

2 Schemes delivered

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1** We had another busy and productive year in 2003/04. We are particularly pleased to report that the volume of maintenance schemes delivered again exceeded that planned to be delivered by Local Transport Plan resources alone. This reflects the importance we attach to halting the deterioration of our roads and required us to add a significant amount of our own resources to supplement our Local Transport Plan funding.
- 2.1.2** With regard to integrated transport delivery, we continued to make progress with walking and cycling schemes and delivered a number of bus stop improvements and, most significantly, a bus priority scheme in Bedford.

2.1.3 As a result of our excellent progress over recent years we have been consolidating our position with regard to delivering road safety improvements. In addition delays resulting from consultation meant we reduced the amount of safety related schemes delivered on the ground. It was, however, a very successful year in terms of delivering school and workplace travel plans.

2.1.4 Table 1 summarises schemes delivered in 2003/04. It compares what we planned to do with what we actually delivered and concludes with a brief summary in the final column showing where there was a significant divergence between planned and actual delivery. More detail on what we delivered is in the commentary following Table 1 as well as in the Finance Forms at Annex C.



Table 1 - Planned and actual schemes delivered in 2003/04¹

Scheme Type	Planned	Delivered	+/- Divergence (%)
Bus priority schemes	2	1	-50 (see 2.3.1)
New public transport interchanges	0	0	0
Improved public transport interchanges	0	0	0
Park and ride schemes	1	0	-100 (see 2.3.20)
New or improved bus stops	28	6	-78 (see 2.3.23)
Other bus infrastructure schemes	0	0	0
New cycle tracks	6	6	0
New cycle paths	0	0	0
Other cycling schemes (for example parking)	13	6	-54 (see 2.3.32)
Pedestrianisation schemes	1	0	-100 (see 2.3.36)
Other walking schemes (footways, rights of way)	16	13	-19
School travel plans	20	25	+25
Other travel plans (workplace)	12	13	+8
Safe routes to school	10	11	+10
Other local safety schemes	4	1	-75 (see 2.3.45)
New or improved road crossings	9	6	-33 (see 2.3.52)
Home Zones	0	0	0
Quiet Lanes	0	0	0
20 mph zones	0	0	0
Other traffic management schemes	8	8	0
New rural bypass	0	0	0
New relief road or ring road	0	0	0
Road dualling and widening schemes	0	0	0
Junction improvements	1	1	0
Bridge strengthening	2	2	0
Carriageway maintenance schemes	64	80	+20
Other maintenance schemes (footways)	0	9	+100 (see 2.4.2)
Other schemes (Decriminalised parking)	1	1	0
TOTAL	198	189	-5

¹This table reflects the programme for 2003/04 only and is a standard format for all authorities. There are no planned and/or delivered schemes for several scheme areas but subsequent years may include planned delivery for these scheme areas.

2.2 Major Schemes



Arlesey Bridge

2.2.1 Arlesey Bridge was opened fully to traffic three months ahead of schedule in July 2003, with substantial completion in October. The outstanding works included landscaping work to areas surrounding the new bridge and providing ramped access to the western (northbound) platform at Arlesey station.

2.2.2 The project won the Institute of Civil Engineers, Chilterns region 'Merit Award 2003' for excellence in design, implementation, innovation and fitness for purpose. The main reasons for winning the award were that

- the project had integrated transport needs as a central design concept;
- it had successfully overcome the major risk of working around and over the East Coast Main Line;
- it managed to avoid major disruption to residents and users.



Bedford Western Bypass

Planned opening date	Current cost estimate
Late 2007/early 2008 (open in 2007 reported last year)	£22,000,000 (of which £2,000,000 from Local Transport Plan) (no change from last year)

2.2.3 During 2003/04 together with English Partnerships, we were successful in our bid to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for funding from the Sustainable Communities Fund. This money will help deliver this major scheme and, in doing so, will facilitate the delivery of growth area housing. We adopted this approach to help avoid further delays.

2.2.4 Work done in 2003/04 means that we are now working with English Partnerships to implement this scheme. Discussions remain ongoing regarding how best to bring forward implementation with greater certainty. The intention is to deliver the scheme at the same time as the housing development rather than after it. Public sector costs will be reclaimed from development as it progresses. Resources reclaimed from the developers will be re-invested locally, for example in Bedford Town Centre.

2.2.5 We anticipate publication of Orders around summer 2004. Delivery thereafter will depend on the outcome of the publication of Orders and agreement on funding and other legal matters. We anticipate that work could start on this scheme in 2005/06 with the aim to open the bypass in 2007/08.



Stoke Hammond/Linslade Western Bypass

Planned start date	Current cost estimate
Late 2007/early 2008 (mid 2006 reported last year)	£1,500,000 from Bedfordshire Local Transport Plan (no change from last year)

2.2.6 Buckinghamshire County Council is delivering this scheme and we are only making a small contribution. Buckinghamshire made good progress with the scheme in 2003/04. The first phase (Northern Link) between Drayton Road south of Skew Bridge and the western end of the Fenny Stratford Bypass opened to traffic on 9 February 2004. The second phase of this scheme has an anticipated completion date in late 2007/early 2008. We are not aware of the need for any additional funding requirements towards our section of this scheme.

