

**Local Transport Note 3/08**

October 2008



# Mixed Priority Routes: Practitioners' Guide





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## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

1.1.1 In 2000,<sup>1</sup> the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions (now the Department for Transport, DfT) published its strategy for road safety in *Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone*. In this document Mixed Priority Routes were identified as being among the least safe of urban roads. Subsequently, the DfT invited local highway authorities to submit schemes for inclusion in the Mixed Priority Routes (MPR) Road Safety Demonstration Project where DfT grants of up to £1 million were available for each participating authority. The ten schemes selected to be included in the project covered a spectrum of different types of authority and highway characteristics.

1.1.2 This document reviews the experience from the ten schemes involved in the Demonstration Project and presents the lessons learned through the project to assist practitioners develop similar successful schemes.

1.1.3 This report provides guidance for project managers and senior technical staff who might be involved in the development and delivery of MPR schemes, building on the experience of those that have already been through the process and understand the organisation and delivery issues involved.

1.1.4 The MPR schemes have unique technical solutions to the redesign of their streets. It is not the purpose of this document to set out technical solutions. A brochure entitled *High Street Renaissance* and detailed scheme reports are also published on the DfT website, [www.dft.org.uk](http://www.dft.org.uk).

1.1.5 Following this introduction, Chapter 2 gives a brief description of what Mixed Priority Routes are, identifies the ten schemes involved and outlines the purpose of MPR projects.

1.1.6 Chapter 3 then briefly describes the wide-ranging benefits achieved for the schemes. Chapter 4 discusses the budget and programme issues, while Chapter 5 looks at the team composition and various skills required to deliver successful projects.

1.1.7 Chapters 6, 7 and 8 then look at the main elements of delivery – consultation/participation, design and implementation.

1.1.8 Finally, Chapter 9 identifies the evaluation elements necessary to determine the success of such schemes.

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<sup>1</sup> DETR (2000) *Tomorrow's Roads – Safer for Everyone*. London: DETR



## CHAPTER 2

# Definition of Mixed Priority Routes

### Summary

Mixed Priority Routes are streets that carry high levels of traffic and also have:

- a mix of residential use and commercial frontages;
- a mix of road users, i.e. shoppers, cyclists, bus passengers, schoolchildren;
- a mix of parking and deliveries;

They are not just transport routes. Although dealing with transport and safety is a key element, other concerns associated with the local economy and local communities may also generate an interest in improving the area with economic regeneration and environmental improvements.

There are many benefits to be gained from enhancing the high street environment with an integrated approach. The investment is likely to contribute towards assisting the delivery of a range of local authority corporate objectives and targets including:

- accessibility planning;
- accident reduction;
- economic regeneration;
- Public Service Agreement;
- quality of life; and
- sustainability.

## 2.1 What defines a Mixed Priority Route?

2.1.1 High streets with mixed traffic and diverse use present a unique combination of road safety problems and are among the least safe of urban roads. Within town centres and other areas with a mixture of land uses, pedestrianisation and limited vehicle access schemes have been successful in reducing casualties. However, many high streets and shopping streets are not suitable for such measures, and so other ways are needed to give greater safety to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, by the reallocation of road space and traffic calming.



2.1.2 To assist in understanding how to make high streets a safer and a more pleasant environment, the Department for Transport (DfT) established the Mixed Priority Routes Demonstration Project. The aim of the project was to facilitate the implementation of a number of trial schemes, monitor the effects and provide a good practice guide to assist practitioners in developing such schemes in the future.

2.1.3 The ten schemes selected were:

- Nantwich Road (A534), Crewe;
- Newland Avenue, Hull;
- Wandsworth Road (A3036), London Borough of Lambeth;
- The Parade/Victoria Terrace (B4087), Leamington Spa (Figure 2.1);
- Renshaw Street/Berry Street (A5038), Liverpool;
- Rusholme, Wilmslow Road (A6100), Manchester;
- Prince of Wales Road, Norwich;
- Cowley Road (B480), Oxford;
- St Peter's Street/Chequer Street (A1081), St Albans (Figure 2.2); and
- Walworth Road (A215), London Borough of Southwark.

2.1.4 The main focus of the project was to develop and implement schemes that reduce casualty numbers, while providing wider sustainable benefits. Also important was to ensure that the environment along the route was improved. Providing high quality streetscapes was therefore included in the schemes.

2.1.5 A re-allocation, or better use, of road space was a major feature of most schemes while maintaining access and traffic capacity in order to prevent traffic being displaced onto other roads. The needs of all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, delivery vehicles, passenger service vehicles and motorists were given careful consideration.

*Figure 2.1 The Parade, Leamington Spa (Warwickshire CC)*



**Figure 2.2** *St Peter's Street, St Albans (Hertfordshire CC)*



## CHAPTER 3

# The results

### Summary

Early results across a number of different indicators shows that all the schemes have been successful in meeting their stated objectives:

- safety: all schemes have achieved a substantial casualty reduction of between 24 per cent and 60 per cent;
- environment: noise and air quality measurements have shown improvements;
- accessibility: pedestrian and cycling activity has increased, and children and mobility impaired users generally feel more confident; and
- economy: improvements in the quality of streetscape have led to a reduction in vacant premises and a more vibrant local economy.

### 3.1 Have these schemes been a success?

3.1.1 Before entering into any great detail regarding the experiences in delivering such complex and challenging schemes, we must first highlight their success. Before the end of 2007, all ten schemes were completed in their entirety and over half of the local authorities are now undertaking full 36-month-after monitoring surveys to provide a robust assessment of their impact.

3.1.2 This success has been demonstrated not only in terms of the road safety benefits, but also through wider peripheral benefits. These range from increased economic vitality associated with additional visitors to local shops and services and increased investment in regeneration, to improvements in facilities and the environment. Common to all schemes are the more tangible human and community benefits derived from drastically improved streetscapes, wider footways, reduced dominance of vehicles and better crossing facilities.

3.1.3 While many of the figures discussed represent only the first 12 months of after data in comparison with the 36-month-before monitoring period, they do provide a good indication of the potential benefits of these schemes.

3.1.4 Early results have been analysed where they are available and summaries are discussed below. Fuller details are contained in each individual scheme report, published separately.

3.1.5 The results for the MPR Demonstration Project as a whole have been considered under objectives for safety, accessibility, environment and economy. While MPR has been predominantly a road safety initiative, wider benefits have been achieved across all objectives.

## 3.2 Summary of safety monitoring

3.2.1 Of the ten schemes included within the project, comparative safety evaluations have been undertaken on seven. Even for these the after data are limited. The earliest scheme evaluated is Prince of Wales Road, Norwich (Figure 3.1), which has seen a 60 per cent reduction in casualties in the 2 years and 7 months after the scheme was completed. This equates to a saving of between 9 and 10 casualties per year. Monitoring recently completed on Cowley Road, Oxford shows a 35 per cent reduction in casualties over three years, with a notable reduction in accident severity.

