

**Southern Leighton
Buzzard Exemplar
Transport Scheme**

**Prepared for
Arnold White Estates
Limited & the Southern
Leighton Buzzard
Steering Group**

by

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATC	Automated Traffic Count
AWEL	Arnold White Estates Limited
BBC	Bedfordshire Borough Council
BCC	Bedfordshire County Council
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CBT	Campaign for Better Transport
CIHT	Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation
DCLG	Department for Communities & Local Government
DfT	Department for Transport
LLTC	Leighton Linlade Town Council
MCC	Manual Classified Count
MfS	Manual for Streets
RTP	Residential Travel Plan
SBFoE	South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth
SLBETS	Southern Leighton Buzzard Exemplar Transport Scheme
SLBUEA	Southern Leighton Buzzard Urban Extension Area
SMA	Stuart Michael Associates Limited

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report has been prepared by Stuart Michael Associates (SMA) Limited, on behalf of Arnold White Estates Limited (AWEL) and the other members of the Southern Leighton Buzzard Steering Group. The purpose of this report is to provide a review of the various initiatives implemented as part of the Southern Leighton Buzzard Exemplar Transport Scheme (SLBETS), to summarise some of the key results and to provide a summary of the lessons learnt from the project.

1.2 The purpose of recording and sharing these lessons learnt is to:

- Avoid similar mistakes being made on future schemes;
- Improve upon current delivery for the remainder of the project;

Background

1.3 The main aim of the Exemplar Transport Scheme was to increase the sustainability of the new development, which forms the Southern Leighton Buzzard Urban Extension Area (SLBUEA), whilst also linking the site to the Town Centre and Railway Station. This would be achieved by ensuring a high level of accessibility to public transport services and walking/cycling links.

1.4 The plans for the Exemplar Scheme was based upon the Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire County Council's Joint Transport Strategy for Leighton Buzzard and the surrounding area, set up in 2005, with the help of Campaign for Better Transport (CBT) as a result of anti-road protests led by South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth (SBFoE).

1.5 This strategy covered a package of "Smarter Choices" for Leighton Buzzard, including improved bus services to the new housing development, following the example of the Silver Rider bus service in Aylesbury.

1.6 In order to overcome the lack of available local authority funding, SBFoE and CBT (led by Stephen Joseph), met with DCLG, supported by Bedfordshire County Council, South Bedfordshire District Council and Arriva. As a result, DCLG agreed to support the initiative on the condition that this be linked to new housing in the area.

1.7 AWEL agreed to create a sustainable, exemplar housing development, on the basis that match funding was provided from Government. Development of this

sustainable transport strategy identified four key strains which underpinned the project:

- To provide a high quality, high frequency bus service to serve the Town Centre and Railway Station;
- Increased cycle parking provision at the Railway Station, in the Town Centre and within the development;
- Civilisation of the main link road to the Town Centre to make walking/cycling more attractive; and
- To provide Real-Time Information Display Screens in each property within the development.

1.8 AWE entered a direct contract with Arriva, to procure the bus service. This meant that they were not bound by normal EU Procurement Laws, requiring local authorities to tender for the service. It also enabled AWE to agree the timetable and operating hours, whilst being mindful of the overall budget available for the service throughout the life of the project.

1.9 To assist with the implementation of this scheme, Bedfordshire County Council (now CBC) made a successful bid to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for £1 million of Growth Area Funding to contribute towards delivering sustainable transport infrastructure for the town. This was accompanied by £2.61 million of developer funding via a negotiated Unilateral Undertaking. This funding has helped to facilitate the implementation of a range of measures since the development commenced in 2007.

1.10 Following this funding, Housing Minister, Ian Wright stated that:

“This project will bring real benefits to the people of Leighton Buzzard. As well as improving residents’ health, it will help to revitalise the Town Centre and bring economic benefits for local businesses by getting people out of their cars. Growth areas are playing a vital role in delivering the new homes we need across the country for new families and young people. I hope to see many more such collaborations between central and local Government and house builders, and would encourage others to follow Leighton Buzzard’s lead.”

- 1.11 The Southern Leighton Buzzard Steering Group¹ was set up in 2007, to collectively help to achieve the aims, objectives, and implement the measures and monitoring programme of the Travel Plan, whilst reviewing its performance and progress.
- 1.12 Supported by a Residential Travel Plan, which includes provision of a range of sustainable transport measures, including a dedicated bus service (Dash Direct), procured by AWEL and operated by Arriva and Real Time Information (RTI) Display Screens in each home.

