

LUTON

BOROUGH COUNCIL



Luton Dunstable
TRANS LINK



Bedfordshire
county council





Background (Socio-economic)

- 🚌 Population of 235,115 of which 184,371 live in Luton
- 🚌 26% of non-car owning households in Luton; 20% in Dunstable
- 🚌 About 60% of work trips are within the three towns
- 🚌 Economic Regeneration following decline of manufacturing during the 1990's. Conurbation classified as Priority Area for Economic Regeneration and a number of wards entitled to Objective 2 funding
- 🚌 109,000 jobs, of which 86,000 are located in Luton
- 🚌 Unemployment rate of 3.7%
- 🚌 Government Sustainable Communities Strategy includes a further 43,000 houses in Luton & South Beds by 2031

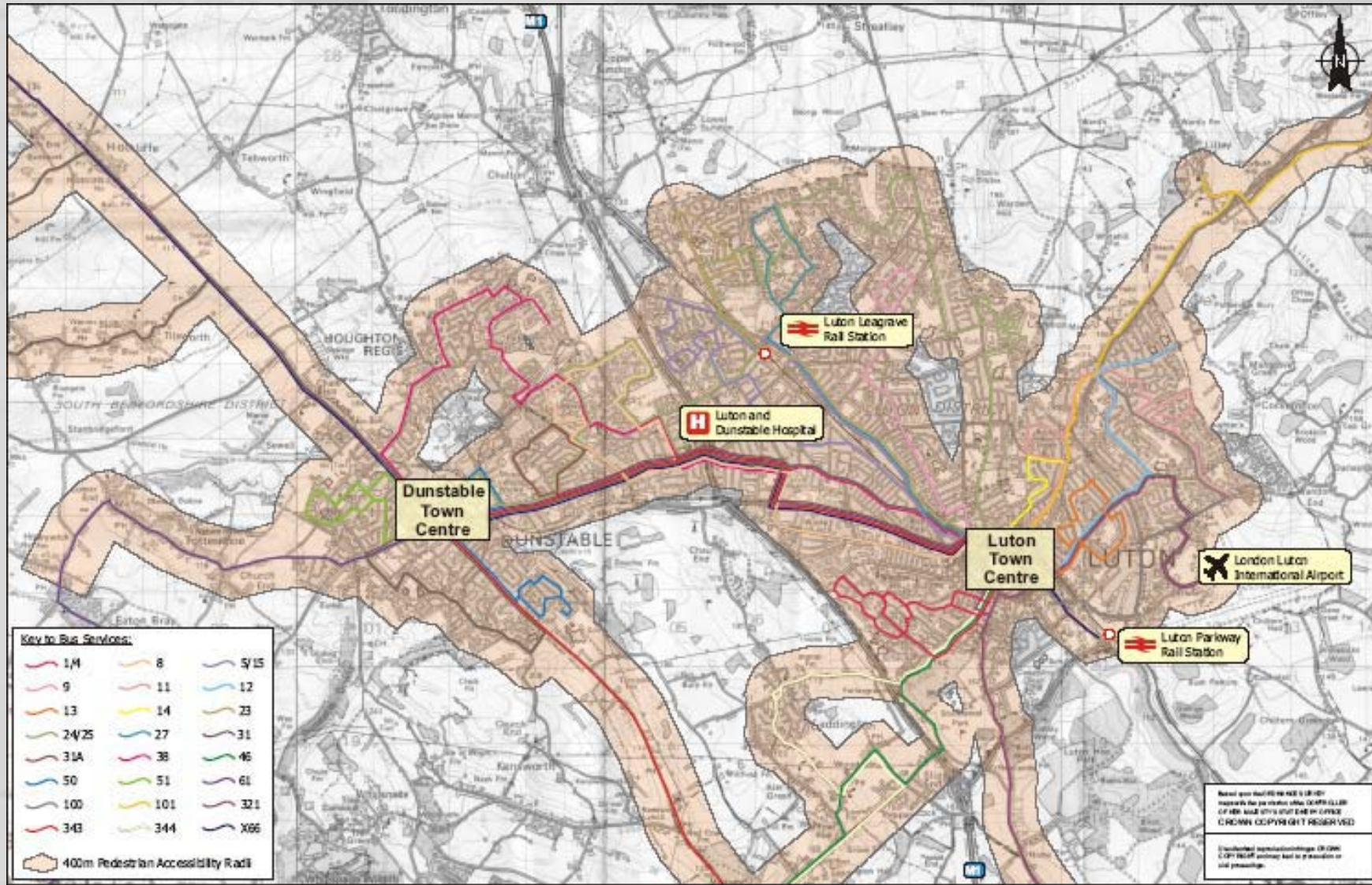


Background (local transport)