3.2.2 Other schemes, with a shorter duration of after data, have still demonstrated significant casualty savings:

Crewe	31 per cent reduction
Hull	65 per cent reduction
Lambeth	54 per cent reduction
Leamington	50 per cent reduction
Liverpool	26 per cent reduction
Manchester	29 per cent reduction

3.2.3 Most significant savings have occurred in relation to the severity of injuries, and particularly in relation to cyclist and pedestrian casualties. For example, in cost-benefit terms, the monetary casualty savings for the Oxford scheme are in the order of £500,000 in the first year.

3.2.4 In the after period of monitoring, Newland Avenue in Hull has seen a 100 per cent reduction in pedestrian casualties and a 21 per cent reduction in cycle casualties.

*Figure 3.1 Prince of Wales Road, Norwich (Jacobs)*

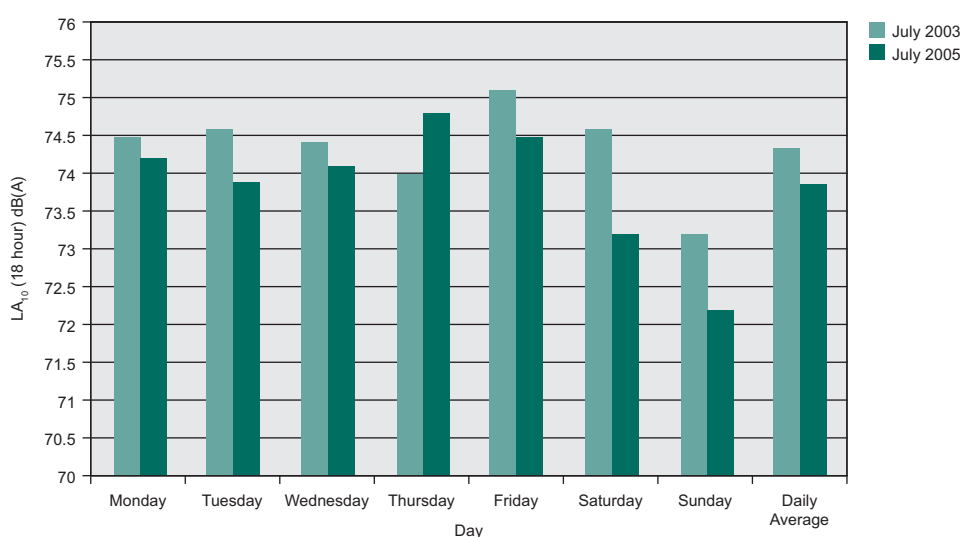


### 3.3 Summary of environmental monitoring

3.3.1 Environmental improvements were an important part of the MPR schemes and have been quantified in some cases through noise and air quality monitoring. In others, public perceptions of the environment were an important part in the evaluation of the schemes.

3.3.2 Nantwich Road in Crewe was subject to comprehensive quantitative environmental surveys which have shown marked improvements in both noise and air quality throughout the scheme. Noise level measurements show a decrease in noise levels after the scheme was introduced at all of the locations monitored, as have similar measurements in Norwich (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Noise monitoring in Prince of Wales Road, Norwich



3.3.3 In Leamington Spa the street appearance, footways and routine road maintenance have all noticeably improved, and this is verified by post-scheme attitude surveys. In addition, there was an increase in people saying that there was room to walk on the footway with a buggy, and that independent travel for wheelchair users was improved.

### 3.4 Summary of accessibility monitoring

3.4.1 Improvement in accessibility for all users was an important aspect of these schemes and was evaluated in terms of the reduced severance experienced particularly by pedestrians (Figure 3.3). Improved crossing facilities and the control of traffic speeds were key aspects of the schemes.

3.4.2 The Newland Avenue scheme in Hull included the conversion of an existing Pelican crossing to a Zebra crossing while installing additional informal crossings. The number of pedestrians using these facilities increased by an average of 18 per cent with cycle usage along the street increasing by 48 per cent (Figure 3.4). In Liverpool, pedestrian activity,



particularly among children and people with impaired mobility, has shown an increase at the revised formal crossings in Berry Street, although it has reduced on Renshaw Street.

3.4.3 Bus usage and reliability across the schemes also increased. In Crewe there was a 7 per cent reduction in weekday public transport journey times together with increased bus flows on the route, with weekend surveys showing a 17 per cent reduction. Newland Avenue in Hull has seen a 27 per cent increase in the number of bus passengers boarding within the scheme area.

3.4.4 Overall traffic volumes have remained roughly constant, with vehicle speeds controlled as many schemes have introduced 20 mph zones. Prince of Wales Road in Norwich (Figure 3.5) has seen a dramatic change in the speed profile in the after survey, with a large reduction in vehicles travelling over 20mph and a commensurate increase under 20 mph. Average and 85th percentile speeds in Leamington Spa have reduced by between 13.5 per cent and 18 per cent.

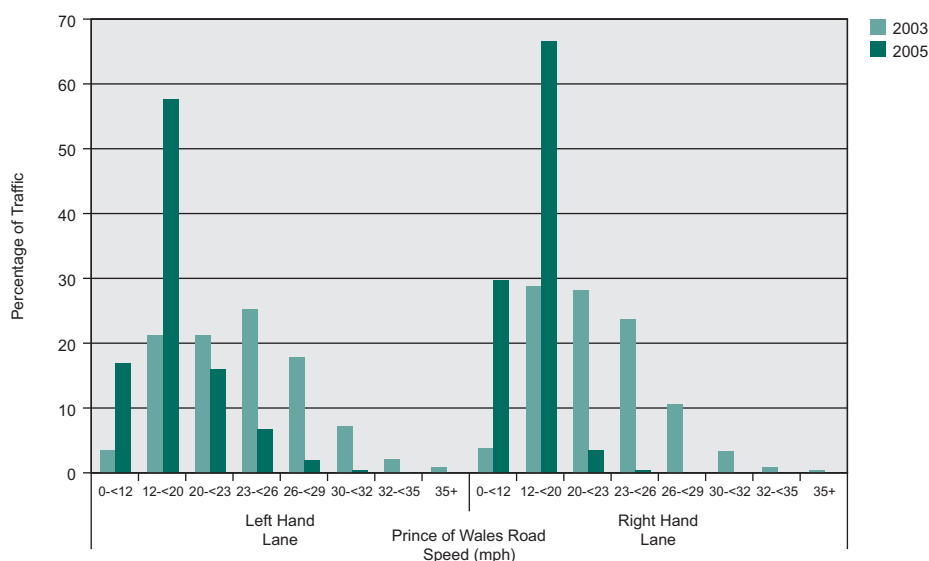


Figure 3.3 Drivers give way to pedestrians in Hull (WSP)

Figure 3.4 Sheltered on-street cycle parking, Hull (Hull CC)



Figure 3.5 Before and after speed comparison, Prince of Wales Road, Norwich



3.4.5 The London Borough of Lambeth undertook a satisfaction survey of residents and businesses following completion of the scheme. Overall satisfaction with Wandsworth Road as a place to live was high, with 72 per cent claiming to be satisfied. It appears that satisfaction with the road surface, the footway paving, pedestrian crossing facilities, the level of noise, greenery and feelings of safety during the day have the most impact on residents' overall satisfaction among all the individual aspects assessed.

