transport strategy objectives. Luton will also soon be able to enforce bus lanes, enhancing the ability to integrate enforcement with other transport policies and measures.

Streetworks

49. Utility companies inevitably need to dig up roads to maintain existing apparatus or to install new connections. However, such works can cause congestion and delays for road users, especially if they are not managed properly and are not co-ordinated effectively with other works.
50. A range of measures is being brought in to help reduce this disruption to a minimum. In April 2001, local authorities were given the power to fine utilities who fail to complete works by an agreed deadline. Powers are being tested in two authorities (Camden and Middlesbrough) which will allow utilities to be charged a 'lane rental' whenever they dig up the road, regardless of whether the works overrun. Both measures are designed to provide incentives for works to be completed as quickly as possible.
51. The management of streetworks and that of local authorities' own maintenance and improvement works, along with traffic and parking schemes, and their enforcement, and the way that accidents are dealt with, all combine to affect the efficiency with which local roads operate. If local authorities are to make the most of the investment already made in the existing road network, then it is important that all these elements are brought together; that someone in cities and large towns has clear and unambiguous responsibility for managing works on the roads and for dealing with incidents and problems on a day-to-day basis. In Luton we have a roadworks coordinator who fulfils this role.

Home Zones

52. Home Zones aim to improve the quality of life in residential streets by changing the balance in the way road space is shared between motor vehicles and other road users, with the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and the local community coming first. They focus on the introduction of pedestrian-friendly measures, to produce very low speeds, improved signing, traffic calming, public seating facilities and other street furniture.
53. The government launched a £30 million Home Zones Challenge Fund in July 2001. Results of the Challenge were announced in January 2002. Luton was successful in securing support for one of the sixty-one projects selected, the winning bid serving an area in Lewsey.

Park and Ride Schemes

54. The Local Transport Plan provides for the construction of two new park and ride schemes to help relieve traffic pressures in, and improve access to the town centre, at M1 Junction 10A and at Butterfield Green.
55. Other schemes that will contribute towards improved travel conditions within the urban area are located outside Luton. The authority will work with adjoining authorities in their development.

Road User Charging and Workplace Parking Levies

56. Since publication of the Local Transport Plan the Transport Act 2000 has been enacted, giving local authorities powers to set up road user charging or workplace parking levy schemes in their areas, if they wish. The Act requires that any local authority introducing a scheme must, for at least 10 years, use the net revenues from the scheme solely to take forward the policies in its local transport plan.
57. There are no proposals for a road user charging scheme in the LTP but it is suggested that a workplace parking levy will be considered in Luton town centre and in other areas of heavy traffic attraction once improvements in public transport i.e. Translink, are in place.
58. Whilst there is interest in exploring the development of charging schemes many authorities are delaying decisions on whether to proceed further until they can assess the outcome of the introduction of charging in central London. Taking into account the time necessary to develop a scheme, this suggests that schemes are unlikely to be implemented until towards the end of the government's 10-year Plan period.

Encouraging Cycling and Walking

59. Reversing the long-term decline in cycling and walking could not only help to reduce congestion, but also improve local environmental quality and promote healthier lifestyles. The 10 Year Plan includes a national target to treble the number of cycling trips between 2000 and 2010. It provides the funding to enable a substantial increase in the number of schemes to help achieve these objectives by making conditions easier and safer for cyclists and pedestrians. It makes clear that the government will be seeking clear evidence, through Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Reports, that authorities have developed and are implementing strategies to secure significant increases in cycling and walking.
60. Over the five-year period of the first LTP, it is estimated that approximately 8 km of new or improved cycle tracks and cycle lanes will be provided in Luton. Around 500 m of cycle tracks and lanes were provided in 2001/02.
61. Two major new initiatives have been launched in the last year, which are expected to help deliver increased levels of cycling (see box). Government has indicated that in the first part of 2003 it will consult on a new national strategy

aimed at improving conditions for pedestrians and encouraging people to think about walking more frequently.

New national cycling initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A new National Cycling Strategy Board for England has been set up to co-ordinate and monitor implementation of the National Cycling Strategy, supported by a network of regional advisors to promote good practice, and provide support to local authorities.• A dedicated £2 million Cycling Projects Fund was launched in March 2002. It will support projects that can achieve a significant increase in cycling locally or raise public awareness of the increase in cycling opportunities.

