

**LUTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# **BEST VALUE REVIEW OF ENGINEERING AND TRANSPORTATION**

## **STAGE TWO (VISION) REPORT (DRAFT)**

### **Appendix G**

#### **Detailed Review of Selected Schemes**

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Main Report

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February 2005

Following consideration of the Stage 1 report of this Review by the Scrutiny Panel it was resolved that two specific schemes be reviewed to test the project related consultation, decision making and monitoring processes of the Service. The selected schemes, which are reviewed in this Appendix, are:-

- Town Centre Traffic Management Changes (Bridge Street and Manchester Street) otherwise known as Guildford Street Two way Traffic Scheme
- The Dallow Road (Lyndhurst Road to Ferndale Road) Traffic Calming Scheme

It is important to stress that both schemes have particular characteristics that make them unusual:-

- Scheme A was linked to the Development Framework for Luton Town Centre including a new look for St Georges Square, and forms part of a more comprehensive Town Centre Transport Scheme which includes completion of the Inner Ring Road to the north of the town, a new bus station, and improved pedestrian links into the town from the rail and bus stations. Funding rules required that the project be complete by the end of 2005-06, placing a crucial time constraint on the programme to remove traffic from Bridge Street and Manchester Street.
- Scheme B was also part of a much larger scheme comprising four separate traffic calming schemes receiving SRB funding.

### **GUILDFORD STREET EXPERIMENTAL TWO WAY TRAFFIC SCHEME**

The scheme is linked to the Development Framework for Luton Town Centre including a new look for St Georges Square, and forms part of a more comprehensive Town Centre Transport Scheme which includes completion of the Inner Ring Road to the north of the town, a new bus station, and improved pedestrian links into the town from the rail and bus stations.

Funding for the first scheme emerging from the Development Framework, the improvement of St Georges Square, had been secured but funding rules required that the project be complete by the end of 2005-06. This time restriction required the Guildford Street scheme to be brought forward ahead of the more comprehensive Town Centre Transport Scheme.

The need for the Guildford Street scheme is linked to the longer term objective to move through traffic off town centre roads and onto the Inner Ring Road, reducing congestion in the town centre and allowing businesses and car parks to be accessed more easily, and allowing Bridge Street to be reserved for buses taxis and cycles only.

**Q1 Although the Guildford Street scheme is linked to longer term objectives, what are the objectives and criteria against which the success of this specific scheme is to be measured.**

*A1 The Guildford Street two way trial is something that would have been delivered through the Town Centre Transport Scheme, however due to the timing of the St. Georges Square improvements it was felt that this scheme should be brought forward to assist in the delivery of this scheme. This phase 1 trial is only the first step in the delivery of the St. Georges square Scheme and a second phase is soon to be trialled this is specific to this scheme. The aim of the project was to facilitate the removal of through traffic around the Galaxy Centre and enable the early delivery of St. Georges Square Improvements. The longer term aim was to assist with the closure of Guildford Street as part of the Town Centre Transport Scheme. The criteria for success was to ensure that the new traffic system could still cope with traffic volumes and movements within the Town, this would be measured by traffic count and journey time data before and after the trial.*

The project was managed through a Project Team, which first met on 27 May 2004. The notes indicate that consultation was to take place on the Development Framework in July 2004 and that the principles of the Guildford Street Scheme would be consulted upon as part of that process. The outcome of the consultation was to be reported to Members on 7 September 2004.

**Q2 Information about the nature of early scheme consultation process and outcome is sketchy. The above timetable would have resulted in the results of consultation being reported after the scheme was implemented**

*A2 The development framework was never going to be a mechanism to consult on the Guildford Street trial, but would consult on the general principles of St. Georges Square Improvements and the Town Centre Transport Scheme. Consultation on the Guildford Street trial was limited to key stakeholders i.e. Galaxy, Arndale and bus operators. No public consultation was carried out.*

It was reinforced that the St Georges Square scheme had to be completed by 2006 as the 'first visible sign that Luton is changing'. It was inevitable that traffic movements will be affected and that 'general traffic will have to bear the brunt of the trials'. Buses may gain in the Town Centre but may suffer in the general traffic just outside the town. A feasibility audit was requested and an implementation programme in order to inform Members.