3.4.6 There was overall satisfaction with the Wandsworth Road as a place to do business, with 64 per cent claiming to be satisfied. The road surface, the provision of parking bays, the improved aesthetics of Wandsworth Road, and feelings of safety during the day have the most impact on business people's overall satisfaction among all the individual aspects assessed.

## 3.5 Summary of economic monitoring

3.5.1 The impacts of the schemes on local economies were evaluated from a number of different surveys. As already noted the pedestrian footfall along the streets has generally increased, as has parking frequency and availability. Parking activity in Crewe was observed from the same video surveys that had been used for pedestrian surveys, using the same crossing zones to sub-divide the road into eight sections. The figures suggest that there were 550 vehicles stopped on this section of the route mid-week before the scheme was introduced, increasing to 660 after the scheme was implemented.

3.5.2 Surveys of perceptions on the effect of the full Leamington Spa scheme in October 2006 after Victoria Terrace and Bath Street had been completed show that all user groups judge the town centre to have improved. In addition ratings for the individual elements of the scheme were positive with less than 10 per cent of those surveyed holding negative views. There was also evidence of behavioural change such as increases in the



proportion of people judging it to be safe for children to cross the road on their own, with the scheme generally seen as a considerable improvement that has led to regeneration of the area.

3.5.3 Overall, there are around 85 business premises split almost equally between each side of the road, the size varying considerably in terms of number of floors and frontage length. In the before survey, 40 per cent of them were a leisure use, such as fast food outlets, nightclubs, public houses and restaurants, with the remainder mainly a mixture of retail and office use. There were five vacant offices and nine vacant non-office premises, including a site that was being redeveloped.

3.5.4 Over the two-year period to the after survey, some premises have been converted to leisure use and some vacancies have opened as restaurant/club use, bringing the total leisure use up to 60 per cent. The number of office vacancies has remained unchanged, whereas the non-office vacancies has fallen to six with two more about to be occupied shortly. A cinema site has been amalgamated with the adjacent nightclub and renamed, to become the biggest nightclub in the area, as part of the continued move towards the night-time economy.

3.5.5 Early indications across a number of different indicators show that all the schemes have been successful in meeting their stated objectives in attracting more visitors to the area.

## CHAPTER 4

# Budget and programme

### Summary

Although a comparison of ‘before’ and ‘actual’ programmes in the MPR Demonstration Project shows what appears to be a considerable delay in project completion, the reality is that once the extent and scope of construction works were agreed, there were few delays. The change in scope was often a result of widening objectives and securing additional funding rather than any failure in delivery.

The following are key lessons learned in this area:

- Develop a detailed programme from the start.
- Allow for change in the early stages in the process as a result of consultation and engagement activities.
- Pump priming allows more ambitious schemes to be developed rather than the more usual piecemeal approaches – the initial funding gets the project on the table and encourages investment.
- Substantial additional funding can be gained from regeneration/ redevelopment funds – these opportunities need to be identified early on to allow for processing of applications and incorporation of additional objectives and monitoring into the scheme.
- Undertake early analysis of the programmes for other funding streams and modify the programme accordingly.
- Consider carefully how to package the scheme – for example road safety may not be the most appropriate aspect of the scheme to highlight.
- Engage an expert to assist in identifying various relevant funding sources.
- Securing additional funding affects the programme, as schemes need to be adjusted/expanded to meet funding criteria.
- MPR schemes are very difficult to implement on annualised budgets and funding availability over 3+ years should be considered where possible.
- Undertake regular reviews of the project programme and budget.
- Be sensitive to the need to programme construction around religious festivals etc.

## 4.1 Setting a realistic budget

4.1.1 Initial budgets for the MPR Demonstration Project schemes were established through the DfT grant of £1 million which provided a basis for drawing in additional finance. Table 4.1 shows the overall costs of schemes. Additional costs incurred during scheme development have resulted from:

- major increase in the extent of the works, incorporating a greater length or additional treatment of side streets;
- change of material specification to improve the streetscape, gaining environmental benefits, with further gains in terms of future maintenance; and
- initial and/or ongoing consultation and the subsequent additional requirements.

*Table 4.1 Comparison of estimated and out-turn costs. These do not include additional lengths/sections developed as part of a broader package of works.*

Scheme	Before estimate £000	Out-turn costs £000
Oxford	650	1,300
Liverpool	2,800	3,500
Hull	1,000	1,700
St Albans	2,200	4,500
Norwich	1,200	1,259
Crewe	971	2,133
Manchester	2,496	2,935
Leamington	1,000	3,445
Lambeth, London	815	2,500
Southwark, London	1,600	4,000

4.1.2 The original estimates were submitted alongside outline scheme designs as part of the bid for funding from the DfT. Following the funding award, schemes were developed through a data-led approach of establishing and understanding the requirements of all existing road users and their perceived problems. This involved both qualitative and quantitative analysis and initial survey work – a key element in determining the scale of works. By having a quantitative analysis, authorities were able to identify clearly the benefits to be achieved and approach potential funders with a strong case.

4.1.3 As a result of more detailed investigations through site surveys and consultation with stakeholders it was often clear that the schemes outlined by authority staff at the bidding stage did not fully address some of the

issues that were subsequently highlighted. Often this resulted in the expansion of the scheme to include a larger area and/or changes to the design to provide additional facilities. This process impacted on scheme programming and costs.

4.1.4 Key issues to take into account when developing the initial cost estimates are:

- costs of extensive and extended consultation (Figure 4.1), including the need for specialist advice;
- likely palette of material to be used, which can have a significant bearing on the overall cost of the scheme;
- the need for carefully planned traffic management and phasing of the scheme implementation to minimise the impact on traders. This may result in an approach to scheme delivery that balances cost and impact on frontages to deliver a better quality and more acceptable scheme;
- the need for significant input from experienced staff with appropriate skills – officer/consultants time was largely underestimated in this regard;
- the costs of key risk items, particularly at the construction stage; and
- the need for extensive traffic surveys covering, for example, parking, pedestrian footfall, user attitudes to the street, and public transport journey times.



Figure 4.1 Consultation event in Manchester (Manchester CC)

### Setting the boundaries

Defining and limiting the extent of schemes was challenging. Schemes grew as funding enabled further additions and improvements, and also as a result of increased demand and public expectation. Project teams have ensured that funding was available beyond the original programmed completion date to meet these increased expectations.

## Value engineering to reduce construction costs by £1million

Final estimated costs for the Renshaw Street/Berry Street scheme in Liverpool were almost £1 million over the initial estimated cost. This was largely due to the complex traffic management involved in construction. Changes to material specifications and construction methods brought the budget back on target while also shortening the construction programme by four weeks.

## 4.2 Identifying sources of funding

4.2.1 In the past, high streets have been targeted following the identification of accident problems by the road safety team. This needs to be supplemented by an understanding of the movement and operational requirements of the street. Involvement of businesses and users of the street in identifying the wider concerns can be used to generate a more holistic improvement.

4.2.2 It is important to bear in mind that the time and skills necessary to secure funding are likely to have associated costs through both staff time and also through expanding the project, thus increasing the planned workload.