 **A507 Ridgmont Bypass**

Planned start date	Current cost estimate
February 2006 (February 2005 reported last year)	£13,488,000 (£11,640,000 reported last year)

2.2.7 We are expecting a Public Inquiry to take place in late 2004. We have provisionally programmed the start of works for February 2006 and expect to complete the project in early 2007. The main reason for the change in start date is due to the long delay in finalising a date for the Public Inquiry.

2.2.8 Our estimated cost increases are related to additional blighted land acquisition, utility companies' works and additional compensation events. Some of this additional cost may be off-set by the future sale of any blighted land we acquire. Cost estimates will not be finalised until completion of the Public Inquiry and subsequent receipt of contractors' tenders. At this time we will submit a bid for additional Local Transport Plan funding.

**2.3 Integrated Transport schemes
Public Transport**



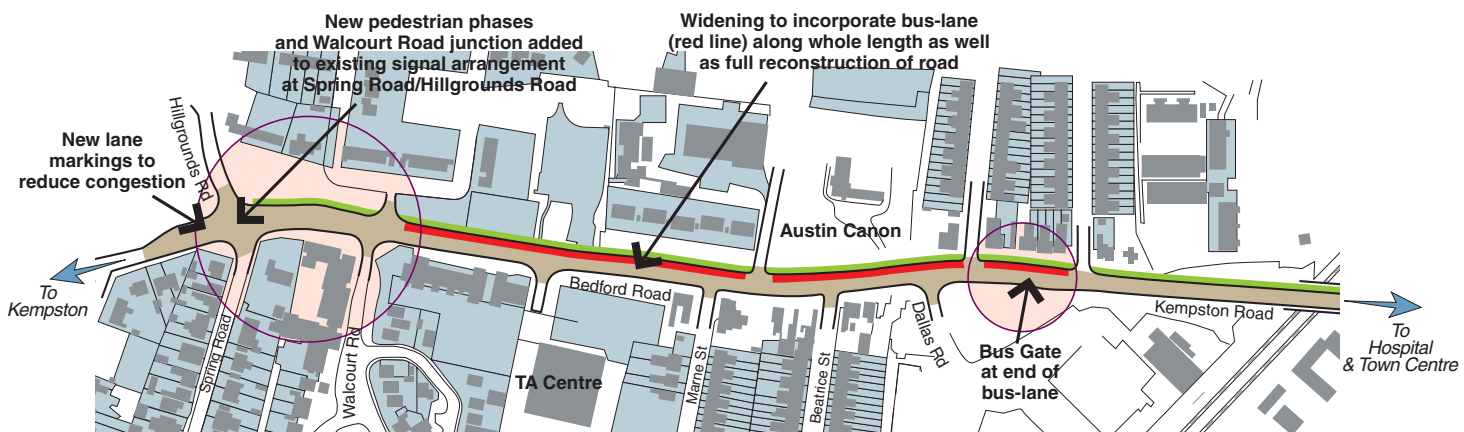
Planned delivery	Actual delivery
2	1

2.3.1 Having been delayed from the previous year we delivered the Kempston Road, Bedford scheme in 2003/04. Another scheme along Amphill Road, Bedford (associated with Elstow Park and Ride) was delayed due to problems with acquiring land. This is now due to start on site in June 2004.

2.3.2 The Kempston Road scheme is a significant part of the Local Transport Plan strategy for promoting sustainable travel in Bedford. We delayed this scheme from 2002/03 in order to combine integrated transport and maintenance investment in one scheme. The final scheme is summarised here to illustrate its significant scale.

- 2.3.3 For public transport users we provided:
- A 24 hour bus lane from Spring Road to Whitbread Avenue.
 - A signal controlled bus-gate to enable buses to exit the bus lane.
 - New bus stops with raised kerbing and facilities for future Real Time Information.

Kempston Road, Bedford



2.3.4 The bus lane and bus gate offer advantages for buses over other traffic, especially at peak times. We timed it so that we provided bus priority measures to broadly coincide with bus operator Stagecoach’s new fleet of buses and more frequent services on this route. We will be able to extend the bus lane in future without major disruption to the public.

2.3.5 The new fleet of buses are low floor vehicles with improved access for passengers with impaired mobility. To complement these vehicles we upgraded six bus stops along Kempston Road to include raised kerbing, new shelters and seating. We have also designed these so we can equip them with future Real Time passenger information.

2.3.6 Bus use on Kempston Road actually increased, despite a range of service changes in Bedford and the disruption during the works in 2003/04. This is undoubtedly the result of the quality of service and vehicles now using the corridor along with the infrastructure improvements. Table 2 summarises recent passenger usage along this route.

Inglis Lyon, Managing Director of Stagecoach East commented on the results of the improvements on the Kempston Road route as follows:

"I am happy to say that our investment coupled with the improvements from the scheme has delivered real benefits to the travelling public in Bedford".