Scope of Report

- 1.13 This report focusses upon the successes of the project in helping to reduce the number of car trips associated with the development and delivering a sustainable development which encourages and incentivises travel by sustainable modes.

Report Outline

- 1.14 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:
- Section 2.0 reviews the success of the exemplar scheme;
 - Section 3.0 provides an overview of what worked well and what lessons can be learned from the project;
 - Section 4.0 provides a summary and conclusion to the report.

¹ Consisting of Arnold White Estates Limited (AWEL), Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), Arriva the Shires, Leighton Linslade Town Council (LLTC), Stuart Michael Associates Limited (SMA) and South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth (SBFoE)

2.0 SUCCESS OF THE EXEMPLAR SCHEME

2.1 Since the project commenced in 2007, the Steering Group has helped to guide the project and achieve the aims and objectives set. As part of the delivery of the Travel Plan, a range of monitoring mechanisms have been implemented to measure the success of various travel plan initiatives.

2.2 Specific monitoring measures have included:

- Multi-modal traffic surveys to establish movements to/from the site;
- Monitoring of bus patronage on the D1, Dash Direct;
- Monitoring of visitors to Community Website (www.slb.uk.com);
- Recording the number of voucher redemptions;

2.3 A summary of some key successes of the project over the life of the Travel Plan have been provided below.

- Since its launch in April 2010, the bus service has provided a key part of the success of the scheme;
- Patronage has increased by more than 208% in 6 years from 50,370 passenger journeys in Year 1 (2010/11) to 105,060 journeys in Year 6 (2016/17);
- Based on the outstanding success of the Dash Direct, the service was placed Runner-Up at the UK Bus Awards in 2011, within the 'Putting Passengers First' category;
- Due, in part, to the significant increase in bus passengers travelling to the station on the Dash Direct service, Leighton Buzzard's Station Travel Plan won the best "Local Transport Integration" in the Association of Community Rail Partnerships.
- The new cycle parking at the station, paid for by the Exemplar Scheme, resulted in BCC winning the "Best Local Government Contribution" award and the National Rail and Cycle Awards in 2009.
- Thanks to the proactive, collaborative approach of the Steering Group, the scheme was commended at the CIHT/Costain Awards in 2012, under the 'Effective Partnerships' category;
- In 2011, the Station Travel Plan was highly commended at the National Transport Awards under the "Best Station Travel Plan measures for Cycling". It was also shortlisted under the "Contribution to Sustainable Transport" category;

- Throughout the life of the project, the range of measures promoted through the Travel Plan has helped to encourage and incentivise sustainable travel modes, resulting in a reduction of 16.5% in car journeys associated with the site over a 12 hour period during Year 6 (this was as high as 24.2% in Year 3);
- Key infrastructure, including bus shelters with Real-Time Information has been delivered to encourage sustainable travel modes;
- Since its launch in 2010, the D1 bus service has carried more than 600,000 passenger journeys;
- In the absence of a local Chamber of Commerce, the Exemplar Scheme funded the creation of a local business directory;
- The Dash Direct service has become synonymous with reliability and high quality;
- The project has successfully delivered a range of cycle promotion measures, including cycle and bus maps of the town and surrounding area, cycle training, led cycle rides, bike maintenance and a range of joint initiatives with the Primary School and Community House.

3.0 LESSONS LEARNT

3.1 Throughout the delivery of the Exemplar project, there have been a number of challenges/actions for the Steering Group to address and implement. The specific lessons learned during this project are set out in the following sections of the report.

Key Lessons

3.2 A summary of the main lessons from the delivery of the exemplar scheme are provided below.

Early Consultation with Stakeholders

3.3 Throughout the life of the project it has been recognised that involving stakeholders in the decision making process has provided significant benefits and enabled a more inclusive bus service for all and assisted with project delivery.

3.4 Actively consulting and the ongoing two-way engagement with passengers on bus timetables has helped to accommodate not only commuters to/from the station but also shop workers from the high street, whilst stop locations have been agreed in consultation with residents to ensure the impacts of stops are minimised.

3.5 Discussions with other stakeholders, including the Community & Voluntary Action Group (managed the Community House), Greenleas Primary School, the Station Travel Plan, High Street businesses and GoCycle have helped to provide updates, implement joint initiatives and draw upon different areas of expertise.