### Making the link to additional funding

Liverpool City Council were able to link their scheme to a number of different objectives:

- Liverpool City Centre Movement Strategy (CCMS) – a £73 million programme of works aiming create a friendly city centre that is safe, clean and attractive;
- £3 million from regional and European re-development funds; and
- transport interchange improvements at the northern end of the scheme secured a £370k contribution from Merseytravel.

4.2.3 With a more co-ordinated approach, various funding sources were successfully identified to supplement the initial costs. A mixture of local authority capital and revenue funds were used, such as Local Transport Plan (LTP), lighting, leisure, maintenance, school and District Council contributions, in addition to Arts, central Government grants and European sources, together with private sector sources (individual businesses, Chambers of Commerce, bus operators and developer contributions).

## Quality of the environment

The Nantwich Road scheme in Crewe was initially developed on the basis of undertaking minimal works along the route. Only a nominal amount was identified for improving street lighting, and no allowance was made for improvements to the landscape and streetscape, even though it was recognised that this would likely form part of the scheme. An updated estimate, after the initial consultation with the Community Working Group, saw the costs rising to as much as £2.7 million, which was subsequently reduced to £2.1 million. Much of the increase was due to the increased quality and extent of streetscape materials and enhancements to the street lighting.

## 4.3 Identifying wider benefits and packaging the proposals

4.3.1 To draw upon the wider funding streams requires the development of a scheme package that clearly meets the funding requirements. It is essential that initial seedcorn funding is identified early in the process. This may require a re-focusing of the scheme to meet the objectives of the funding.

4.3.2 Consequently, it can be beneficial to have access to ‘expert’ advice from within the authority if at all possible. Many authorities employ an individual or small team to bid for funds and they may be able to advise on an appropriate approach.

4.3.3 Support from the regeneration team at an early stage can also assist in packaging schemes to other funders for maximum effect, as they are usually both experienced and successful in doing this.

4.3.4 There are no hard and fast rules about what these will be as the local economic and social characteristics of the area differ greatly. The MPR schemes have secured, funding through diverse sources, including:

- Section 106 (Town and Country Planning Act 1990) agreements with developers (Figure 4.2);
- regeneration funds (central Government and European Union);
- LTP funds, including both capital and maintenance streams;
- targeted social funding from central government, addressing social, economic and other inequalities; and
- investment from the private sector, for example investment from public transport operators.



## Funding the vision

Cheshire County Council identified that the location of the Nantwich Road scheme in Crewe linked into potential improvements for access, particularly by bus, to the railway station. Enhancements to the scheme and review of the objectives were successful in gaining additional funding through the LTP and M6 Midman Programme (Midlands to Manchester multi-modal study).

4.3.5 A profile of potential funding sources needs to be drawn up for each MPR scheme. Once all potential sources have been identified, funding considerations can be included within the vision and objectives of the scheme.



Figure 4.2 St Albans, use of S106 for junction improvements (WSP)

## 4.4 Planning around different budget timescales

4.4.1 Both the initial scoping/concept and budget constraints influence the scheme programme, and it is vital to establish realistic funding. However, the varying timescales over which different funding regimes operate also need to be considered. Without this, complications in programming can arise, as assumptions will need to be made about what funding is available and when.



4.4.2 Significantly, this means the management team for the project needs to understand when funding sources open and close. They need to have flexibility within the programme to allow the scheme designers to maximise the funding opportunities. Clear and early decisions have to be made, and communicated, when this happens.

## 4.5 Allowing for delays

4.5.1 Without exception, the authorities involved in the MPR Demonstration Project were over-optimistic on the timescale for development and implementation of the schemes (see Table 4.2).

*Table 4.2 Timescale for schemes*

Scheme	Original completion	Actual completion
Oxford	July 05	Nov 05
Liverpool	Mar 05	Dec 05
Hull	Mar 05	Oct 05
St Albans	May 06	Mar 07
Norwich	Sept 03	Jun 04
Crewe	Apr 04	Apr 05
Manchester	Sept 03	Dec 04
Leamington	Mar 04	Oct 05
Lambeth, London	June 04	Feb 07
Southwark, London	May 05	Apr 07

4.5.2 Any failure in keeping a project to programme not only leads to stakeholder frustration, but also undermines the willingness of those key to the project to commit to involvement over the longer term. It is therefore imperative that a realistic programme is developed and communicated to all involved.

4.5.3 The amount of time and effort required for consultation was generally underestimated, and some authorities felt that more time should have been built into the programme for additional design development work resulting from this increased stakeholder input.

4.5.4 The programme must therefore be developed on the basis of a well-defined consultation and engagement strategy. This should reflect the time taken to undertake consultation and engagement, to identify and develop options to reach consensus on the way forward in the light of these findings.

4.5.5 Given the impact that delays can have on public perception, the stage at which a timetable for the scheme is made public is crucial. With the greater risk to the programme occurring in the early stages; publicising anticipated construction periods without having a well-developed design may raise the expectations of stakeholders unreasonably.

## 4.6 Expect the unexpected

4.6.1 It is worthwhile developing a strategy that can take account of both changes in funding and scope as they arise. Contingencies and alternative scenarios need to be built into the programme.

4.6.2 It has to be appreciated that the involvement of different agencies and funding streams will not bring quick solutions, even for small schemes. The balance between intensive periods of activity and times when little seems to be happening must be recognised and planned into the process.

4.6.3 Authorities need to engage with utility companies at an early stage. Major refurbishment utility works can cause significant delays to agreed programmes. Major gas pipeline renewal works were undertaken for a period of 10 months along Wandsworth Road prior to the scheme being constructed.

### There's no avoiding utilities

The location of services and the need for their diversion can seriously affect scheme design. Liverpool City Council used ground-penetrating radar surveys (at the time a relatively new method) in addition to service drawings to establish a clear picture of what limitations were to be imposed on the designers. The radar survey helped to identify a 132 kV cable lying as shallow as 500 mm in some areas. It was not feasible to divert the cable in advance of, or as part of, the works, so the designers worked around the cable. Discoveries like this during construction would have had serious implications to both budget and programme.

## CHAPTER 5

# Team composition

### Summary

One commonly held opinion among the local authority project managers and key staff has been that they have benefited a great deal from their involvement in the Mixed Priority Routes Demonstration Project. The reasons for this vary as widely as the schemes themselves: from improving relationships with local communities, the experience gained and challenges provided, through to seeing working methods being rolled out further within an organisation after seeing the benefits.

- Diverse skills are needed – these need to be planned and staff trained or external service providers found. Play to people's strengths; do not try to put square pegs into round holes.
- Team composition and inputs will vary – plan for different skill requirements.
- There needs to be a dedicated project manager throughout the process.
- Draw the team from all partners – internal, service providers, voluntary sector, residents and businesses.
- Access expertise for the consultation/engagement and communication processes.
- Use of external service providers may need careful management.
- Relations with councils and other highway authorities can be difficult and a challenge, as often a single point of contact is not available.
- Early support from local officials is crucial in obtaining continuing support. However, the effect of local elections should not be underestimated and reinforces the need to gain strong and broad support from the public.
- Delegated powers can be used to good effect, provided there is political confidence about the overall delivery.