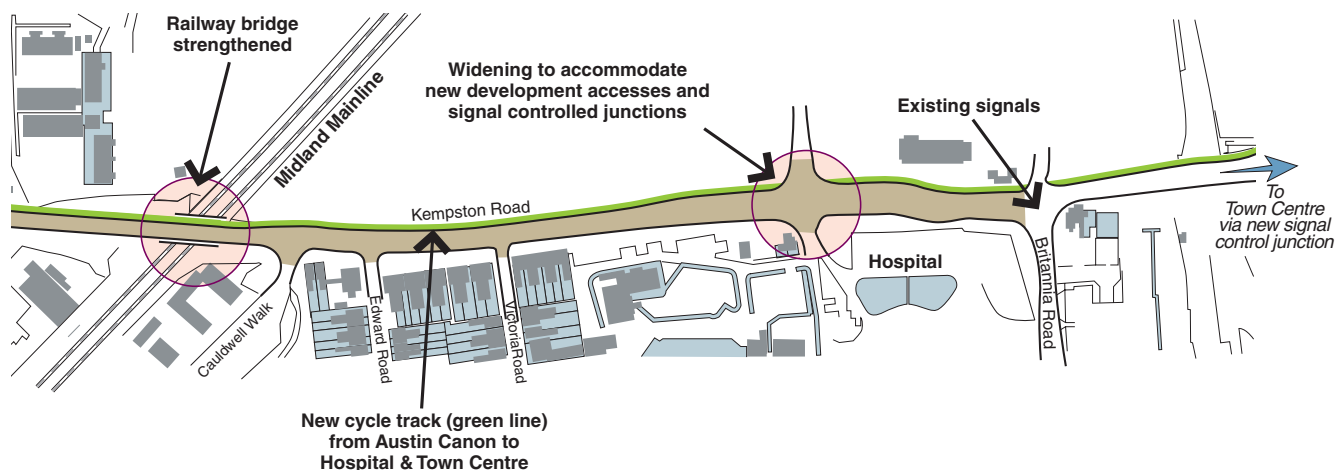
Other highlights are as follows:

- By March/April 2004 passenger numbers had almost returned to their September 2002 peak level.
- Passenger numbers reached their lowest level in July/August 2003 and have taken only 8 months to return to almost peak levels.

Table 2 - Bus passenger changes and the Kempston Road scheme

Average ridership change in two months before scheme	Average ridership change during construction works	Average ridership change in four months after scheme
-3.2%	-9.3%	+4.1%

Note: percentage change compared to equivalent months in 2002/2003



- 2.3.7 For pedestrians and cyclists the scheme included:
- Improved crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - Extension of the existing off-road segregated cycle route connecting Kempston to Bedford town centre by way of the Hospital.

2.3.8 We have added a significant ‘missing link’ to the Bedford cycle network by providing an off-road route along Kempston road. This is significant in terms of improving 24-hour access for patients and staff to the Hospital. We will monitor use of cycles along this route and include data in future reports.

2.3.9 We have also provided and improved road crossing facilities, including a Toucan crossing on Prebend Street. All signal controlled crossings promote continuous networks (this section forms part of National Cycle Network Route 51) for pedestrians and cyclists. In addition, pedestrian phases have been incorporated into traffic signals which will help reduce pedestrian casualties in certain locations.

- 2.3.10 For all transport users, we have improved accessibility and safety, by providing:
- Tactile paving at all road crossings and side roads;
 - Skid resistant surfacing at all signal controlled junctions and crossings;
 - Improved street and junction lighting;
 - Disabled parking in Stafford Road; and
 - Parking bays for local shoppers in Beatrice Street

2.3.11 For reducing congestion we have introduced:

- Three new signal controlled junctions linked to the urban traffic control system.

2.3.12 These new signals not only aid bus priority but also control and ease the flow of traffic along Kempston Road and through its junctions. Initial assessments suggest that the signal controlled junctions are operating more efficiently and as a result journey times have reduced, especially into Bedford. Table 3, below, summarises journey time changes.

Table 3 - Journey time changes due to the Kempston Road scheme

	Journey time to Bedford	Journey time to Kempston
During the AM peak period	7 minutes quicker	46 seconds slower
During the PM peak period	53 seconds slower	50 seconds quicker

The bus lane and cycle route



2.3.13 Improved roads, bridges and footways by way of:

- A completely reconstructed carriageway and footway with improved alignment, and widened carriageway;
- A strengthened bridge over the Midland Mainline railway;
- Quieter road surfacing.

2.3.14 One of the main reasons we initiated this scheme was that the carriageway had failed and we urgently needed to completely reconstruct it. We used quieter, modern road surfacing materials and undertook strengthening works on the bridge across the railway. This in itself required careful planning and timing.

2.3.15 The Kempston Road works were programmed so that the most disruptive part of the works would be carried out during school holidays in summer 2003. Late running works by utilities companies as a result of unforeseen issues that arose during construction meant that the scheme was completed later than planned.

2.3.16 A number of ancillary works had to be undertaken prior to commencing the scheme. These included utility companies' work and advanced warning information. Diversion of bus services, provision of transport for the disabled and relocation of Ambulance and Paramedic services also had to be arranged in order to maintain services for the public.