3.6 Joint working with these stakeholders has helped to minimise the impacts of various measures, whilst joint promotions have enabled funding to go further (e.g. with the GoCycle Team and LSTF project).

Communication is Key

3.7 Communication with the customer has been at the forefront of the Steering Group's strategy and it is acknowledged that a lack of information will result in low patronage. Furthermore it was considered that the presentation of, and ease of access to information can also influence travel choices.

- 3.8 By continually providing subliminal messaging about the service to residents, this increases the potential for motorists to switch from the car to public transport.
- 3.9 Initial communication has been made by way of distributing Residents Welcome Packs to each new resident on the development, which contains; bus and rail timetables, route maps and fare information alongside other sustainable travel information and a local town business and shopping directory.
- 3.10 Further channels of communication to passengers include:
- Email – A database has been created of passenger email addresses, which enables direct communication of any updates to the service, newsletters or promotional offers. To maintain passenger security, these email addresses are maintained on a secure database, which the Travel Plan Coordinator is responsible for.
 - Dash Direct Newsletter – published regularly, available on the bus, in the town library and town hall, this is also e-mailed to those passengers registered with the email database.
 - The community website www.slb.uk.com has direct links to the current timetables and fare information, as well as a feedback form through which customers can contact the TPC directly.
 - Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) is provided at key nodal points and inter-changes, this enables customers to remain informed of the service real time location and can assist with planning onward journeys.
 - RTPI in-house display screens provided with live real-time bus and rail timetable information, directly into each dwelling.
 - Passengers were able to speak directly to AWE and the TPC to discuss any issues and did so regularly throughout the project. This very active involvement in the project made a profound impact on residents travel behaviours.
- 3.11 On all correspondence with the passengers (email, newsletters, etc), contact details of the TPC are included.

Marketing is Critical to the Success of a Scheme

- 3.12 Whilst providing key infrastructure as part of a residential scheme is critical (e.g. pedestrians footways, cycleways, bus services & shelters) to encouraging travel

via sustainable modes, this is only beneficial if residents are suitably informed of what is available to them. Developing a clear marketing strategy for the implementation of the Travel Plan and its range of measures is essential and ensures that there is clear direction to the promotion of the scheme.

- 3.13 Following very early discussions with residents of the Sandhills Estate, it was clear that many hadn't been aware of the previous bus service (Grant Palmer hourly service which did not operate during commuter peak periods), which operated around the site.
- 3.14 Prior to the launch of the D1 service and throughout the life of the Travel Plan, it has, therefore, been essential to develop awareness for the service and to ensure the needs of the passengers (in terms of operating hours) were met. This has been achieved through the Residents Travel Packs, resident inductions, the community website and social media, which have all helped to create awareness, build credibility and provide a consistent source of information for residents.
- 3.15 Without this targeted marketing of the bus service, which also included initiatives with the community house and Greenleas School, it is likely that patronage would not have been as high throughout the project.

Technology is helpful, but can be difficult to adapt to changes

- 3.16 As part of the obligations within the Unilateral Undertaking (UU), it was agreed that Real-Time Information Display Screens would be provided within each property, with the ability to provide 'live' bus arrival/departure information, along with local community information. The aim was to increase awareness of the bus service, particularly for those residents who would not normally think about travelling by bus.
- 3.17 Over the past 10 years since this obligation was included within the UU, however, technology and how people access information has changed significantly. Information which was previously only accessible by computers/laptops is now readily available on mobile devices and custom built apps to help you plan your journey. This provides residents with immediate access to public transport information, thereby making other technology outdated.

3.18 It is, therefore, key that projects learn and adapt with new technology. As the community website monitoring statistics have informed us, use of mobile devices/tablets in recent years has increased dramatically. Information via apps, live feeds and social media, enable people to get real-time information wherever they are. As a result, what was seen as exemplary technology at the commencement of the project, very quickly became dated, unresponsive and was replaced by improved, user-friendly information.

3.19 From the website monitoring software, it was possible to identify trends and changes in how residents accessed information, including which platform (laptop/mobile/etc) was being used. These monitoring statistics also helped to identify which information was being accessed the most on the site, which enabled targeted changes to the website to provide relevant, up-to-date information.

Sharing of knowledge is critical

3.20 Being able to share knowledge between the Steering Group members and other stakeholders has been one of the key benefits of the scheme. Close liaison with the Station Travel Plan team helped to identify passenger demand on train services to/from Leighton Buzzard station. This helped to create the bus timetable, to ensure this met the most popular fast commuter trains into/out of London and Milton Keynes.