## 5.1 Key skills needed

5.1.1 Mixed Priority Route schemes will draw upon a range of skills and experience that may fall outside the boundaries of those traditionally tasked with the delivery of road safety related schemes. Successful projects require

a broadly-based skill set for integrated and comprehensive solutions to be developed and delivered. These schemes also place significant emphasis on project teams in terms of maintaining continuity over extended project durations.

5.1.2 In addition, the integrated approach in busy urban environments means that stakeholder engagement, compromise and conflict resolution, combined with the development of consensus, are vital aspects of a successful project.

## 5.2 Key personnel

### Councillors

5.2.1 Different authorities have different structures of governance, so the elected officials involved may differ. They may be the cabinet official with responsibility for transport and highways, the local councillor for the ward (Figure 5.1) or a member of the transport committee. Regardless of exact structures in place, the close involvement of elected officials has been shown to generate significant benefits to the scheme. This is for a variety of reasons, including:

- providing political weight and acceptability to any events that are undertaken as part of the project;
- assisting in generating enthusiasm and a desire to be involved among the various stakeholder bodies engaged in the scheme development, design and delivery process;
- maintaining direction and momentum during difficult stages in the design and delivery process;
- assisting in reaching compromise in areas of difficulty and, if necessary, making key decisions on design issues; and
- providing guidance on the political sensitivities of key aspects of the project, including messages presented during the stakeholder engagement process.

### Project director

5.2.2 With appropriate political support, these projects will be able to develop a momentum and a pan-authority acceptance. However, the level of direction and guidance provided by elected officials will inevitably be relatively low.

5.2.3 The project director fulfils the role of liaising between the technical team and politicians and needs to manage the inevitable staff turnover that takes place on long-term projects. Key criteria for the project director are to:

- be a senior member of the authority's management team able to commit resources to a project and make strategic decisions;
- have direct links and influence with key stakeholders;



Figure 5.1 The community gets involved (Hull CC)

- have direct links with the senior management team in other authority departments;
- have an understanding of regeneration issues, urban/streetscape design as well as safety and traffic engineering; and
- have an appreciation of good practice in project and programme management.

5.2.4 The project director will have a series of significant roles in the project that are fundamental to the successful delivery of the scheme. These roles are to:

- keep the officials informed on progress and to prepare/manage for key decisions to be made in a timely fashion;
- develop strategies for conflict resolution and the reaching of consensus among different delivery partners;
- retain an overview of the original agreed scope of work, aims and objectives and to challenge all parties where there is a risk of, or actual, drift in the scope of work;
- challenge the processes, for example consultation methods to ensure good practice;
- ensure that the project team has access to appropriate project management skills; and
- ensure continuity of purpose and direction is maintained throughout the design and delivery process through appropriate handover of information if and when the project team changes.



## Project manager

5.2.5 The project manager is the lynch-pin of the project. It is a challenging role which requires someone capable of managing complex projects. They will also be required to reconsider some of their own thinking and the methods of working of long-established departments and teams. The appointment of an appropriate high-quality project manager is one of the key criteria for success of an MPR project.

5.2.6 The project manager will be responsible for:

- translating the vision into reality;
- co-ordinating and managing other initiatives within scheme limits;
- managing a multi-disciplinary team, where effective communication skills are a must;
- managing the aspirations of the community;
- identifying and negotiating other sources of funding;
- negotiating the wider benefits of the scheme with strategic bodies ;
- ensuring that the project programme is developed and maintained;
- undertaking regular reviews of the project budget and scope;
- delivering appropriate skills and resource to the design team at the correct time;
- procuring specialist services required for the project;
- identifying and managing the key risks for the project;
- enabling working across departments and with external service providers; and
- managing a wide range of technical skills required throughout the scheme development and delivery process.

## Project team

5.2.7 The skills identified below (in addition to those of traffic and highway engineer) will all be required at some point during the scheme and will play an essential role in delivering a successful scheme.

### Planners/transport planners

5.2.8 Planners and transport planners can perceive problems, issues and solutions in a different context from the traffic engineering and road safety teams, as they often have a greater awareness of the broader policy objectives that are relevant to the scheme. This understanding allows the development of strategies for the scheme that deliver not just the road safety aspects of the scheme, but also the wider scheme objectives. This in turn will result in increased buy-in from local stakeholders and also give opportunities to access funding sources outside of those traditionally used for road safety schemes.

## **Regeneration**

5.2.9 Chapter 4 on budget and programme clearly identified the diverse opportunities available for sources of funding that can be secured for such schemes. In this way the schemes are similar to a regeneration project, addressing widely varying problems and requirements and securing funding from numerous sources. In addition, one of the benefits being delivered via Mixed Priority Routes is regeneration. The project manager should seek advice from the authority's regeneration team at an early stage to assist in shaping the project and to develop a strategy for maximising funding opportunities.

## **Engagement and consultation**

5.2.10 Chapter 6 of this guidance addresses the need for comprehensive engagement of all local stakeholders. The users of Mixed Priority Routes are diverse in nature and they all have a valid and valuable perception of the route and a stake in the delivery of a successful scheme. To engage this wide variety of stakeholders in an effective manner will not be achieved through the conventional approaches often adopted by authorities. Specialist skills will be required to develop and deliver communication strategies that deliver positive results.

## **Traffic signal engineers**

5.2.11 Traffic signals will often form part of the design solution for a project. Traffic signals can be a significant contributor to improving permeability of the road space and in the reduction in vehicle speeds. Traffic signal engineers must form an integrated part of the design team to ensure their recommendations and proposals address the key issues rather than simply complying with a standard set of signal requirements.

## **Contractors**

5.2.12 The long-term acceptability of these schemes will be dependent on the impact that frontagers experience during the construction period and the quality of the final product. Contractors have a significant role to play in delivering schemes that are quick and easy to deliver while maintaining the quality finish required.

## **Urban/streetscape design**

5.2.13 The nature of these schemes means that an improvement in the streetscape is a fundamental part of the delivery. This is a specialist skill that may need to be delivered from sources outside the traffic engineering teams.

## **Data monitoring**

5.2.14 Traffic and other quantifiable data provide a traditional comparison of the before and after situations, but they can also influence the designs and can be used during public consultation to reinforce the decision-making process by providing logical reasoning for different aspects. Input from a dedicated team may also help in rationalising what can be a bewildering array of requirements.



## Evolving the project team

The range of skills involved in delivering this kind of project from inception through to construction is considerable, to say the least. Different skills are required at both the development and design/implementation stages. An official from Lambeth's development team provided valuable input to the public engagement and conceptual design stages.

Liverpool City Council ensured that skilled project management was in place for the design and construction elements of the scheme. These work areas were overlapped in the programme to provide the necessary background and insight to ensure successful handover and delivery. The contractor and the implementation project manager were involved during detailed design to monitor buildability and develop detailed traffic management proposals.

## 5.3 Changing skills through the process

5.3.1 Key to the success of the project is the delivery of the right skills at the right time, both at the decision-making stage and throughout delivery of the project.