**Q3    The above comments suggest that traffic disruption was an accepted consequence of the scheme, at least in the short medium term. Were Members aware of this**

*A3    Initial work on the Guildford Street trial i.e. late 2003 (report by Pell Frishmann) showed that there may be some problems in traffic terms, however it was recognised that we would not truly know the impact unless we implemented the measures, members were aware of this, hence the scheme was taken forward as a trial.*

Informal notes of subsequent Project Meetings on 6 July and 14 July identify action points including the need to brief Members, including Shadow Portfolio holders. The project Plan shows a very tight timetable for completing the statutory processes for the orders.

**Q4    Are there formal notes of the other Project Team meetings?**

*A4    No further notes are available other than that contained in the file.*

**Q5    Were Quality Procedures used as a matter of routine in the project management process**

*A5    All statutory procedures were adhered to throughout the project i.e. TRO's etc and essential consultation was carried out. Delivery of the scheme was guided by the Project team meetings held on a weekly basis. Project Management resources were provided to ensure delivery of the scheme within a very challenging timescale, this required 100% time commitment for the duration of the scheme.*

**Q6    The meeting notes seem to suggest that there were some concerns from certain officers about the potential risks of failure of the scheme.**

*A6    It was recognised that the proposed changes would be difficult to deliver and that there was already a mechanism for delivery of these improvements through the main Town Centre Improvements Scheme, however the time restrictions associated with the funding of the St. Georges Square scheme made it necessary to advance these works and deliver as a trial so that if problems did occur then the trial could easily be removed before the main £12M scheme got underway. Yes, there were risks associated with the delivery of this scheme, however contingencies were put in place to mitigate these risks to some extent and the benefits if the scheme was successful warranted the scheme to be taken forward. One or two officers raised the concerns, not the whole officer group.*

A Member Briefing note was sent to all Councillors on 20 July 2004 indicating that work on the Development Framework had identified the need to remove all traffic from Bridge Street and Manchester Street in order to enable the improvement of St Georges Square. There was also greater urgency because of the need to spend the money by April 2006. The cost of the scheme at £40,000 was about half that previously reported. Informal discussions had been held with the majority of stakeholders and formal notification of the scheme would be carried out over the next two weeks

**Q7 Still not much detailed information reported about the views of Stakeholders and public**

*A7 No public consultation was carried out on the trial, and stakeholder views were such that they did not oppose the scheme therefore did not pose a threat to the implementation of the scheme. Residents and business immediately affected by changes were, however, kept informed of what was happening but observations were only sought in relation to maintaining access to property.*

**Q8 This appears to be the first time that non-executive members were briefed on a potentially controversial scheme. Was this sufficient?**

*A8 Shadow Portfolio-holders were kept informed of developments and progress on the scheme as well as the Leader and portfolio holders. It was therefore felt that this was sufficient member involvement within the challenging timescales for delivery.*

A Stage 2 safety audit of the scheme was undertaken on 8 July 2004 and a report prepared recommending a number of actions.

**Q9 The timetable for undertaking and reporting on the Safety Audit was extremely tight. What action was taken on the recommendations? Has a Stage 3 Audit following construction been done?**

*A9 The majority of the safety audit issues related to vehicle conflicts and as such these were addressed through signage and adjustments to traffic signal timings. No Stage 3 audit has been carried out, it is likely that the Stage 1 trial will be amended via implementation of Stage 2 and as such the combined schemes will have to be subject to future safety audits.*

Information about the scheme was issued to affected businesses and residents on 29 July 2004 advising that the scheme was to be implemented on 16 August 2004. Also sent to other stakeholders including Police, Fire, Rail operators and the Arndale Centre on 27 July, taxi and bus operators on 30 July. Press releases also issued to local press and radio. Replies received from the Principal Librarian and the Blood Donor Centre.