- 🚌 Dominance of car travel and the shortness of the majority of journeys to work leads to traffic congestion at peak times – 2 main routes between 2 towns carry in excess of 57,000 vehicles per day
- 🚌 Congestion has a severe impact on the reliability and journey times for bus services.
- 🚌 Perception of local public transport that it is unreliable, infrequent, and too slow
- 🚌 Midland Mainline and Thameslink trains serve three stations in Luton but there are capacity problems on the line
- 🚌 London Luton Airport currently 8mppa – with growth to 30mppa by 2030



Existing bus services












Background (disused railway corridor)

- 🚌 Part of longer route from Leighton Buzzard (WCML) to Welwyn (ECML) that last carried passengers in 1964
- 🚌 Luton to Dunstable section continued for freight operations until 1989, mainly to serve Blue Circle cement works in Houghton Regis
- 🚌 Part of the line near Luton Town Football Club was re-aligned in the mid 1980's during the construction of relief road, but generally the track / sleepers are in poor condition
- 🚌 Lack of use since 1989 has resulted in the line becoming colonised by vegetation. Designated a County Wildlife site in 2003.



Objectives

-  Provide an attractive alternative to the car for intra urban trips
-  Use rail corridor to provide a segregated public transport system between the three towns
-  Provide interchange opportunities with Luton Airport, rail stations, and longer distance coach / bus services
-  Integrate with other elements of the Transport Strategy for the area
-  Support planning and regeneration policies of the area
-  Maximise accessibility and mobility in the conurbation
-  Achieve all of the above optimising financial / economic performance and with no net overall loss of biodiversity.










Why guided bus?

- 🚌 Offers 3 main advantages over conventional bus lanes :
 - Width restrictions imposed by single track disused railway corridor, particularly near to football club and by SSSI
 - Self enforcing
 - Given CWS status of corridor, guided busway offers best opportunity to retain as much existing habitat as possible.






Key features of the busway

-  12km mainly segregated kerb guided busway
-  Unguided sections at both ends & in Luton town centre
-  80 kph design speed, operating on line of sight
-  Emergency maintenance track alongside busway (W of M1) also to be used by pedestrians and cyclists
-  Real time information at stops on & off busway
-  Vehicles provided and operated by local bus operators through Quality Partnership or Contract
-  Need for sensitive approach to landscaping and ecological mitigation measures particularly in the Blow's Downs area (SSSI)