3.21 Liaison with other stakeholders such as Greenleas School, the Sandhills Community House and other Steering Group members has also helped to guide the project. A summary of these points is provided below:

Greenleas School	Advised on parking constraints outside school and on surrounding roads
	Provided key travel plan information to enter into Annual Monitoring Reports
	Joint promotions of walking and cycle measures, as well as promotion of bus service within school newsletters
Sandhills Community House	Able to share concerns raised by local residents
	Shared information relating to local community events
	Created a local page on the community website to promote events
	Enabled us to target specific groups with promotions on walking, cycling and public transport
Station Travel Plan Team	Were able to advise when issues with Real-Time displays
	Provided details of initiatives being implemented as part of the scheme.
	Provided details of rail passenger surveys to identify demand for all rail services.
	Provided postcode data for rail users to establish journey origins.

Leighton Linslade 'Go-Cycle' Scheme	Provided support to exemplar Steering Group and shared information relating to local events
	Promoted cycling to residents of Sandhills and Exemplar Site.
	Identified measures and infrastructure improvements to be implemented to help increase cycle journeys to/from the Town Centre.
	Provided cycle training to residents for all levels and abilities.
Residents Inductions & Consultation	Involving residents at each stage of the Travel Plan process has helped to make the scheme a success. This has included resident inductions and personalised travel planning (to establish existing travel patterns and behaviour), consultation with regard to provision of additional bus stops & changes to timetables and residents meetings to discuss issues/concerns within the site.
Ownership of services/drivers	The dedicated bus drivers on the service since its launch, have provided a key social role for many residents, whilst ensuring greater security and trust for younger passengers.

Providing Bus Friendly Roads

- 3.22 Having bus friendly roadways through the Sandhills estate via Johnson Drive proved extremely beneficial at the beginning of the project. Enabling access up to Kestrel Way, which then connects the bus service round to Billington Road ensured that the bus service could penetrate the site. This made the service more visible to residents and enabled new occupants on site to try the bus service from the moment they moved in.
- 3.23 This, along with the strong marketing strategy and resident inductions, helped to increase awareness and patronage early in the project.
- 3.24 By contrast, it is clear that residents to the eastern end of Johnson Drive were not able to access the service as easily. Had the D1 service been able to travel further into the site or through into Billington Park, then it is likely that patronage would have been even higher.
- 3.25 The recent changes to the route to enable the bus to travel along the length of Johnson Drive and turn within Astral Park will help to make the service more accessible for residents to the eastern edge of the site and from some parts of Billington Park.

Partnership working is essential

- 3.26 The creation of a Steering Group has enabled collective thinking, split responsibilities, shared knowledge/resources and has resulted in being able to identify issues and provide solutions as a group.

- 3.27 The diverse range of personnel within the Steering Group, from Public, Private and Community Environmental organisations have all remained dedicated throughout, to ensure the project was a success.
- 3.28 This has been achieved as a direct result of the planning, flexibility and energy by all parties within the Steering Group, which has helped to drive the project forward and to meet the aims and objectives set.
- 3.29 Where necessary, Steering Group members have also not been afraid to have frank and honest conversations and to challenge each another's views to help achieve the desired results.
- 3.30 The Exemplar Project has worked in partnership with the Station Travel Plan Coordinator to establish demand for each train and understand the needs of commuters. As a result, the timetable has been based on train arrival/departure times to ensure interchange between modes is as fast and reliable as possible with particular attention paid to the most popular train times.
- 3.31 Passenger surveys have been carried out, to identify potential issues and how the service can be improved to further integrate with residents travel behaviour. The comments have guided the revisions to the bus timetable.
- 3.32 The measures implemented have resulted in significantly less traffic on the highway network and helped to achieve the aims and objectives set within the travel plan. To provide greater benefit to the wider community, travel plan measures are being promoted to existing residential and employment areas.
- 3.33 A number of sub groups that have been established and members of the Steering Group have very close working relationships with the Station Travel Plan Coordinator, the local Community & Voluntary Action group and CBC's highways consultants Amey. The outcomes are as follows:
- The timetable and length of service has been derived by close working with CBC, Arriva (management and drivers) and Station Travel Plan Group to determine when people travel and to integrate with the trains to/from London and Birmingham;
 - Welcome packs issued to every homeowner include Town Council Newsletters, Bus & Rail timetables, business directories, a church directory, bus vouchers and information on walking and cycling;