**Q10 Bearing in mind that this will have been the first time that some people will have heard anything about the scheme and its implications is 2 weeks notice long enough ?**

*A10 The 2 week period was sufficient time to resolve any specific issues that local businesses had with the trial, it should be noted that this was not a consultation exercise at this stage it was notification of the traffic trial. The major stakeholders/ businesses had already been consulted earlier and were familiar with the proposals.*

The programme was influenced by the timing of Transco works resulting in the temporary closure of Guildford Street between Bridge Street and Mill Street. The proposed road changes were undertaken during the Transco closure to minimise disruption. It was also decided to start the scheme in August to tie in with lowest traffic levels.

**Q11 Were the Transco works emergency or could they have been delayed?**

*A11 The Transco works were essential, detailed discussions were carried out to consider timing issues and it was concluded that both sets of work could be carried out simultaneously which would greatly reduce disruption to the general public.*

The information letter indicated that during the trial traffic movements will be closely monitored to determine whether the scheme is to be made permanent or removed.

**Q12 Any information on timetable for monitoring or results. See earlier comments about criteria for success?**

*A12 Journey time and traffic count data is currently being reviewed and information will be available shortly.*

**Q13 Records of expenditure on the scheme suggest that although total construction costs incurred by Crowley were about £45,000, consistent with the figure in Members briefing note, the total costs associated with the scheme are probably about twice this.**

*A13 Correct.*

**Q14 Providing initial responses to the complaints made following the introduction of the scheme was done well. A petition was advised that it would be reported to the Area Committee. Has the Area Committee discussed the scheme?**

*A14 I understand that a report is being taken to the Executive committee on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2005 referred from Area Committee.*

### **CONCLUSIONS ON GUILDFORD STREET SCHEME**

It is important to re-emphasise that this scheme is unusual in that it was linked to the Development Framework for Luton Town Centre including a new look for St Georges Square, and forms part of a more comprehensive Town Centre Transport Scheme which includes completion of the Inner Ring Road to the north of the town, a new bus station, and improved pedestrian links into the town from the rail and bus stations. Funding rules required that the project be complete by the end of 2005-06, placing a crucial time constraint on the programme. In these circumstances the scheme is not typical of projects more usually undertaken by the Council.

- Minutes of the first meeting of the Project Team indicate that consultation was to take place on the Development Framework in July 2004 and that the principles of the Guildford Street Scheme would be consulted upon as part of that process. The minutes suggest that traffic disruption was an accepted consequence of the scheme, at least in the short medium term.
- Subsequent Project Meetings taking place on 6 July and 14 July have only informal handwritten notes. This is not consistent best practice
- In the event, consultation on the Guildford Street trial was limited to key stakeholders. There would normally be a more extensive list
- No wider public consultation was carried out. This is not consistent with recommended practice
- A Members briefing note was issued to all Councillors on 20 July 2004 providing a comprehensive report on the scheme and stressing the urgency for its completion. This appears to be the first time that non-executive members were briefed on a potentially controversial scheme. This could be considered short notice
- Information about the scheme was issued to affected businesses, residents, and other stakeholders at the end of July advising that the scheme was to be implemented on 16 August 2004. Press releases also issued to local press and radio.
- Changes in journey time and traffic count data is currently being reviewed and information will be available shortly. This would normally be reported more quickly
- Records of expenditure on the scheme suggest the total costs associated with the scheme are probably about twice the £45,000 estimate reported to Members. This would normally be reported to Members
- Providing initial responses to the complaints made following the introduction of the scheme was done well.