5.3.2 The aspects of resourcing that differ from conventional traffic engineering projects are:

- Consultation and engagement – because of the importance of developing and maintaining buy-in during the whole process, these resources are needed earlier than normal in the design process, from scheme inception. The process of engagement must also be maintained all the way through to completion of the scheme to ensure that the needs of the local frontagers, including traders, are identified and addressed.
- Project management – these projects are more involved and take much longer to deliver than conventional improvement or casualty reduction schemes. The comprehensive engagement also presents a series of challenges in terms of delivering to a fixed timescale. A good understanding of broader project management techniques is vital to the successful management and delivery.
- Urban design and streetscape – the project team needs to ensure that the concept designs are translated effectively into the final delivery. The detailed development and delivery of schemes need to ensure that the original concepts are retained. Minor changes in materials and engineered delivery can inadvertently dilute the original scheme to the detriment of overall acceptance.

## Outsourcing consultation to local organisations

Hull and Oxfordshire councils employed external organisations to lead consultation events. East Oxford Action, a local community enterprise, was key to ensuring that the methods utilised were geared to engaging all parts of the local community including the traditionally hard to reach groups. In Hull, the local university (Lincoln School of Architecture) was used to bring a fresh, innovative approach to community engagement (Figure 5.2) and arranged a number of successful events on Newland Avenue.



Figure 5.2 Community street audit (Hull CC)

## 5.4 Managing different disciplines

5.4.1 Throughout the process, the different disciplines involved will have their own perspectives to bring to the process. They will also have differing views on what aspects should take priority.

5.4.2 A key component in the successful management of these disciplines is to have clear objectives set from the outset and agreement on how each of the disciplines is contributing to these objectives. Time to co-ordinate and agree these views needs to be built into the process.

5.4.3 Each element within the design needs to be related to the achievement of the overall scheme and its importance recorded. Any changes to the elements within the design then need to be considered against the objectives. Before changes are confirmed, they need to be referred to the discipline responsible for its inclusion. This needs to be done with a considered understanding of the implications both on acceptability and budget, which can only be achieved when all the implications are understood.

5.4.4 Throughout this process the external stakeholders that have taken part during the consultation also need to be involved. The role they take in the design and implementation process is important and they need to be kept informed about changes and the reasons for them.

5.4.5 Several of the successful schemes included a steering group to liaise between the technical delivery teams and various stakeholders, both internal and external. These included technical and political representatives to oversee effective delivery.

## 5.5 Allocating resources

5.5.1 Keeping all the parties involved aware of the changes and requirements over both the short and long term is important to the successful allocation of resources. Resource planning needs to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure key deadlines and timeframes are confirmed before work is committed.

5.5.2 Regular reporting mechanisms for the whole team need to be established so that co-ordination is maintained. Key contacts for each discipline/stakeholder need to be included and a communication strategy developed for both management and engagement.

## 5.6 Early contractor involvement

5.6.1 Early contractor involvement (ECI) is increasingly recognised as an important input to the design process. The involvement of contractors prior to the design being finalised provides a number of benefits. It:

- identifies opportunities for costs to be saved, either through an alternative specification or by allowing for a more efficient construction process;
- reinforces the importance of delivering a quality finish for the project and engages the contractor so that more experienced construction teams are involved in the process; and

- involves the contractor in the stakeholder engagement process, ensuring they are sensitive to the frontagers' concerns and the commitments made during the design process.

## 5.7 Managing change

5.7.1 Change is inevitable as part of the complexity and timescale of MPR schemes. The key to managing this change is to:

- understand and appreciate competing demands on-street;
- identify the rationale for changes;
- identify changes;
- know whom they affect;
- assess impact and discuss with those affected while maintaining a good balance; and
- communicate changes effectively to all affected.

5.7.2 Success in managing this part of the process will lead to reduced delays and costs. The inevitable consequence of not achieving this is a less effective scheme – either in design terms or in overall acceptability – and can result in additional consultation, committee approvals or revisions to what was believed to be an accepted design.

## 5.8 Unitary and two-tier authorities

5.8.1 Schemes have been implemented across a range of different authorities: unitary, two-tier, metropolitan and London boroughs. They have different reporting structures that need to be accommodated within the development and approval of measures. In all cases the support from officials and their active involvement in the process were essential.

### Gaining consensus in a two-tier authority

Some difficulty can be experienced with communications between county and district authorities. It is important that there is one single decision-maker at any partnering authority – dealing with specific individuals for views on different aspects of the project can result in a range of conflicting opinions.

In Cheshire, the Environment Committee deals with the major transportation issues in the county, and the Crewe and Nantwich Highways and Transportation Local Joint Committees (the Local Joint Committee) deal with the matters relating to the highways service in the district. Following the successful award of the Nantwich Road scheme, the Local Joint Committee agreed to the establishment of a Community Working Group to assist with the development of the project reporting to both the councils and other organisations of progress and changes.

## Delegated authority

5.8.2 Whether full committee approval or delegated powers are in place needs to be established at the outset. Consideration should be given for the relevant authorities' requirements and programmed into the scheme development. Throughout, regular reporting or involvement of members of all bodies involved needs to be maintained.

5.8.3 Even where delegated powers of officer approval have been granted, there may be value in having an overseeing committee to ensure that the schemes meet the overall corporate objectives of the authorities involved.

## Different committee approvals

5.8.4 It is rare for authorities to have the same committee structures and approval processes. Some may be similar, but all are different to some degree. It is important that the various approvals and commitments are achieved in order for schemes to progress.

5.8.5 The MPR schemes have been implemented successfully where a variety of different structures have been in place. Throughout the process, officials and governing bodies have been kept informed of the development of the schemes and, even where formal approvals were not required, communication with relevant councillors has been maintained. The active support of officials is vital to the success of these schemes.

## Keeping officials involved

### Keeping the decision-makers on board

A partnering group made up of stakeholders and officials in Hull ensured that the key decision-makers were kept informed of progress at monthly meetings. This kept all parties on board and enabled representatives from the residents' association and traders' association to feed back to the local community.

5.8.6 Where two-tier highway authorities are involved, or where district councils and other bodies (i.e. TfL) are involved with elements other than direct highway matters, these have been useful forums to keep politicians up to date in understanding the development of measures.

5.8.7 Programming of these meetings and ensuring that all are informed of relevant progress – and emerging problems – is essential to the smooth running of the scheme. As details are progressed, additional approvals may be needed and, without the relevant people having adequate knowledge of the design, procedures can lead to reporting delays.



5.8.8 In many cases, officials will be happy to be directly involved in the development of the scheme. Effort should be made to integrate their personal involvement within the wider design process. Aside from the benefit of achieving more rapid approval of schemes, their involvement (Figure 5.3) will also improve the team's ability to address any particularly difficult issues with the community.