2.3.17 With a scheme like this we considered it vital to provide regular and effective information for the public. We used the following measures to communicate what the scheme entailed and the temporary arrangements for managing access:

- A dedicated telephone help line;
- A free breakdown recovery service;
- A dedicated website, updated daily, with an email facility, informing the public of progress and changes in the temporary traffic management.
- Newspaper advertisements to keep the residents and the public informed;
- Local leafleting to keep the residents informed of changes to the scheme;
- Public warning signs on the outskirts of the area of the works to warn the travelling public to avoid Kempston Road;

- Monitoring the Temporary traffic management continuously to keep the travelling public and the workforce safe.

2.3.18 Construction began in June 2003 and the works were substantially complete in December 2003. Minor works are underway to calibrate the traffic signal systems to give the most efficient control of traffic flow.

A new 'low floor' bus introduced by Stagecoach

Transport Interchange – Kempston interchange station

2.3.19 As an ongoing consequence of the Strategic Rail Authority's suspension of the Rail Passenger Partnership fund and the demand for Local Transport Plan resources this scheme has been delayed. In 2004/05 we aim to achieve the necessary consents for this scheme. Annex F includes a supplementary bid for funding in order that it can be implemented in 2005/06.

Artist's impression of Kempston Interchange Station



Park and Ride, Bedford

Planned delivery	Actual delivery
1	0

2.3.20 We had planned to deliver the Elstow Park and Ride site last year but there were legal problems which delayed the transfer of land for this scheme from the developers. We anticipate these being resolved in 2004/05 but the construction contract will have to be re-tendered with an estimated start date on site of November 2004. The supporting bus lane on Ampthill Road will be complete by then.

2.3.21 The Secretary of State refused planning permission in 2002 for a joint venture scheme with a developer at Cardington Cross. We continue to look at options for developing the Park and Ride scheme in the light of the Secretary of State’s decision.

2.3.22 Park and Ride sites to the west and north of Bedford at Biddenham Loop and Clapham will also be provided in association with housing development sites. Development Briefs were adopted in January 2003 for these sites. Delivery is dependent on how quickly the developments are progressed, which in turn is linked to the delivery of Bedford Western bypass, discussed at 2.2.3.

New bus stops and services

Planned delivery	Actual delivery
28 bus stops	6 bus stops
1 new on-demand service	1 new on-demand service

2.3.23 We surveyed all bus stops on three principal routes in Bedford in 2003/04. We subsequently upgraded 6 stops as part of the Kempston Road scheme. Our contractor was unable to deliver the accessibility improvements to the remainder of the surveyed stops last year due to problems with staff resources. We will implement planned improvements to stops as part of a rolling programme in line with available funds each year.

2.3.24 Following our successful Urban Bus Challenge Fund bid in 2002, we launched the ‘Bedford Dart’ demand responsive bus service in 2003. This provides on demand services between two areas of the town that recently had bus services cut, the town centre, hospital and employment areas. It operates throughout the day and is able to serve shift patterns. In essence it addresses accessibility problems previously identified in survey work which were strongly linked to deprivation.

2.3.25 We have set up a call centre to serve this project. This has capacity to serve other parts of the county. When the call centre is operating as required, we will expand the Bedford Dart service to cover other parts of the town. Use of the service has been steadily growing as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 - Bedford Dart passenger numbers

Forecast average monthly trips 2004/05	Actual trips Feb 2004	Actual trips Mar 2004	Actual trips April 2004	Actual trips May 2004	Actual trips June 2004
6250	654	1282	2037	2347	2702

2.3.26 We were successful in bidding for additional Rural Bus Challenge funding in 2003 to extend the East Beds Link for a further three years. The additional funding will also extend the service at Sandy and introduce new peak hour services for villages. The funding will also allow us to introduce ‘on-demand’ services for other villages in the area.

2.3.27 Use of the service to date has been encouraging. Table 5, below, compares forecast and actual use and shows that we are on course for our number of journeys per month.

Table 5 - East Beds Link passenger numbers

Forecast average monthly single journeys 2004/05	Average monthly single journeys 2002/03	Average monthly single journeys 2003/04
1140	1044	1110

The Bedford Dart in service



 **Other bus infrastructure**

2.3.28 In 2003 we appointed a Public Transport Information Officer and have identified a number of projects that will deliver improvements in information in 2004/05. Background work will enable us to deliver a pilot Real Time Information scheme at selected bus stops in Bedford in 2004 as well as improvements to:

- roadside information;
- ‘area wide’ transport guides;
- information on Concessionary Fares and Post 16 transport; as well as
- an ongoing commitment to Traveline.

We will deliver the full Real Time Information programme beyond 2004/05 in Bedfordshire as part of a consortium with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Cycling

Planned delivery	Actual delivery	Delivery by others
6 cycle tracks	6 cycle tracks	2 cycle tracks
13 cycle parking	6 cycle parking	N/A

 **New cycle tracks**

2.3.29 We completed an additional 8.4 kilometres of cycle route in 2003/04, adding 5% to the overall network. Several schemes were delivered in Bedford (totalling 1680 metres), the main one being the new 1400 metre route as part of the Kempston Road scheme. Elsewhere we completed routes in Leighton Buzzard (310 metres), and in Arlesey and Marston Moretaine (880 metres). In addition landfill tax contributions delivered 5500 metres of the National Cycle Network route 51 in the Marston Vale.

