
AUTHOR	Joint Report of Strategic Director (Environment), Bedfordshire County Council and Director of Environment & Regeneration, Luton Borough Council
SUBJECT	Luton – Dunstable Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report 2002/03

PURPOSE	To inform Members of the broad principles of the Luton - Dunstable Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report and to provide an update on progress with the implementation of the Local Transport Plan.
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RECOMMENDATION	That the broad principles of the structure and content of the Luton - Dunstable Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report 2002/03, as detailed in this report, be commended to Bedfordshire County Council and Luton Borough Council for submission to Government on 31st July 2003.
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Local Highway Authorities in England are required, under the Transport Act 2000, to submit Annual Progress Reports (APRs) on the implementation of their Local Transport Plans (LTPs). The full Luton - Dunstable Local Transport Plan for the period 2001/02 - 2005/06 was prepared and submitted to central government in July 2000. In December 2000 GO-East responded with a decision letter giving details of the capital settlement released to Luton Borough Council and Bedfordshire County Council. The Authorities have subsequently produced two Annual Progress Reports, in August 2001 and July 2002, reporting on what has been done to implement the LTP while in December 2001 and 2002 the Government has issued further decision letters announcing the levels of funding for the following financial year. Both these decision letters also raised particular points which the Authorities were asked to address in subsequent APRs.
- 1.2 The third APR therefore:
- reports on progress during the 2002/03 financial year – i.e. in using the funds which the Government confirmed in its decision letter of December 2001;
 - addresses particular issues which the Government raised in its decision letter of December 2002.
- The APR is due to be submitted on 31st July 2003.

- 1.3 In the LTP the Authorities included three major schemes, which are defined as schemes costing more than £5 million each. Detailed submissions relating to Translink and the East Luton Corridor Improvements scheme were submitted to GO-East in previous LTP rounds. A decision is still awaited on Translink but the decision letter of December 2001 indicated the funding for the East Luton Corridor Improvements scheme had received “approval in principle” for funding. The third major scheme, now known as the Luton Town Centre Improvements Scheme and comprising works in connection with the redevelopment of Luton station, a new bus station, the completion of the Inner Ring Road Phase 2 and other bus priority and pedestrianisation measures to obtain environmental and integrated transport objectives in Luton town centre, was submitted in July 2002. The Government’s decision letter of December 2002 indicated that more information was needed before a decision could be made on either the Translink or the Town Centre Improvements schemes.

2. PURPOSE OF THE ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

- 2.1 The APR is primarily a report on progress towards achieving the policies and goals set out in the LTP and is not a policy statement in itself.
- 2.2 The Government expects the APR to report progress on implementing the LTP under three major headings: in achieving the LTP’s targets and objectives, in delivering the schemes proposed in the LTP on the ground, and in achieving spending LTP capital funds effectively. Achievement of objectives and targets refers particularly to the outcomes of the plan such as reducing traffic levels, accidents or pollution, or increasing the use of sustainable modes.
- 2.3 Inevitably the level of settlement received from central government affects the rate at which targets can be reached and raises issues as to the priorities for implementing the remainder of the LTP. The APR cannot bid for new funds simply because the settlement fell short of its bid. The Government’s position is that bids for supplementary funding will be very much the exception and must be justified by major changes in circumstances. These circumstances do not appear to apply to the conurbation area at present.

3. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

- 3.1 The broad structure of the APR is determined by the Government’s “Guidance on LTP Annual Progress Reports Third Edition” (draft version released January 2003) and by GO-East’s decision letter of December 2002. There are seven main elements:
- i) An executive summary.
 - ii) A brief overview of progress made in 2001/02 in working towards the objectives and targets set out in the LTP. This includes progress on six nationally set “core performance indicators” which were first announced in early 2002.
 - iii) A brief report on the delivery of LTP schemes on the ground.
 - iv) A brief report on the local authorities’ spending programmes in 2002/03 and proposed programme for 2003/04.
 - v) A completed pro-forma recording the actions taken in response to the particular points raised in the December 2002 settlement decision letter.

- vi) A brief report on the arrangements for consulting on the APR and of actions taken to share good practice and learn from other authorities.
- vii) A report on any barriers that are affecting the authorities' abilities to implement their LTP.

Elements (ii), (iii) and (iv) must record performance indicators, scheme delivery and expenditure on a standard pro-forma, accompanied by a verbal report accounting for any shortfalls or over-runs compared with prior expectations.

From the contents of the December 2002 decision letter and subsequent discussions with GO-East, it became apparent that the government expected that the Luton-Dunstable 2002/03 APR should address the following issues:

- Provide clear explanations and courses of action where targets are not on track for achievement.
- Make it clear how much has been delivered on the ground, making more use of maps and diagrams.
- Provide a well-structured and transparent presentation of financial information.
- Compile and submit modal strategies to the DfT.
- Report on consultation procedures for the APRs themselves, as well as for individual schemes.
- Provide more detail of what has been learned from or shared with other authorities and say more about Best Value Performance Plans and any future Best Value reviews.
- Keep the APR within 30 pages and provide more illustrations and maps.

Along with the APR, copies of the Luton Cycle, Parking, Bus and Walking Strategies (assuming that the latter two have been finally approved by the submission date) will be submitted with the APR.