*Figure 5.3 Scheme opening, Hull (WSP)*



## CHAPTER 6

# Consultation, engagement and stakeholder participation

### Summary

- Consultation is a continuous and variable process.
- It needs a dedicated team for the on-going process.
- Plan for external resources or specific training of staff.
- An overall strategy needs to be developed for the whole process – identifying a hierarchy of needs, controlling expectations, identifying the key individuals and reacting to their needs, while maintaining a balanced approach.
- Engaging the community (particularly certain groups) can be included in overarching project goals.
- Appropriate budgets need to be set in accordance with proposed levels of engagement.
- Consultation/engagement needs integrating in the design process.
- Many of the engineering subtleties/requirements are not understood by the general public. They need to be fully explained.
- Be realistic in both the timing and use of relevant data in the process.
- Training and information for the end user is sometimes necessary so that they understand the intended use of new infrastructure.
- Remember to evaluate and improve for the next project.

## 6.1 Identifying stakeholders

6.1.1 Traditionally, local schemes have been developed with minimal involvement of the public. Authorities often simply told residents what they proposed for their area. If a scheme was particularly important or controversial, authorities sometimes made a more concerted effort to gather opinions by way of a public meeting or exhibition. However, it was not always clear how much notice authorities take of the views people expressed and as a result a level of scepticism remains in many areas among the public.



## From consultation to a direct influence on design

A range of special-interest groups were consulted in order to provide more detailed end-user input on some of the more contentious elements of the Cowley Road scheme in Oxford. A local cycling group was consulted to develop the scheme and disability groups helped to shape the accessibility element of the scheme, both groups influencing the design. Many other authorities engaged disability access groups to ensure that schemes catered for the end user rather than traditionally following established standards or guidelines.

6.1.2 If a scheme sets out not only to improve the appearance of an area but also its social/economic capital, then authorities must take a much more radical approach. It is not enough simply to present a range of options. Hard work is needed to build a sense of involvement and to develop a scheme that truly reflects stakeholders' aspirations. This approach can establish community ownership of the scheme.

6.1.3 Authorities have to identify the key players at the start and include their inputs during scheme development. Residents and businesses are obvious players, but engaging them for the duration on a voluntary basis can be a time-consuming task requiring specialist skills. Other agencies can have the skills and networks in place to access the key groups. However, authorities may first need to explain what is intended and what might be involved. This could include making available general information on the concept – for example likely benefits, potential negative impacts, and alternative options. The authority should, however, also explain what needs to be done to implement a scheme.

6.1.4 In devising a strategy to engage potential stakeholders, it is important to consider how to involve hard-to-reach groups. These may be people facing barriers such as caring commitments, mobility impairment, visual impairment, poor literacy, language difficulties, geographical isolation, young people or groups who feel excluded from society. The team should not assume that they are aware of all of the groups that should be engaged. Information on these sources may be found with the authority's communications team, with the department dealing with constitutional and democratic issues and with the various departments and other agencies working in the field, for example:

- education;
- health;
- police, and fire and rescue;
- social services; and
- education.

6.1.5 It is recommended that an independent view is sought, at an early stage in the process, of how this engagement might be delivered, to allow the project manager to determine whether longer-term support is required for this activity.

## Maintaining contact

6.1.6 Communication is a crucial component of the project, and it is necessary to develop an effective communication strategy for the scheme development process. Previous research and experience has shown the vital need for good and extensive public involvement at all stages.

6.1.7 This needs to start at the outset, as part of understanding the issues and continue throughout design and implementation.

6.1.8 Not only was consultation (Figures 6.1 and 6.2) an important part of the process as part of these schemes, but also active participation. Initial involvement started with identifying the stakeholders. In addition to the residents and businesses involved along the street, transport operators, housing, education, and social services were identified, as well as police and statutory undertakers.

### It's all about the PR

Anticipating the likely disruption from an extensive traffic management regime, Liverpool City Council employed PR/Media consultants October Communications to handle public relations for the Renshaw Street/Berry Street scheme and other major works in the city. The liaison role involved press releases for advance warning to the public of potential disruption. The effect of wider city centre regeneration works, branded 'Big Dig Liverpool', were broadcast on local radio to disseminate information to the public on a daily basis about the status of all works in the city. As a result, public awareness of work was high and therefore very little negative feedback was received either directly or through the local press.

*Figure 6.1 Public consultation, St Albans (Hertfordshire CC)*



*Figure 6.2 Prize winner as part of the Lambeth consultation (LB Lambeth)*



6.1.9 Communication has to be maintained throughout with the various bodies involved, with clear timetables and explanations. Even when there appears to be little tangible development, activity in parts of the team can be intense. This is often not recognised in the conventional planning processes and not communicated to stakeholders.

6.1.10 Many non-professionals can find it difficult to interpret plans and layouts, so authorities need to consider other approaches. One successful approach is to involve children – often through the local school – in producing models of the area. Another is to develop a three-dimensional computer-generated simulation so that residents can identify their surroundings. Established techniques such as ‘planning for real’, where residents are actively involved in assessing their area and planning the layout, have been useful in developing people’s understanding of how their surroundings currently work – or don’t. Even a computer-game format has been used to get a younger audience involved.

6.1.11 These skills may be available within other local authority departments; community development workers, if available, have many of the links with the community and the skills required. In some cases the voluntary sector may have both the linkages and the resources. There are a number of consultancies providing these specialist skills as well.

6.1.12 Authorities should bear in mind that a number of other stakeholders will have an interest. It is important to involve all stakeholders so that their requirements are not overlooked. Those with an interest may include other sections of the authority which is promoting the scheme, for example maintenance and service providers, as well as:

- emergency services;
- operational services;
- other local authorities;
- groups representing road users;
- local access groups;
- disabled persons groups; and
- utility or service companies.

## 6.2 Appropriate methods

6.2.1 There are a number of methods of stakeholder involvement, with differing levels of engagement:

- **Raising awareness and providing information:** This involves the use of methods to notify people of the proposed strategy, improvements, progress and decisions that have been made (Figure 6.3).
- **Consultation:** Members of the public are encouraged to contribute to identifying issues; establishing objectives and shaping solutions identified for the area. The decision making, however, continues to rest with authority and project team following consultation. It is important that any decisions taken as a result of consultation are fed back adequately to those who were consulted. If not, this can create antagonism and difficulties later in the process.
- **Participation:** This is a two-way dialogue and encourages active involvement in the development of strategies and specific measures. Participants can directly influence the outcomes and share in the decision-making process. It includes identifying and prioritising problems, developing strategies and agreeing an approach together with local people or stakeholders.

*Figure 6.3 Exhibition tent, St Albans (Hertfordshire CC)*





## Maintaining the dialogue with stakeholders

Many of the schemes were implemented in areas where there is a very tight-knit community where maintaining contact and support for the scheme proved to be vital in terms of its perceived success. At Newland Avenue in Hull, residents and traders were involved in the partnering group for the project, which met monthly to discuss progress. This was maintained throughout the project lifecycle, including the construction phases when contractor representatives were also involved to address any issues that stakeholders were experiencing on site.

*'We are delighted to see the Wandsworth Road project completed. The scheme was developed from our community blueprint, the Stockwell Masterplan, which identified the Wandsworth Road as a priority area for a package of environmental, community safety and pedestrian improvements. First and foremost local people wanted to see measures that reduced the dominance of traffic on this busy route into London. The project has seen a massive increase in pedestrian crossings, wider pavements, improvements to street lighting, better street signage and tree planting and landscaping schemes. It would be great if we could work with Lambeth Council/TfL/DfT and other external agencies to develop and deliver similar improvements on the other major roads running through our neighbourhood., The Director of the Stockwell Partnership.*

6.2.2 A wide range of activities were successful in delivering the above types of involvement. Some examples are identified below.