- In the absence of a local Chambers of Commerce, the project has funded a local business directory and map of the Town Centre;
- Working with the Town Council, the project funded the local bus, cycle and walking map for the Town;

3.34 This Partnership working has resulted in the project being commended at the National CIHT Awards (2012).

Business Relationship with Arriva & Local Authority

3.35 Throughout the delivery of the exemplar project, Arnold White Estates and the rest of the Steering Group have developed a very close, co-operative and business-like relationship with the bus operator. Arriva's commitment from the outset, to ensure they provide a high quality service that caters for all passengers, has been excellent and all personnel at various stages of the projects delivery (drivers, managers, marketing and administrative staff) have continued to be absolutely committed to the scheme.

3.36 The multi-disciplinary nature of the Steering Group members across various Local Authority disciplines was immensely helpful and has helped to foster stronger working relationships.

Provision of Subsidised Bus Vouchers

3.37 The provision of bus vouchers to both new occupants and existing residents on the Sandhills Estate has helped to create awareness of the bus service and to significantly boost patronage during the early years of the service operating through the site.

3.38 Throughout the project, vouchers were issued to new occupants as part of the Residents Travel Packs, which included vouchers for a total of 18 weeks for use on the D1 service. Targeted voucher campaigns were also distributed to existing residents of the Sandhills Estate and to properties located along the D1 route into the Town Centre, to help increase awareness and promote the service.

3.39 A detailed analysis of the targeted voucher campaigns run throughout the life of the project has been undertaken, to establish whether this had a lasting impact on patronage beyond the initial surge in passenger numbers resulting from voucher redemptions. A summary is provided in **Table 3.1** overleaf.

Voucher Campaign	4 week average prior to voucher distribution	Highest 4 week average during campaign	4 week average after distribution	% change before and after voucher distribution	% increase during voucher campaign	% reduction after voucher campaign
24/09/10 to 04/02/11	850	1362	1204	41.62%	60.24%	-11.62%
29/04/11 to 02/09/11	1120	1627	1599	42.80%	45.32%	-1.74%
23/12/11 to 08/06/12	1718	2043	1888	9.91%	18.89%	-7.55%
26/10/12 to 01/03/13	2087	2016	1682	-19.42%	-3.39%	-16.59%
22/11/13 to 14/03/14	1634	1774	1570	-3.87%	8.57%	-11.46%
20/06/15 to 19/12/15	1686	2261	2130	26.35%	34.10%	-5.78%

Table 3.1 - Bus Voucher Distribution and Change in Patronage

3.40 As the results suggest, in the majority of instances, patronage increased rapidly whilst vouchers were in circulation before reducing slightly at the end of the campaign. It is worth noting, however, that the 4 week average at the end of the campaign was still higher than before the vouchers were issued in all but one occasion. On three occasions (Sept '10 – Feb '11; Apr '11 – Sept '11; June '15 – Dec '15) patronage at the end of the voucher campaigns was more than 25% higher than before they were distributed. Whilst patronage may have naturally increased during these periods, as a result of further promotion/word of mouth, it is considered that the vouchers helped to accelerate this increase.

Annual Monitoring Reports provide easy to digest summary

3.41 The preparation of Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR's) was a commitment of the approved Travel Plan. This was agreed with CBC as part of the monitoring and management strategy for the final Travel Plan.

3.42 Information contained within the AMR's included:

- Multi-Modal Traffic Surveys on the surrounding road network;
- Details of bus patronage, ticket types, popular stops and voucher redemptions;
- Website monitoring statistics (including details of no. of visits, most popular pages/links, how site is accessed (laptop/mobile/tablet));
- Details of arrivals/departures to Greenleas Primary School; and
- Details of construction traffic (which impacts upon modal shift).

3.43 The AMR's helped to monitor progress of the Travel Plan, identify which measures have worked at various stages of the project delivery and plan for the following 12 months. This helped to give direction to the project and provide a constant point of reference to refer to throughout the project. The results were

also used to inform local officers, Councillors and local residents of the schemes success.

Programmed delivery is key

- 3.44 Providing a robust (but flexible) programme of measures/initiatives to be implemented throughout the life of the Travel Plan has helped to maintain focus of the Steering Group, particularly due to delays in construction/occupation rates as a result of the recession.
- 3.45 Setting of actions to Steering Group members during meetings has also helped to delivery key measures across the life of the project, ranging from the initial launch of the bus service, to the installation of infrastructure (such as bus shelters and stops) and completion of travel surveys.
- 3.46 Without the commitment of the Steering Group and partnership approach to the delivery of some key measures, it is likely that the scheme would not have had the successes it has achieved to date.