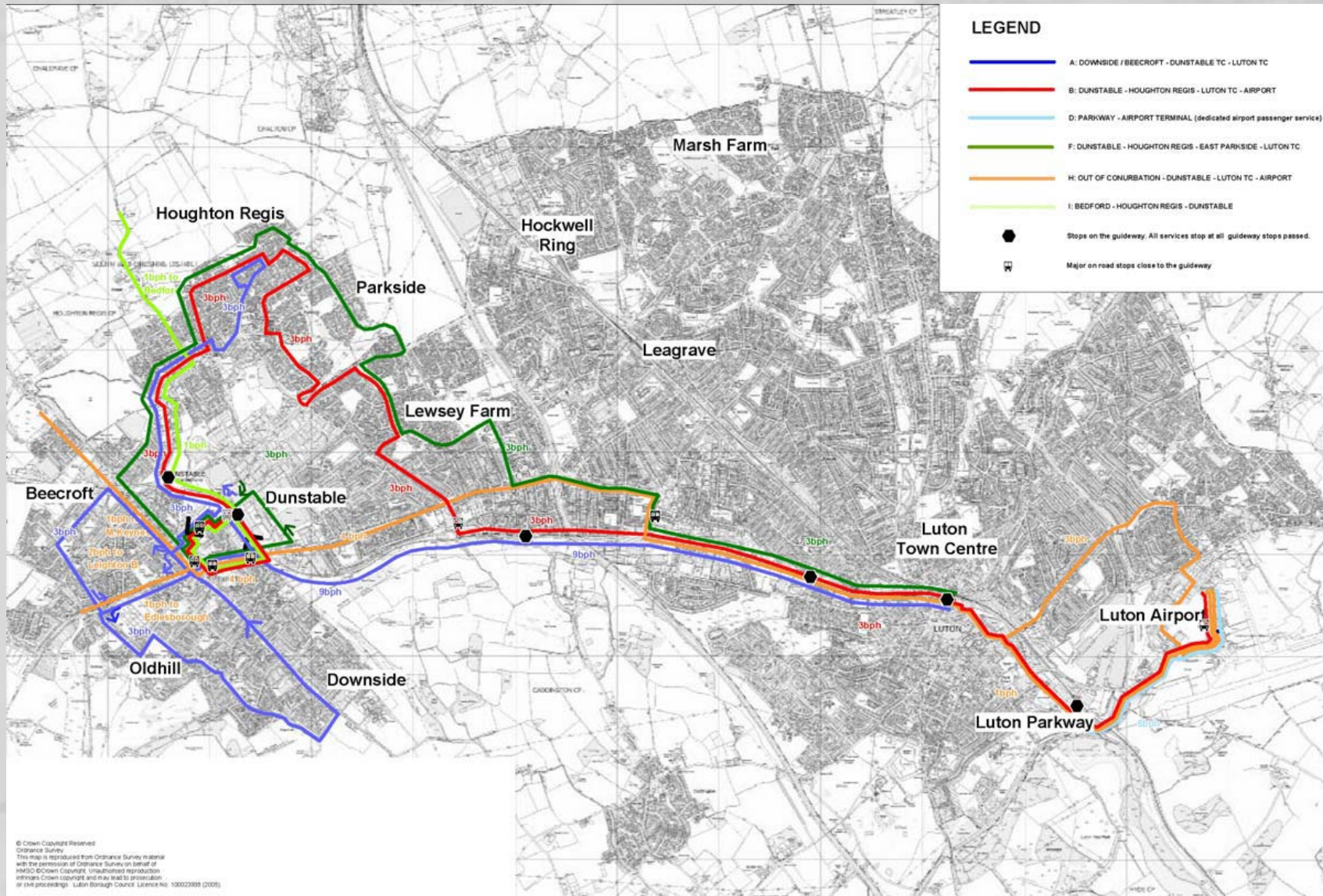


Translink services

-  Translink services operate between 6am and 11pm
-  Each service operates at least on 15 minute frequency during the day
-  Not all services will use entire busway. Different services will use parts of core busway, entering & leaving at key locations to allow maximum flexibility & penetration of residential areas