- A petition was advised that it would be reported to the Area Committee. A report is being taken to the Executive committee on the 14 February 2005. This is consistent with recommended practice but a little late

## **DALLOW ROAD (LYNDHURST ROAD TO FERNDALE ROAD) TRAFFIC CALMING**

### **Background**

The Dallow Road scheme contains two separate elements, the Wimborne Road area and the Portland Road area. These two sections together with a further two elements, the Dunstable Road area and the Lewsey Farm comprised the SRB6 Traffic Calming Project.

A Stage 2 project appraisal was prepared and submitted in August 2002 jointly with the East of England Development Agency. Stage 2 of the project is the implementation of improvements agreed with the local community under Stage 1, the public consultation stage. This had been completed in January 2002 with assistance from Bettridge Turner and Partners.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The aims of the SRB project, as set out in the Stage 2 submission were to achieve:-

- improved infrastructure and environment
- improved community safety through accident reduction
- improved community safety through reducing crime and the fear of crime
- improved quality and availability of on street parking through the better management enforcement and design. this will promote growth in local businesses

The specific objectives of the Wimborne Road and Portland Road schemes were to provide traffic calming works to control vehicle speed and behaviour, to provide new parking areas in well designed settings, to improve the accessibility of public transport, and to create one way streets to the benefit of traffic flows and the safety of local people

### **Stage 1 Consultation**

Requests and petitions seeking action had been regularly received, the earliest dating back to 1993

Records of the public consultation process indicate that this was a thorough and comprehensive exercise.



- In the case of Portland Road information about the proposals were sent to 603 properties and replies received from 213 (35%). In the case of Wimborne Road information was sent to 223 properties and responses received from 67 (30%)
- Of those responding to the Portland Road scheme 152 (71%) were happy with the overall proposals, with 10 (5%) unhappy. 135 (63%) were happy with changes to their road and 24 (11%) were unhappy. Of those responding to the Wimborne Road scheme 64 (96%) were happy with the overall scheme and 2 (3%) were unhappy. 60 (90%) were happy with changes to their road and 6 (9%) were unhappy.

**Q1 The questions very specific about reopening to through traffic, one way and road humps and the information circulated did not explore the implications in detail. Were the residents clear about the implications of the scheme**

*A1 The residents were clear and very supportive of the scheme at the exhibition. They understood the need for the combination of one way streets to improve parking and traffic calming to keep speeds down*

**Q2 Only 30-35% of residents responded and there was the potential for the large 'silent majority' to turn against the scheme at some stage. Was this considered and did it happen?**

*A2 The percentage of 30-35% was quite high for this type of scheme and it would have been difficult to increase this. The usual expectation is about 25%*

### **Preferred Scheme**

The Stage 2 report described four options for Portland Road and for Wimborne Road. The preferred option in each case was as advertised in the consultation leaflet and agreed by the Steering Group. Cost estimated as £127,000 for Portland Road and £50,000 for Wimborne Road, making a total cost for both schemes of £177,000. The Stage 2 costs were shown as £150,000 for the Dallow Road project (comprising both Wimborne and Portland Road)

The cost of the schemes estimated by Bettridge Turner and Partners in their report of the Stage 1 consultation were £91,700 for Wimborne Road and £235,600 for Portland Road, a total of £327,300

At that time the intention set out in the Stage 2 submission was to complete all expenditure on all four areas by November 2002

**Q3 There seems to be a wide difference between the estimate prepared by Bettridge Turner and partners and the Stage 2 submission figure**

*A3 The Bettridge Turner estimate included a third scheme of the SRB package*

## **Steering Group**

The schemes were to be overseen by Community Steering Groups including representation from local councillors, local businesses, community groups, police and transport operators. Details of the preferred constitution of the Portland and Wimborne Road Groups are contained in the Stage 2 report.