Clear branding increases awareness

- 3.47 Clear, concise branding of promotional material has helped to provide consistency, build trust and create an identity for the project. The name for the bus service was agreed by the Steering Group in 2010 and a logo produced by Arriva. These logos have been added to all promotional material including the Residents Travel Packs, newsletters, community website and high street promotions.
- 3.48 Following the livery re-design of the bus service, all other promotional material was also amended to reflect the new logo and colour scheme, helping to re-inforce the brand.

Variety of Measures

- 3.49 It is recognised that all households are different and, as a result, their travel behaviours, interests and requirements will vary. Providing a variety of measures throughout the life of the Travel Plan has, therefore, been essential to ensure residents are fully engaged in the project. Each of these measures have

helped to inform and reinforce the aims and objectives to encourage and incentivise travel by sustainable modes.

Essential to manage budgets effectively

- 3.50 With an absolute limit on budget, careful management of the exemplar budget has been critical. With the launch of the bus service, it was important not to commence the service so early that buses would be running empty around the site. At the same time, however, it was important to ensure that new occupants on the site had access to public transport from the moment they moved in. It was, therefore, a very fine line to determine when to launch the service.
- 3.51 Launching the bus service at the appropriate time, helped to extend the life of the Travel Plan period, which was particularly critical in view of the extended construction period as a result of the economic downturn between 2008 and 2012, which impacted upon the number of house occupations on site. During this period it was essential to maintain a close eye on expenditure, whilst delivering the measures required to continue momentum of the project.
- 3.52 Identifying specific fees for individual promotional measures has also helped to control expenditure. This has included:
- Setting annual budgets for Travel Plan Coordination services;
 - Establishing fees for cycle promotions;
 - Fixed budget for creation of website in 2010 and re-design in 2016;
 - Separate budgets for printing of walking/cycling maps;
 - Bus travel surveys;
 - Promotion of high street businesses;
 - Provision of cycles to Greenleas School
- 3.53 Creation of a finance review group consisting of AWEL and CBC, has helped to monitor expenditure over the life of the project. It has also helped to identify upcoming costs, specific measures and to allocate budgets to particular initiatives.

Careful Management of S.106 Triggers is key

- 3.54 Section 106 agreements have played an important role as the traditional method by which local planning authorities have funded infrastructure requirements within their areas. Whilst many triggers provided straightforward delivery of certain infrastructure, as a result of the economic downturn part way through the project, this resulted in some measures not being implemented until much later in the project. This has specifically been the case where infrastructure provision has been linked to delivery of a specific number of dwellings on site or within particular phases.
- 3.55 As a result, it has meant that the bus gate onto Grovebury Lane has been delayed and, subsequently, the Dash Direct Service has not been able to travel through Site 17a. On this basis, this has resulted in a much longer walking distance for many residents to access the services and, therefore, patronage from Site 17a has been lower than anticipated due to the inability to be able to penetrate the site.
- 3.56 As a result, each household within Site 17a generate more car journeys per dwelling compared to Sites 15b-d, which have a regular bus service passing through the site.

Regular Bus Drivers

- 3.57 Arriva's commitment to providing dedicated bus drivers on the Dash Direct service from the outset, helped to provide security and continuity to passengers using the service. Two dedicated bus drivers were selected by Arriva to operate the service, which helped to ensure the drivers were familiar faces to passengers. They both took time to get to know passengers, which was seen as a key community benefit, particularly for vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children and those with disabilities.
- 3.58 The drivers own dedication to the running of the service (on time and to the passenger's satisfaction) has also been instrumental to the increase in patronage, the attractiveness and overall success of the project.

Community House

- 3.59 Set up in 2011, the Sandhills Community House provided a key community facility within the SLB development. Located on Plover Road, within Site 15b, the Community House provided a hub for information on local services and offered a programme of activities, learning opportunities, events and services. These programme events, organised for children, families and adults were scheduled throughout the day and evening.
- 3.60 Various groups to help promote walking and cycling were also set up, with Pauline Roby assisting with cycle training, bike maintenance sessions and led rides around the town. Various other measures were also promoted through the Community House and its staff, including the bus service, real-time display screens and joint initiatives with Greenleas School, the Town Council and Steering Group.
- 3.61 The presence of the Community House and the dedication of its staff, helped to provide an inclusive facility for all residents and helped to continue to promote the various sustainable travel modes available.