Translink services









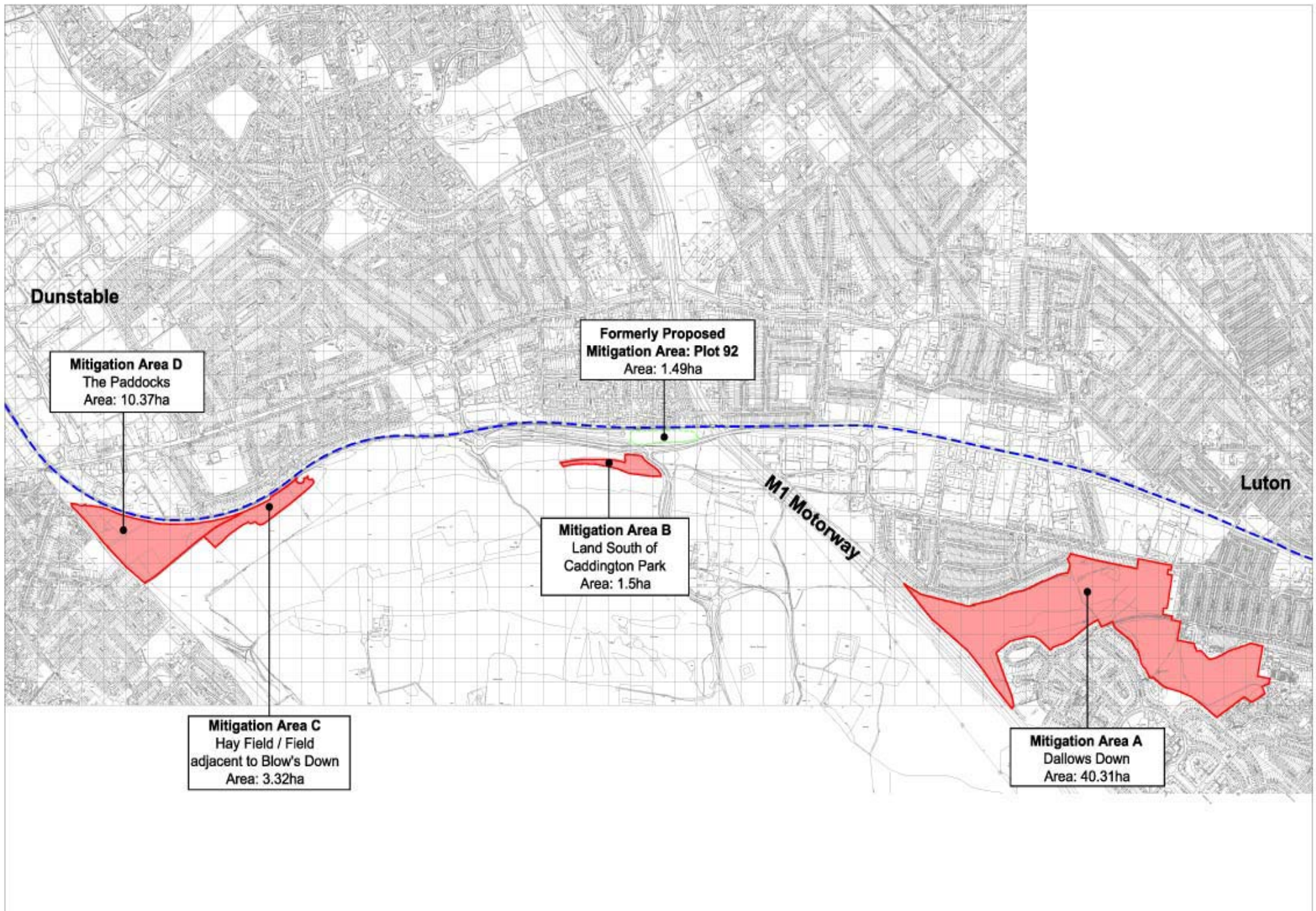
Issues

-  Ecology (need for extensive environmental mitigation)
-  Public Open Space
-  BCC
-  Change of political control in Luton
-  HMRI
-  Operations
-  Status of busway
-  Objections
-  East Luton Corridor



Issues – Ecology

-  Need to satisfy English Nature/local wildlife Trust & 'no net loss of biodiversity' in Biodiversity Action Plan
-  Extensive ecological surveys undertaken
-  Ecological mitigation package includes 4 sites, 2 to be acquired, 2 in Public ownership – 3 are near to SSSI and will enable whole area to be managed as a single ecological unit
-  Producing management plans for each & providing funding for others (probably Wildlife Trust) to manage



| no | date | description | by |
|----|----------|-------------|----|
| A | 02/03/05 | Areas added | HS |

| key | description |
|-----|--|
| | Luton Dunstable Translink Route |
| | Updated Nature Conservation Mitigation Areas |
| | Formerly Proposed Mitigation Areas |

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| client | Luton Borough Council |
| job title | Luton Dunstable Translink |
| drawing title | Updated Nature Conservation Mitigation Areas - Location Plan |
| scale | 1:15,000(BAS) |
| drawn by | HJS |
| checked by | TW |
| drawing no. | M4044/10 Rev A |