2.3.30 A significant contribution of £366,000 was awarded by the East of England Development Agency to help start work in February 2004 on a 3.5 kilometre stretch of the National Cycle Network route 6 “greenway” between Stanbridgeford and French’s Avenue in Dunstable. This route will be completed in October 2004 and will include a new bridge crossing of the A505 (Leighton Southern Bypass).

2.3.31 Two schemes (Riverside, Leighton Linslade and Clifton to Henlow) have had to be delayed, as insufficient funding was available to complete the works. Public consultation and design work is proceeding with a view to completing these schemes in 2005/06. Priority was given to funding the Stanbridgeford to Dunstable “greenway” to make use of the funding from the East of England Development Agency and complete this scheme in 2004/05.

 **Cycle Parking**

2.3.32 The Project ‘Stand & Deliver’ began in September 2003 when we identified a need for cycle parking in rural locations. Our Cycling and Parish Paths Partnership budgets planned 13 cycle parking locations at libraries, village halls, local shops, post offices and churches. The programme was delayed slightly but will be complete by June 2004.



Walking

Planned delivery	Actual delivery
16 walking	13 walking
1 pedestrianisation	0 pedestrianisation

 **New footways**

2.3.33 Six schemes were delivered from our priority list to provide new footways and a further seven delivered by the Rights of Way team. Progress was also made on improvements to the Amphill Road, Bedford footbridge scheme which will be completed in 2004/05. Additional spending on one of our schemes and delays in obtaining Network Rail approval for another scheme are the main reasons we fell short of our delivery programme. Subject to satisfactory funding, we aim to address this shortfall over the next two years.

2.3.34 In January 2004, the ‘Bedfordshire Health Walks’ project was launched with 14 trained Health Walk Leaders organising regular walks in Bedfordshire. These are short walks which encourage people to increase their heart rate and improve their health by regularly walking.

 **Rights of Way**

2.3.35 Our Rights of Way team delivered seven Local Transport Plan funded projects. These included surfacing a new bridleway, river bank reinforcement along with installing an accessible path, maintenance of seasonal byways, disabled parking spaces in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, new signing and drainage and new stiles and gateways.



Pedestrianisation

2.3.36 We have a programme of enhancements to several town centres planned over the next few years. Pedestrian priority measures in Leighton Buzzard were commenced and are due to be completed in 2004.

Travel Plans

Planned delivery	Actual delivery
20 school	25 school
12 workplace	13 workplace



School travel plans

2.3.37 A total of 25 school travel plans were delivered last year. In addition some 35 existing travel plans were submitted to Government to bid for grant funding to deliver travel plan objectives. These travel plans focus on integration into school life and policy and include monitoring commitments. Government funding has allowed us to appoint additional officers to continue this work and enable us deliver more travel plans each year.

Safe travel to school publicity designed by pupils



Workplace travel plans

2.3.38 Working jointly with District and Borough Councils, we secured 13 workplace travel plans through the planning process. This is proving to be the most effective way of securing this type of travel plan as our own resources are focused on delivering school travel plans.

2.3.39 As a result of a successful bid in 2003/04 we will be appointing a new member of staff to work with small and medium sized businesses to develop travel plans. We will fund this project jointly with the European Social Fund. This project is part of a range of initiatives under the Bedfordshire and Luton Sustainable Business Partnership and is an excellent opportunity to link travel plans with other environmental initiatives.



Safer Routes to School

Planned delivery	Actual delivery
10	11

2.3.40 Our Safer Routes to School Programme has evolved over the last year to reflect the emphasis that the Department for Transport's Travelling to School; An Action Plan and Good Practice Guide places on school travel plans. The main way we now deliver Safer Routes schemes is now by developing a travel plan.

2.3.41 When schools have agreed travel plans we prioritise them for funding. We base this on whether plans will bring about a shift in mode of transport and reduce the number and severity of accidents. We have strengthened the links between the Safer Routes programme and Safety Engineering, so as to identify opportunities for area wide schemes that can be jointly funded. This integrated approach meant that 11 schools benefited from the Safer Routes to School programme in 2003/04.

2.3.42 We have 50 schools that have registered an interest to develop a travel plan for submission by 31st March 2005. These will go on to form the future of the Safer Routes programme.



School Travel Plans and Healthy Schools

2.3.43 Extensive efforts have been made to integrate school travel plans into the Bedfordshire and Luton Healthy Schools initiative with two officers being trained as accreditors and having extensive involvement in the development of the new safety standards. A number of school travel plans will be used in 2004/05 to gain accreditation as either a Safety or Special Health Promoting Project.

2.3.44 Stratton Upper School, Biggleswade, gained its Healthy Schools accreditation in Safety through their travel plan. Students carried out research, resulting in clear objectives and initiatives. They plan to use a grant from Government to either install secure cycle storage or a new pedestrian access. Their key concerns with regard to road crossings and lack of footpaths were included in negotiations with developers as part of new housing development. The school will relocate a pedestrian access to meet the proposed new crossing point.