Leighton-Linslade GoCycle

- 3.62 In June 2008, the Transport Secretary announced £100m funding for ten new Cycling Towns, together with the six existing demonstration towns. The funding was intended to transform the towns into areas where cycling would become the preferred local options, improving the environment, reducing congestion and increasing fitness.
- 3.63 As part of this scheme, a range of measures were implemented, in close partnership with the SLB Steering Group, which included, but was not limited to:
- National Standards Cycle Training delivered to all schools;
 - Cycle training for adults;
 - Led cycle rides for various groups;
 - Dr Bike sessions at all schools and local events;
 - Improvements to cycle routes, cycle lanes and cycle parking facilities;
 - Ongoing promotion of cycle routes and cycle benefits.

- 3.64 Being able to draw upon the knowledge of the GoCycle Team, helped to focus on delivering cycle promotion measures that were in line with best practice, whilst ensuring that value for money was achieved. Where possible, joint promotions were implemented to help share costs.
- 3.65 A key benefit for residents of the SLB development and the rest of the town was the provision of additional safe, secure cycle parking at the railway station. This has helped to increase the level of cycling to/from the station from all areas of the town.

Engage with residents at an early stage

- 3.66 Changing travel behaviour is most effective when other key life changes occur at the same time (such as moving house, changing schools, retirement). With this in mind, it has been necessary to liaise closely with the sales suites throughout the construction period, to ensure residents were provided with Residents Packs, bus vouchers and other promotional material as soon as they occupy each property. Providing this information once they have already settled in their new property makes it less likely that they will change their travel behaviours.
- 3.67 Ensuring that the D1 was operating as soon as possible enabled new residents to immediately adopt the service from the moment they moved in.

Station Travel Plan Success

- 3.68 Station Travel Plans were an initiative launched by the Government in the Rail White Paper: Delivering a Sustainable Railway (2007). The concept built upon best practice which had long been established in Workplace and Residential Travel Planning. As a result, Station Travel Plans were piloted to help manage travel demand between a railway station and the community it serves.
- 3.69 This was to be achieved through the promotion of measures that aimed to tackle local, transport related, issues such as congestion, and on-street parking, plus the environmental impacts of station travel.
- 3.70 A variety of measures, most notably improving infrastructure and services for non-car modes (e.g. cycle parking) and encouraging people to use these modes

through better car park management and promotion were proposed, to reduce the impact of rail passengers on the surrounding road network.

- 3.71 As a result of the White Paper, the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC), with the support of the Department for Transport (DfT), set up the National Pilot Station Travel Plan Programme of 31 stations of this 3-year programme was to encourage rail passengers to travel to and from the station in a more sustainable manner.
- 3.72 The Station Travel Plan Steering Group included London Midland, Network Rail, BBC (later CBC), LLTC, Buzz Cycles, Off the Rails (a Station Adoption Scheme under ACORP), the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, Arriva, Grant Palmer, Buckinghamshire County Council and chaired by SBFoE.
- 3.73 The Station Travel Plan contained 11 key objectives, each aimed at transferring Leighton Buzzard Station into an effective transport interchange facility, with high quality sustainable transport facilities and services. These objectives included, inter alia, achieving a modal shift away from single occupancy travel for journeys to/from the station; helping to reduce congestion; to increase footfall at the station; to reduce the town's overall carbon footprint, whilst encouraging walking and cycling in partnership with the Go-Cycle team and the SLB Steering Group.
- 3.74 As a result of the support provided by the SLB Steering group and the ability to change the D1 timetable to connect with the fast trains to/from London and Milton Keynes during the peak commuter periods, the Leighton Buzzard Station Travel Plan, 'Get on Track', was awarded First Place in the Local Transport Integration category. With increased cycle parking and improved bus service provision, backed up by a programme of promotional activities, cycling to the station has increased by 58%, with bus travel doubling.