In the event, the Steering Groups for Wimborne Road and Portland Road were combined and first meeting of the Portland Road and Wimborne Road Steering Group took place on 8 October 2001. Local Councillors were invited (letter 21 September) but in the event none attended. However three local residents attended

The second Steering Group meeting took place on 24 October. but again no Councillors attended despite phone calls on 10 October

A public meeting and exhibition was held on 6 November. Apparently this was poorly attended but there is no record of attendance. The next Steering Group meeting on 26 November (one Councillor attending) expressed concerns about this and discussed proposals to improve public response

The Steering Group meeting on 18 December 2001(one resident no councillors). agreed consultation arrangements for January 2002. The meeting 30 January 2002( 1 resident I councillor) received a petition from Warwick Road residents. It was still intended at that stage to complete the works during 2002-3

No future meetings of the Steering Group were planned and unclear and there is no record of subsequent reports to Members

**Q4 The attendance at the Steering Group was universally poor particularly from Councillors and Residents, which undermines its credibility for managing the scheme?**

*A4 Attendance was poor although the portfolio holder did attend and took a close interest in the scheme*

## **Detailed Design**

Delay in progressing the schemes over a year. Resources problem only recommenced in April 2004 when JP became Traffic Engineering Manager

Not part of capital programme and precedence was given to LTP schemes and LBC money.

**Q5 With such a long delay of about 18 months there would probably have been a number of changes in residents. Was a re-consultation considered, particularly in the light of the large 'silent majority' and the weakness of the Steering Group**

*A3 The 18 month delay was too long. Priority was given to LTP schemes and LBC funded schemes and the Dallow Road scheme slipped by default. No further consultation took place but information leaflets were distributed advising people when scheme was ready to start*

Tenders sought for consultancy support on 8 August 2003 for return by 29 August 2003. Glanville Consultants were appointed 27 April 2004, advised on 12 September 2003, request to legal 17 March 2004. Tender was £39,330.

Sent general plan layouts to Police, ambulance operators etc on 3 October 2003  
Objections Feb 2004?

A series of regular progress meetings commenced on 26 November 2003. This identified a Temporary road closures window from 8 Feb to 28 May. Leaflets were to be issued to residents 1 month and 1 week prior to commencement  
Stage 1 Safety audit complete Stage 2 being processed. Police reservations about Wimborne Road proposals

The meeting of 9 January 2004 noted that the Stage 2 safety audit was 3 weeks late and causing delay to finalising the design. Police still concerned about Wimborne Road. The meeting of 27 January noted that an objection to Wimborne road may require redesign and one for Portland that may not need redesign. Stage 2 safety audits received and design being updated. Police confirm no objection.

On 9 February it was agreed that the Portland Road scheme needed to be amended and Medina Road was to remain 2-way. A letter was to be sent to residents explaining the change. Wimborne road also required modification involving second closure at Clifton/ Dallow Road junction. Apparently there was considered to be no need to re-advertise the order for this.

**Q6 Why was it not considered necessary to re-advertise the second closure in a different place**

*A6 This was not a permanent closure. It was a temporary arrangement just for football match days which was done by the Police under their own powers*

By the meeting of 3 March. Safety audit stage 2 complete and exception reports tabled. Changes to the schemes following audits caused problems – residents happy with original scheme not happy with the modifications.

**Q7 The situation was complicated by the late changes to the proposals. Were these due to deficiencies in the design process or did they result from changed circumstances that could not have been foreseen**

*A7 The problems identified by the safety audit were very minor and it was marginal whether any changes were necessary. In the event changes were made. There were no real problems with the original design.*

Notices posted for orders 7 January (but supercedes the one on 5 January) for the one way and 20 mph zone. Separate notification for the road humps and temporary closures.