Local Safety

Planned delivery	Actual delivery
4	1



Safety engineering

2.3.45 Last year, in the light of our success in achieving our road safety targets in 2002/03, we spent more time carrying out investigative and design work on 'whole route' and other schemes. This was alongside further investigations into the links between deprivation and child pedestrian casualties. Where possible we have sought casualty reduction through influencing the design of other schemes (the Kempston Road scheme being an example).

2.3.46 There are a number of minor safety programme areas that we have been making progress on as well as making adjustments to schemes from previous years and completing some of last year's schemes. We aim to increase delivery in 2004/05 to redress the shortfall in 2003/04 although, in the context of our targets, the safety programme is ahead of schedule.



Route schemes

2.3.47 Our current approach reflects the fact that clusters of casualties are harder to find and issues such as motorcycle casualties or speed generally are best addressed along a whole route. We intend to generate priority lists for short, medium and long term casualty reduction. The financial rate of return per casualty is likely to be relatively low and we are actively seeking ways of funding this work from integration with other programme areas (for example, maintenance) as well as non-Local Transport Plan sources (for example, developer funding).



A6 'Whole Route' safety scheme

2.3.48 The A6 between Luton and Bedford was detrunked in 2002. The road had been identified nationally as a high risk route with a poor casualty record. We have investigated the casualty history along the route and aim to implement measures over time as part of a strategic approach to managing the route.

The Bedfordshire and Luton Casualty Reduction Partnership has already installed safety cameras along the A6. These have produced an excellent reduction in casualties in this section of the route. They have also resulted in consequent benefits at locations upstream and downstream of those sites.

Along the A6 between Bedford and Luton, casualties have reduced by 46% in the last year. (See www.drivesafely.org for more information.)

Safety camera location on the A6



Cameras have become an inherent part of managing safety on this and other routes in the County. We will try to build on the sound foundation that cameras provide on routes like these with other, separate schemes to reduce casualties.

Road Safety Strategy

2.3.50 In February 2004 we launched our Road Safety Strategy in conjunction with the Police. The launch was well supported by a wide range of stakeholders. This is relevant to delivering schemes as it reflects our aim to have a more integrated approach to addressing road safety issues. The Strategy's aims reflect this and we hope to demonstrate better scheme integration in future years. The purposes of the Strategy are:

- To raise the profile and status of work to reduce casualties throughout Bedfordshire and of the benefits that this work brings;
- To encourage people to use roads in a more responsible way and to give greater consideration to vulnerable road users;
- To identify and engage all those stakeholders who can benefit from reducing casualties that result from road collisions in Bedfordshire and who can contribute in a co-ordinated way to reducing them;
- To integrate the County's approach to road safety, using resources and funding in a more economic way; and
- To relate casualty reduction in Bedfordshire to the National Casualty Reduction Targets and demonstrate how we are contributing to them.

A603 'Whole Route' safety scheme

2.3.49 The A603 is one of the key east-west links between Bedford and the A1. This route was investigated last year in the same way as the A6 and a selection of sites are currently selected for treatment in 2004/05 (for example, Willington bends).

Road safety and deprivation – an update

2.3.51 Our research has confirmed that there is a higher incidence of child pedestrian casualties in deprived wards and we continue to investigate this. Following closer liaison with our regeneration team, we are going to put forward a proposal for road safety initiatives in deprived areas. We hope this will attract additional funding through existing regeneration projects so that we can undertake more intense work to reduce casualties in these areas.

Road Crossings

Planned delivery	Actual delivery
9	6

New road crossings

2.3.52 The road crossing delivery programme did not quite achieve what we planned, for a variety of reasons. We were unable to deliver two of the planned schemes, in one case because local people objected and the other, because we were unable to acquire land for a new footway. We hope to resolve both issues and deliver these two schemes in 2004/05.

Bedford Road, Shefford (zebra crossing)

2.3.53 This is a 'B' class road that carries significant volumes of traffic through Shefford. The crossing is mainly used as a link between a housing estate and the town centre. The scheme included anti-skid surfacing, dropped kerbing, tactile paving as well as new street lighting in order to provide a safe and accessible crossing.

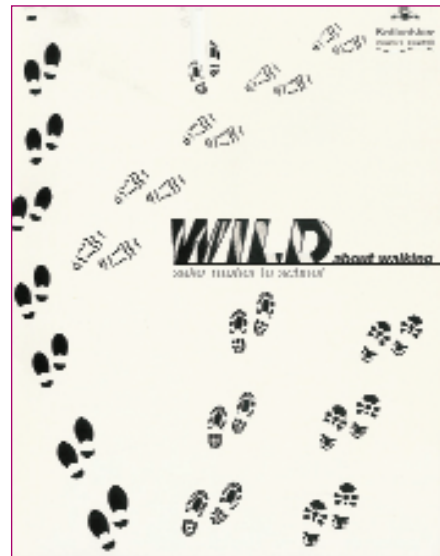
The new road crossing in Shefford



Road safety education Wild about Walking

2.3.54 We launched our 'Wild about Walking' scheme to encourage walking to school. It is based on Somerset County Council's scheme and involves each child receiving a pack which allows them to use stickers to record how they get to school each day. They are awarded certificates when they have made a certain number of journeys.