62. Latest available data from the National Travel Survey suggest that by 2001 the long-term decline in walking and cycling had not yet begun to be reversed. Local authorities are being encouraged to create the conditions needed to do this. We continue to consider what further steps can be taken to help increase the number of people walking and cycling in Luton and, using funding available under the recently concluded local public service agreement, we plan to appoint a cycling officer and to buy in cycle proficiency training for schoolchildren. In this way we will address both issues of encouraging cycling and making it a safer means of travel.

IMPROVING ROAD SAFETY

63. Luton already has a good road safety record, including the lowest number of killed and seriously injured casualties per head of population in Eastern England. The government has set targets to reduce overall road deaths and serious injuries by 40% by 2010 (compared to the annual average for the 1994–98 period), and within that to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries in children by 50%. Government also want to do more to reduce the higher incidence of road casualties in disadvantaged communities, particularly amongst children.
64. The strategy to achieve these targets is made up of a range of national and local initiatives involving a number of different agencies (see box below).

Road safety strategy
Nationally, actions taken since July 2000 have included: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a continuing programme of high profile national publicity campaigns aimed at reducing speed, drink-driving, fatigue and the use of mobile phones;• setting up safety camera partnerships with the police;• introducing moving image hazard perception testing into the

theory driving test;

- modernising the licensing and testing arrangements for motorcyclists;
- improvements to vehicle safety, such as the requirement for all new buses, coaches and large goods vehicles to have anti-lock brakes;
- promoting child road safety via publicity campaigns and web sites, which include school lesson plans for English, Maths, Geography and other subjects that feature key road safety messages; and
- launching a child pedestrian training scheme for six- and seven-year olds ,particularly in disadvantaged areas where accident rates are higher.

In Luton we estimate they will deliver some 125 local road safety measures over the five-year period of the first LTP, including traffic calming, safety measures for children and traffic management schemes. These will be augmented by a further 60* similar schemes funded by LBC over the same five-year period. More than 30 such measures were completed in 2001/02 of these 11 were funded by LBC

* This number depends on LBC funding being maintained over the full five-year period of the LTP.

There are added benefits of an area-wide approach to road safety, and new projects will be pursued on that basis where appropriate.

65. While there is still a long way to go in delivering the casualty reduction targets for 2010, we are making very good progress in Luton. The latest full year statistics available (2001) for Luton, Dunstable and Houghton Regis show that, overall, road deaths and serious injuries have already been cut by 28.7% from the 1994–98 baseline average, to 77 casualties. For child deaths and serious injuries during the same period, there has been a 55.6% cut to 12 casualties; the target for 2010 is a 50% reduction.

BETTER CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN SERVICES

66. People will tend to use public transport more if the inconvenience associated with changing between modes can be minimised. Working with local public transport providers, we are seeking to deliver easier journeys. Translink provides the best opportunity for achieving this but other measures such as through-ticketing, better co-ordination of services, improved physical connections, better travel information and improved waiting facilities all assist in this respect
67. The Luton Dunstable LTP includes provision for an improved interchange at Luton central station and through completion of Translink better connections will be provided with and between all the rail stations in the Borough. We are also

working to install dynamic information systems to improve the provision of information to passengers.

THE FUTURE

68. Along with other local authorities, Luton has faced a significant challenge in gearing up to deliver the larger capital spending programmes that we now have the opportunity and resources to pursue under the LTP system. The further increases in funding expected over the next three years will increase the challenge. But we expect to be able to meet that challenge and to show increasing evidence of progress towards local and national targets and objectives, and of schemes being delivered on the ground.
69. Looking further forward, the second LTP (setting out policies for 2006/07 to 2010/11) will need to be submitted by summer 2005. In preparing this, we will need to draw on Regional Transport Strategies (issued as part of Regional Planning Guidance), on the outcomes of the London to South Midlands multi-modal study, the Milton Keynes/South Midlands growth study and plans for the expansion of London Luton Airport, as well as the results of local consultation. We expect to pay more systematic attention to identifying and catering for the needs of local people, particularly those without use of a car, for better access to jobs and key services, and to reduce social exclusion.
70. We expect the measures being implemented to enable continued growth in bus patronage particularly in the Translink corridor. We do not expect to see increases everywhere however - the scope for growth is not uniform throughout the Borough. But we do expect to work with bus operators to realise the prospects for growth and to attract passengers, again mainly through completion of Translink, but also through measures such as bus priorities, park and ride schemes, better quality infrastructure, good information, attractive ticketing, customer care and improved punctuality.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

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| 71. | Luton Dunstable Local Transport Plan | July 2000 |
| 72. | Luton Dunstable Annual Progress Report 2001 | July 2001 |
| 73. | Luton Dunstable Annual Progress Report 2002 | July 2001 |