- 3.2 In areas with two tiers of local government, such as the portion of South Bedfordshire within the conurbation, the district council is expected to be an active partner in the implementation of the LTP and in the development of the APR. South Bedfordshire District Council's comments on progress in delivering the LTP's strategy will feature in an appendix to this APR.
- 3.3 A fuller summary of the proposed structure for the APR is given in Appendix A.

4. PROGRESS ON IMPLEMENTING THE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

- 4.1 The initial stages of implementing the LTP were slower than hoped for because the development of, and in some cases consultation for, integrated transport schemes took longer than expected to complete. The following list shows the principal schemes that were completed during the year:
 - Improved pedestrian and cyclist access between Luton Airport Parkway station and Capability Green;
 - Signalisation of the Oakley Road/Dunstable Road roundabout and provision of bus lanes on Dunstable Road between Stoneygate Road and Oakley Road;
 - Completion of a missing section of bus lane on Dunstable Road between Moor Street and Francis Street;

- Completion of the Inner Ring Road Phase 1 between Old and New Bedford Roads, with associated traffic management works.
 - The Chequers roundabout local safety scheme.
- 4.2 Following an extended public consultation procedure, which resulted in the scheme being deferred pending the collection of safety data about similar schemes carried out by other authorities, it has not been possible to progress the bus lanes in the Bedford Road corridor. Consequently there was a lower than planned rate of expenditure on bus lane schemes.
- 4.3 Expenditure on maintenance, local safety schemes and on Safety Around Schools/ Safer Routes to Schools has however been close to the budgeted figure. Although the scheme to replace the footbridges over the Midland main railway line at Waller Avenue and Roman Road was delayed, work on site is now well advanced and the new bridges have been fabricated ready for lifting into position early in the next financial year.
- 4.4 The processing of the business case for Translink by Department for Transport (DfT) has taken much longer than expected. The rigorous examination of the business case for the project, carried out by the consultants appointed by the DfT, required Translink service plans to be revisited and further modelling work to be done. Discussions are taking place with DfT about outstanding issues to be resolved and these will be the subject of a separate oral report. Assuming a successful outcome, work in preparation for the Transport and Works Act application should resume with a view to making a formal submission in the autumn.

5. OFFICER AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Government guidance stresses the importance of public consultation in both setting and implementing the LTP strategy. Consultation has continued with stakeholders through the Local Transport Forum. A meeting of the Forum on 11th March 2002 dealt with the broad outline of the APR and, in particular, the progress towards the Authorities' targets for local transport. A further meeting on 22nd May will give Forum members the opportunity to comment on the APR's content in more detail
- 5.2 The Authorities will also conduct internal inter-discipline consultation regarding the APR's content.

6. MEMBERS' APPROVAL OF THE APR

- 6.1 Members will recall that, in previous years, JAC has commended the broad outline and content (as set out in this Report) to the Executives of Luton Borough Council and Bedfordshire County Council. Each Authority has then approved the final content of the APR in the most appropriate way. In view of the timescale, Members may feel it appropriate that approval of this year's APR should be dealt with on a similar basis.

APPENDICES:

- A Outline of Contents of the APR

APPENDIX A: OUTLINE OF CONTENTS OF THE 2003 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

Section 1 Executive Summary

Section 2 Progress towards targets and objectives
 Pro-forma A (progress on core performance indicators)
 Prof-forma B (progress on main indicators)
 Commentary on progress
 Statement on action on road safety and disadvantage

Section 2 will be a commentary on progress towards the performance indicators' targets. This commentary will supplement the standard pro-forma. Attention will be focused on the Department for Transport's six Core Performance Indicators and twenty Main Performance Indicators. These 26 indicators will form headings in the Section. (The remaining performance indicators will also be reported upon, but in an appendix).

Section 3 Finance form F4 (though this might not be physically placed here)
 Commentary on scheme delivery on the ground:
 Major schemes
 Other schemes
 Case studies (shorter than last year)
 Wider issues

Section 3 will be based upon Finance Form F4 and will describe the Authorities' progress in delivering schemes on the ground. It will therefore be structured under the headings in Form F4. Under each heading will be listed the LTP aims and the performance indicators which are most relevant to it. The idea is to meet past criticisms that the APRs' accounts of delivery were not sufficiently linked to targets. If there are any data which indicate how, for example, a scheme has reduced accidents or increased/reduced vehicle speeds, these will be reported.

Some schemes may be singled out for "Case Study" treatment (though more briefly than last year) with suitable illustrative material.

Section 4 LTP spending programme
 Table(s) on 2002/03 and 2003/04 spending programmes
 Finance forms F1 – F3

Section 4 is the spending programme. Again, this is structured under the headings in the finance forms F3 and F4. Here the idea is to compare the planned spend under each heading for 2002-03 with actual spending and then to show planned spending for 2003-04. It will be necessary to distinguish spending from the LTP Settlement and spending coming from other sources. There also needs to be a verbal explanation for any over-runs, transfers or shortfalls.

Section 5 Evidence of improvement
 Pointers to new strategies (bus, walking and parking) – appended

Section 6 Consultation and best practice

Section 7 Barriers to implementing LTPs

Appendices:

Luton Bus, Parking and Walking Strategies

Table of performance indicators not covered in Section 2, possibly with brief commentary