'Wild About Walking' publicity



'Don't be a fool ...' – school gate parking scheme

2.3.55 We ran this initiative in partnership with Bedfordshire Police and Parking Attendants in the Bedford area, in response to complaints about the parking behaviour outside schools. The scheme proved successful where the appropriate parking restrictions were enforceable but the whole school community needs to be much more involved.

Other initiatives

2.3.56 We are now in the second year of our innovative 'Passport for Life' programme for children. In each of the last two years 5,000 Reception Year children received the 'Passport for Life' and the passport will begin entering Middle Schools in 2006. The Local Transport Plan delivers £25,000 of the cost of the Passport for Life programme.

2.3.57 The following lists examples of the activities that we have undertaken in 2003/04 in our school road safety programme:

- 5,000 Road Safety Leaflets distributed at the beginning of Middle School (Year 5)
- 900 Year 6 and above pupils attended National Cycling Proficiency Course
- 100 Year 4 pupils attended off road cycling courses
- 135 young drivers attended the Pre-Driver Training and 'ADrive' (defensive driver training course)

Traffic Management and Calming

Planned delivery	Actual delivery
8 traffic management	8 traffic management
1 junction improvement	1 junction improvement

Countywide Speed Limit Reviews

2.3.58 We implemented a number of new and amended speed limits in 2003/04. This included a 20 mile per hour zone in Ampthill town centre as well as several new and extended speed limits in urban and rural areas. The public have given these restrictions a good reception and earlier survey work indicates that imposing lower speed limits reduces average actual vehicle speeds by 3.5 miles per hour.

2.3.59 The following table summarises the numbers of kilometres of new or extended speed limits we have delivered:

Table 6 - Extra speed limits introduced in 2003/04

Type of speed restriction	Length delivered
20 miles per hour	4.6 kilometres
30 miles per hour	8.3 kilometres
40 miles per hour	5.9 kilometres

Village gateways

2.3.60 Town and villages have benefited by installing gateway features to emphasise speed limits and inform drivers that they are entering a built-up area and should slow down. We have installed 4 in Harlington, Dunton, Leighton-Linslade and Streatley. We have combined some of these with speed limit amendments and these might well be a forerunner to more comprehensive traffic calming schemes.

The new village gateway at Streatley



Parking and other minor schemes

2.3.61 We have also delivered small-scale projects to restrain speed or improve safe use of the highway. These involve improved on street parking controls, enhanced signs and minor highway improvements.



Decriminalised parking enforcement

Planned delivery	Actual delivery
1	1


2.3.62 Mid and South Bedfordshire Districts introduced decriminalised parking enforcement of the on-street parking regulations from 1 February 2004 – so meeting the target date we set out in last year’s Report. South Bedfordshire District Council operates the service on our behalf in both Districts. A joint parking board of Councillors from all three Councils oversees the service. A memorandum of understanding has been signed with the police to clarify responsibilities.


2.3.63 As part of the implementation process all of the traffic regulation orders in Mid and South Bedfordshire were reviewed and consolidated last year. Our on-street parking controls are correctly regulated and signposted to ensure that they can be properly enforced.

2.3.64 Initial feedback shows that residents, schools and businesses welcome the scheme because there is now less inconsiderate parking and associated congestion. Shopkeepers report more trade with a greater turnover of cars parking in limited waiting areas.

2.3.65 The target date of 1 April 2004 for extension of decriminalised parking enforcement to rural areas of Bedford Borough was not met. As our agents, the Borough Council’s focus of activity in 2003/04 was the delivery of other aspects of the Local Transport Plan, especially public transport initiatives and accident reduction measures. This extension is planned to start on 1 April 2005.

Information on the decriminalised parking scheme





please contact us

If you would like more information about the new parking enforcement scheme, please contact us at the addresses below.

how do I pay the Penalty Charge Notice?

Details of how to pay will be included on the back of the Penalty Charge Notice.

what happens to the money?
The money received from PCNs will pay for the cost of the enforcement scheme. Any surplus will be reinvested in traffic management schemes.


are the police still involved in parking issues?
The Police will retain responsibility for moving traffic, offences and endorsable parking offences such as parking at pedestrian crossings. They also retain responsibility for obstruction of footpaths and the highway, including the blocking of driveways.

Mid Bedfordshire:
(Monday–Thursday 9am–4.30pm, Friday 9am–1.30pm)
Parking Section
District Council Offices
24 London Road
Riggswode
Bedfordshire SG18 8ER
01467 313137 email: parking@midbeds.gov.uk
www.midbeds.gov.uk




South Bedfordshire:
(Monday–Thursday 9am–5pm, Friday 9am–4.30pm)
Parking Manager
The District Office
High Street North
Dunstable LU6 1LF
01582 473222 email: parking@southbeds.gov.uk
www.southbeds.gov.uk

Bedfordshire County Council:
(Monday–Thursday 9am–5.30pm, Friday 9am–5pm)
Customer Contact Centre
HBS Business Services
County Hall
Bedford MK42 9AP
01234 228661 email: highways faults@hbsbeds.com
www.bedfordshire.gov.uk

managing our parking effectively



If you would like to receive a copy of this leaflet in a different language or in a special format such as large print, audio cassette or Braille, please contact us by letter or telephone at: Traffic and Safety, Bedfordshire County Council, County Hall, Bedford MK42 9AP tel: 01234 228661

2.4 Maintenance schemes



Highway maintenance

Planned delivery	Actual delivery
64 carriageway maintenance	80 carriageway maintenance
0 footways	9 footways

2.4.1 In 2003/04 we implemented 8 principal road maintenance schemes. This was a considerable improvement on 2002/03 when only 1 site was completed. The increase in work done was due to the need to achieve our challenging target (see 3.2.3).