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Issues - Public Open Space

- 1.5Ha of Public Open Space will be lost at Houghton Regis
- This Open Space needs to be replaced to avoid putting the Order into Special Parliamentary Procedures
- Toward the end of 2004 problems arose with with 2 areas of intended replacement land within the scheme limits, which effectively meant we had to identify alternative replacement open space
- There are no other suitable opportunities within the limits of the scheme, therefore any new replacement would be outside the powers of the draft Order so no powers to acquire – ideally land should already be in public ownership
- Difficulties identifying suitable sites & delays at Government Office meant application not made until September. This week responding to objections raised by 3 Councils.
- Expecting decision soon on whether or not there will be a short inquiry



Issues - BCC, LBC

- 🚌 TWA Rules require a second, confirmatory, resolution soon after the application is made
- 🚌 Bedfordshire CC failed to make its confirmatory resolution on 12 February 2004 and instead resolved to withdraw as joint promoter of Translink
- 🚌 In March 2004 DfT agreed that Luton could become sole promoter
- 🚌 Shortly afterwards BCC Members reversed their earlier decision and approached Luton to get back on board. Although no longer co-promoter, BCC are now a full partner in the scheme.
- 🚌 Luton changed from Labour to Lib Dem control in 2003. Lib Dems had come in with an anti busway / pro rail policy and needed to be persuaded of its advantages before allowing scheme to progress
- 🚌 Generally been an 'interesting' experience guiding Members through the process



Issues - HMRI

- 🚌 HMRI involvement to date been on 2 points:
 - emergency access track alongside busway
 - approached for clearance on reduced lateral tolerances by LTFC but no response to date
- 🚌 Currently out to consultation about divesting themselves of interest in guided busways. Need to consider if the new generation of mainly segregated busways on disused railway corridors should be viewed differently to current style of UK busway with short lengths on highway as local congestion busters



Issues - Bus operations / busway status

- 🚌 Need for balance of services between those on guideway and those operating along Dunstable Road
- 🚌 Further development of service plans to be agreed with operator
- 🚌 Although supportive of the scheme, not always been easy to engage fully with local main operator about use of busway
- 🚌 Need to take view on whether busway will be private road or highway
 - Private road = greater control over access but makes funding maintenance more difficult
 - Public highway = funding for maintenance along with rest of highway network but less control on access



Issues – Objections, Inquiry

- 🚌 Significant proportion of objections were tick lists organised by local rail lobby
- 🚌 High proportion wanting rail link re-instated but huge variety in how this should be done
- 🚌 Objections from commercial organisations led to further work on how the busway could be built at specific locations. Balfour Beatty appointed to review construction methodology reports, this ultimately led to a reduction in the scheme limits at some locations
- 🚌 The way the Inquiry was run meant we needed to have most of our witnesses present for almost the entire inquiry
- 🚌 Inquiry went on longer & cost much more than anticipated
- 🚌 New objections allowed during inquiry, some as late as the last week







Issues – East Luton Corridor

- 🚌 Dualling of airport access road with new section of road over same alignment between Parkway Station & airport terminal as Translink
- 🚌 Width restrictions at Industrial Park near to airport perimeter mean only one scheme can be built
- 🚌 Promoted as 2 separate schemes
- 🚌 Intention is to put in ELC and include HOV lane which Translink services would benefit from



Procurement

Current views are:

-  Separate design, construction & maintenance of busway from the provision of vehicles and operation of services
-  Infrastructure procurement through a Design Build / Design Build Maintain contract
-  Currently considering best way of procuring services (Quality Partnership / Quality Contract) and balance between commercial / tendered services
-  Grant Thornton / Jacobs Babtie recently appointed to provide an independent 'reality check' on scheme, to advise on above and to better inform decisions about next steps



Maintenance

- 🚌 After end of initial maintenance period, maintenance of busway and associated infrastructure best carried out by Councils
- 🚌 Need to consider maintenance in relation to different elements of the busway infrastructure (e.g. stops, traffic signals at access points, landscaping)
- 🚌 Possibility of contributions from operators towards ongoing maintenance of the busway, maybe through access charges
- 🚌 Possibility of partially funding maintenance through secondary revenue (sponsorship, advertising etc on new infrastructure)