**Q8 Publishing the orders at different times and in different formats would have been confusing for residents. Could they have been standardised and co-ordinated better**

*A8 Yes, there was a bit of a mix up with the orders and notices. This was a new aspect to our work and we were on a steep learning curve but hopefully we've learnt from this*

Orders made 19 January 2004. Three petitions were received from Medina Road, Beresford Road and Portland Road leading to modifications. The petitions were reported to the Area Committee and Medina Road petition was subsequently withdrawn. The Beresford Road and Portland Road situation is to be reviewed in six months (June 2005)

**Q9 Would it have been useful to keep the Steering Group going to consider the changes in design to keep the local community 'on board'**

*A9 Bearing in mind the attendance at earlier meetings this is questionable*

## **Construction**

A letter was sent to Councillors advising that construction was to start in February 2004 (for Lewsey Farm) and the 7 day leaflets were delivered on 5 and 6 February 2004. The Portland Road and Wimborne Road schemes were scheduled for commencement on 8 March 2004

The progress meeting of 6 April 2004 recorded the extent of completion for Portland Road as road humps 100%, signs 30%, repairs 0% and for Wimborne Road humps 100%, roads signs 100%, repairs 0 %

By 19 May 2004 the extent of completion for Portland Road and Wimborne Road was road humps 100%, sign posts 100%, but signs and markings dependent on legal confirmation of orders, repairs 100%. Delays with electrical connections

Information to residents advising that works are complete and that the one-way system to be operational from 19 June 2004 (Portland Road) and 28 June 2004 (Wimborne Road)

**Q10 There was quite a delay between completion of the works and implementation of the orders. Was this just to do with getting electrical connections completed.**

*A10 Some of the electrical connections may have been through the local electricity network company (EDF). An Order is issued to EDF for this connection, however, we have little control in when they carry out this work. With regard to the delay with the lining & signing, this may have been due to the fact that the scheme was transferred to another engineer at the start of construction and he may have not been total familiar with procuring these orders, as he had only recently start with LBC.*

It was agreed in January 2005 to review the scheme after 6 months. The actual cost of schemes exceeded the estimate by about £120,000

### **CONCLUSIONS ON DALLOW ROAD SCHEME**

It is important to re-emphasise that the scheme was part of a much larger scheme comprising four separate traffic calming schemes funded not through the Local Transport Plan allocation or Luton Borough resources but through Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funds

- The public consultation process which took place in January 2002 indicate that this was a thorough and comprehensive exercise. But about two thirds of residents did not respond. With such a significant traffic scheme it would have been preferable to base conclusions on at least a majority of residents to obtain a higher participation.
- The schemes were to be overseen by Community Steering Groups including representation from local councillors, local businesses, community groups, police and transport operators. This is consistent with good practice.
- The first Steering Group for the Dallow Area Schemes took place on 8 October 2001. Local Councillors were invited but none attended. However three local residents attended. The second Steering Group

meeting took place on 24 October, but again no Councillors attended despite reminder phone calls. This lack of member and resident involvement is unfortunate

- Attendance continued to be poor at all subsequent Steering Groups with at most one Councillor and one resident attending. A public meeting and exhibition was held on 6 November. Apparently this was poorly attended but there is no record of attendance. Such 'apathy' often translates easily into objections when schemes start.
- The final Steering Group meeting took place on 30 January 2002. No future meetings of the Steering Group were planned and there is no record of subsequent reports to Members.
- There was a long delay in progressing the schemes due primarily to shortage of resources. Precedence was given to LTP schemes and LBC money rather than the SRB funding. Such a long delay causes uncertainty with residents, and excludes new incomers from the consultation process
- Consultants were not appointed to carry out design of the schemes until September 2003
- The first of regular progress meetings commenced on 26 November 2003. Agreed leaflets were to be issued to residents 1 month and 1 week prior to commencement of works
- The meeting of 9 February concluded that a number of changes to both schemes were necessary as a result of safety audits and comments from Police and residents. Changes to the schemes following audits caused problems – residents happy with original scheme were not happy with the modifications. It would have been good practice to retain the original Steering Group throughout the process.
- Notices posted for various orders for including one-way system, road humps in different formats with different response dates. This is not good practice
- It was agreed last month to review the scheme after 6 months. This is good practice
- Actual cost of schemes exceeded estimate by about £120,000. This should have been reported to Members but appears not to have been.