2.4.2 We also completed a programme of 72 non-principal road maintenance schemes and 9 footway schemes. This compares favourably with the 2003 delivery when 38 schemes were completed. This increase was, again, in order to reduce the amount of roads needing repair in line with our targets.



Bridge strengthening

Planned delivery	Actual delivery
2	2

2.4.3 We completed two bridge strengthening schemes as planned in 2003 as well as completing some work carried over from 2002/03. Additional work focussed on further assessments as well as design work for 2004/05.

2.4.4 In addition to the maintenance schemes summarised in Table 1, we made good progress in delivering other maintenance works, this is summarised in paragraphs 2.4.5 to 2.4.19.



Street lighting

2.4.5 In 2003/04 we planned to continue our replacement streetlighting programme but we had to divert funding away from streetlighting to finance highway maintenance which was a higher priority. To redress the balance we have identified a programme for 2004/05 to replace 146 ageing columns in seven towns and parishes. Beyond 2004/05 we will identify a new programme. This will take into consideration:

- ageing lighting columns
- street crime incidents
- night time accidents and
- requests from Parish Councils and residents.



Routine maintenance

2.4.6 In 2003/04 we had a busy winter maintenance workload. We carried out 69 salting runs compared with 64 runs during the equivalent period in 2002/03. There were two periods of laying snow in January and February, resulting in 24 hour manning of the gritting fleet for the time that weather conditions prevailed.

2.4.7 We have continued to invest in our gritting fleet during 2003/04 and have purchased one further gritter for use on detrunked roads. Installed in all of our gritting vehicles is a new monitoring system, which enables us to track the position and monitor the speed of the gritters whilst salting, allowing for more efficient use of the gritters.

2.4.8 We also installed the Icelert Bureau system which has enabled better management of weather forecasts and our proposed actions. This system is continuing to develop and it is hoped to integrate with adjoining authorities over the forthcoming year.

2.4.9 We are undertaking a review of salting routes for 2004/05 and in particular a review of the salting of footways and cycle tracks. We will also be carrying out a route optimising survey of the reviewed salting routes. This should improve the efficiency of each route and reduce the amount of 'dead running' (the distance that a gritter travels on a route whilst not salting).

- 2.4.10 In 2003/04 a system was introduced for gully emptying. The system provides accurate reports of the gullies maintained. The benefits include the creation and maintenance of our gully inventory and an improved system for repairing faults.
- 2.4.11 In addition to contributing £2,500,000 of our revenue budget to planned structural maintenance we have also committed over £3,000,000 for routine unplanned patching and minor repairs.
- 2.4.12 We introduced a new verge cutting regime for rural roads, with the order of verge cutting changed to better suit growing periods. This resulted in a considerable drop in the number of complaints received on this service.
- 2.4.13 In 2003/04 we launched a pothole initiative. This involved dedicated gangs visiting each Parish once a year and filling all potholes on every road. We will repeat this in 2004/05.
- 2.4.14 The Highway Maintenance Partnership Scheme continued in 2003/04. This allocated a sum of money to each Town or Parish to spend on work that they consider to be of priority. Schemes delivered varied from footway patching to road resurfacing and from providing lay-bys to installing new village signs.
- 2.4.15 Last year we undertook a programme of road marking replacement. In connection with this, we replaced all principal road centre lines across the county. We also replaced yellow lining in readiness for the decriminalised parking schemes in both the Mid and South Beds administrative areas.



Progress on improving our Highway Service

- 2.4.16 Following an inspection of our Highway Service, the Audit Commission have published their assessment report. They believe that we provide a fair service that has excellent prospects for improvement.
- 2.4.17 The Audit Commission complimented the aims and targets for the service. They agreed that we are carrying out an effective, prioritised and costed programme of road maintenance, and that the efficiency of routine maintenance work is improving along with good communications between us and the Town and Parish Councils. The Audit Commission were impressed by the range of measures to improve road safety, and recognised the work to include environmental impact and sustainability in highway works.
- 2.4.18 In order to improve the transparency of our service and so that the public are better able to understand who does what, we will launch 'Bedfordshire Highways' in July 2004. This will mean a single point of contact for highways related matters for the public and will also ensure our contractors respond as Bedfordshire County Council representatives.
- 2.4.19 Following annual assessment of road condition, we are now prioritising our road maintenance programme. The main criteria we are using are
 - defectiveness;
 - cost of treatment; and
 - road category.

We are also considering the level of public complaints, and whether the road has a surface-related safety record. By this method we hope to improve the amount of kilometres we can treat for a given budget. This has begun to be reflected in the improvement in road condition from 2002/03 to 2003/04.