4.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

- 4.1 Stuart Michael Associates Limited has prepared this lessons learnt report to provide a review of the various measures implemented as part of the Southern Leighton Buzzard Exemplar Transport Scheme (SLBETS) and to summarise the lessons that can be taken from the delivery of the project.
- 4.2 It is hoped that this report can be used as a point of reference to avoid mistakes being made on future schemes, to implement the measures which have been successful and to improve upon current project delivery.
- 4.3 The scheme has required effective partnerships with regional, county and local level government in addition to key stakeholders, each with a determination to promote both the site and Leighton Buzzard by encouraging a modal shift towards sustainable travel modes, leading to reduced congestion and increased promotion of local retailers.
- 4.4 The success of this exemplar scheme has been as a result of commitment from a number of private and public organisations, each taking ownership of and remaining highly focussed on achieving the objectives. All decisions made by the Steering Group are done so collectively and it is this partnership working that has helped the scheme to achieve the targets set.
- 4.5 The outstanding results and national recognition for the bus service makes the scheme a best practice example of what can be achieved by having a joined up partnership approach that really connects with the local community and bus passengers. This has been essential to the success of the scheme.
- 4.6 The key benefit to all partners within the Steering Group and to assist with delivery of future projects, has been to understand what the most cost effective measures are. In understanding what works and its cost, both developer (AWE) and Planning Authority (CBC) will be able to demonstrate how to achieve a modal shift at a given cost on future projects.
- 4.7 In summary, some of the key lessons to be learnt from the project are as follows:
- Early two-way consultation and engagement with stakeholders is vital;
 - Good communication between all parties is key;

- Technology is helpful, but can be difficult to adapt to changes;
- Sharing of knowledge is critical (including the bus drivers and residents);
- Partnership working is essential;
- Annual Monitoring Report provide easy to digest information;
- Programmed delivery is key;
- Clear branding increases awareness;
- There should be variety of measures promoted, especially good basic information on bus times, routes, etc;
- Essential to manage budgets effectively;
- Regular bus drivers provide consistency; and
- Engage with residents at an early stage.
- Regular Steering Group meetings
- Commitment from the multi-disciplinary and diverse membership of the Steering Group

Conclusion

- 4.8 It is concluded that the success of the project has been based upon the clear management structure created by the Steering Group. This has helped to maintain focus, preserve the budget available for the life of the scheme and deliver successful results.
- 4.9 Fundamentally, Arnold White Estates (AWE) has taken ownership of the project and the Steering Group has worked well together to deliver the various successes throughout the life of the project.
- 4.10 Special thanks go to all members of the hard working Steering Group, for their efforts and contribution towards achieving the aims and objectives set at the beginning of the project. This group made partnership working a reality and ensured that the scheme was seen as an exemplary project. Currently the Steering Group consists of the following personnel:
- Ian Foll, Arnold White Estates Limited
 - Jim Tombe, Central Bedfordshire Council
 - David Hale, Central Bedfordshire Council
 - Jodie Colclough, Central Bedfordshire Council
 - Jack Holland, Arriva the Shires
 - Paul Morgan, Arriva the Shires

- Mark Saccoccio, Leighton Linlade Town Council
- Victoria Harvey, South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth
- Martin Ohrland, Stuart Michael Associates

4.11 Further thanks also go to the many local shop owners within the town for their input on the scheme, along with residents, who have assisted with bus stop locations, timetables and notifying the Steering Group of any punctuality/service issues on the bus. The following people/organisations have also provided valuable assistance at various stages of the project.

Arnold White Estates Limited	Tanya Wilson, Carina Newton
Arriva the Shires	Mike Conroy, Steve MacDonald, Linsey Frostick, Barbara Watson, Brian Drury, Nigel Bates and all other drivers on the D1 service
Bedfordshire County Council	Melanie MacLeod, Glenn Barcham
Central Bedfordshire Council	Dave Ager, Ann Rowland, Steve Lakin, Paul Dodge, Dave Streeton, Nick Chapman (Amey), James Gleave
Leighton Linlade Town Council	Barry Wardle, Pat Kingsnorth, Debbie Marsh
Sandhills Community House	Vicki Drummond, Gina Croxford, Helen Nottingham
Stuart Michael Associates	Stuart Atkinson, Nicola Clay
Campaign for Better Transport	Stephen Joseph
Vix (ACIS)	Jamie Whiteman, Chris Hardman, Anthony Burgess
Other stakeholders	Dick Llewellyn (Gosschalks); Pauline Roby; Alexia Moyle (Greenleas Primary School); GM Traffic Consultants; Publicity Project; Generate UK; Mark Gatehouse (Persimmon); Keith Millard (Taylor Wimpey), Henry Cleary (DCLG), Cllr Tom Wootton, Gary Emerson (Bucks CC)