6.2.3 Informing stakeholders could include:

- coverage through the media, such as local newspapers and radio – frequently a low-cost, high-penetration approach. For target groups the use of community radio and newspapers can be effective;
- posters, leaflets and information sheets – a means of communicating more information, but take-up can be limited. Care needs to be taken that the language and format used in documentation is accessible; and
- the internet – there exists significant potential, although careful design is important and levels of web access must be carefully considered.



#### 6.2.4 Consulting stakeholders could include:

- questionnaires – a commonly used means of gaining feedback on options. Care must be taken to ensure key language groups are served;
- public meetings – these need to be managed with some care to ensure appropriate messages are presented in an effective manner; and
- discussion groups – these groups are randomly drawn from the community and provide a valuable means of gaining a level of insight and information not available through questionnaires.

#### 6.2.5 Participation activities could include:

- Transport Forum/Citizens' Panel – these panels provide a means of gaining regular feedback on strategic issues from a cross-section of the community. It provides a valuable forum for those responsible for strategies or schemes to test the water;
- community workshop – for particularly large schemes, community workshops (Figure 6.4) might be held to allow local representatives of all users to provide their input to the problem and the solution identification process.

6.2.6 There is, however, no fixed strategy for the engagement of the community and stakeholders. It is vital that any project develops a consultation, communication and engagement strategy that clearly sets out at the start of the project the time, nature and purpose of all communications. This needs to be carefully co-ordinated with the overall programme of activities. By taking a proactive approach, it is possible to maintain momentum during quiet periods, communicate positive messages and also deliver benefits through improving the sense of community involvement in decision-making.

*Figure 6.4 Project board – design workshop (Hull CC)*



## 6.3 Dealing with conflict

6.3.1 Conflicts are an inevitable outcome of any significant changes to the street scene. It is important to recognise from the outset that there are significant and widely varying vested interests in the layout of the local high streets.

6.3.2 Separating the design function from that of engagement and negotiation has merits, providing a buffer zone between the designers and the users of the street. This allows trade-offs to be made without getting tied into discussions about engineering feasibility, frequently seen by the lay person as a ruse and excuse for not addressing their needs. This approach does require the design team and the engagement staff to trust and understand each other.

6.3.3 Probably the most important requirement is to have staff skilled in engagement. Using experienced staff allows the introduction of techniques that achieve consensus without conflict.

### Third-party organisations with major influence

In St Albans, there was a delicate balance to strike between the highway and streetscape improvements and the sensitivity of an historic city centre. English Heritage provided a great deal of input, largely in respect of the materials to be used in the scheme. This proved to be a difficult issue for the project team having to balance the budget against the need for high-quality materials – particularly with the scheme expanding to include more of the public realm.

## 6.4 Managing expectations

6.4.1 Throughout the consultation and engagement activities the expectations of the stakeholders need to be actively managed. Key to the successful management of expectations includes:

- clearly stating, at all times, the maximum physical extent of the works;
- developing a hierarchy of needs based on the level of local support at the public consultation stages;
- setting a palette of materials that match the assumptions in the original cost estimates;
- identifying the need for trade-offs where changes in scope are requested; and
- providing information on indicative costs and budgets to stakeholders to improve the understanding of the costs likely to be incurred.

## CHAPTER 7

# Design

### Summary

The achievements of the local authorities participating in the MPR Demonstration Project – reducing casualties, improving the streetscape/environment (and some winning design awards) – is testament to the quality and breadth of the project team. Their approach has in many cases promoted a more co-operative working environment, with many different disciplines working in partnership, gaining an appreciation of the big picture as applies to schemes of this scale.

- These schemes need to be developed using a first principles concept – set this up from the start in terms of the approach and consider the input from consultation.
- Organisations tend to be risk-averse – staying close to established guidance. It needs a culture from the top to do things differently, i.e. get buy-in early on and agree parameters for design.
- Allow time for unconventional approaches.
- Project managers need to be prepared to review the schemes throughout to account for changing needs, including after implementation.
- Stakeholder requirements change over time.
- Road safety auditors assess the scheme using the information that they are given – suitable briefing to the audit team will ensure that they understand the aims and objectives of the scheme and its design philosophy.

### 7.1 Key features

“ There's more room for walking with the children now and you feel safer away from the traffic. ”

“ It seems so much calmer with the wider pavement – you feel safer from the traffic. ”

7.1.1 A remarkable success in all of these schemes has been the development of highway and streetworks projects that are sensitive to the needs of the local population and address not only the road safety issues but also the broad spectrum of requirements of the regular users of the space. They are not just about the physical changes to the environment – they are also about creating vibrant, sustainable and safe neighbourhoods. A change in people’s attitudes to where they live and work is an important element. Schemes need to relate to their own unique environment and not be treated in isolation. The spatial planning process can be a good starting point in recognising the opportunities that are present.

7.1.2 Almost by definition, this means that the projects must be developed from first principles. This results in a different relationship between designers and end users, a wider and more complete use of data and a significantly reduced reliance on a standards-led approach to the development of the scheme.

7.1.3 The design process is iterative, involving a number of key features that give a clear message in relation to the use of the street. The main point is to reduce vehicle dominance and increase opportunities for other activities. This means using the different elements in an innovative way to constrain vehicle speed and redistribute space whilst providing facilities for a variety of uses and activities.

7.1.4 There is no universal solution. Each scheme is bespoke to the particular circumstances. Authorities need to consider the area surrounding the scheme, in particular the planning and development of facilities and connectivity.

7.1.5 While there is no single formula for a Mixed Priority Route scheme, some key approaches are common throughout most, if not all, of the projects:

- Use of informal crossings to respond to pedestrian desire lines, and to improve the availability of crossing points.
- Reduction in vehicle speed through the careful use of vertical or horizontal deflections and constrained carriageway widths. Strategic use of traffic signal design can also help reduce traffic speed.
- Rationalisation and improvement of the parking and loading arrangements.

“ Overall the road layout is better – less confusing for all. Signage has improved a lot – there’s a lot less people driving about lost. ”

## Reducing street clutter

Street clutter, particularly at junctions, was an issue on the narrow footways of Renshaw Street and Berry Street in Liverpool. The design team took the opportunity to de-clutter areas where space remained at a premium because of junction geometry – the result was the use of combined lighting and traffic signal columns.

7.1.6 The way in which these and other features are combined can vary significantly. The engineers will need to use their contact with local road users and stakeholders and the data from the pre-design surveys to develop the concepts. Care should be taken in balancing divergent views of local people with the more robust information collected as part of the surveys; views earnestly and honestly held may often be coloured by personal experience in very specific circumstances.

## 7.2 Innovation

7.2.1 Until recently, the lack of examples of successful MPR schemes has led authorities to lean heavily towards past experience, where the emphasis has been on free vehicle movement. Urban designers' development of concepts based upon European experience has met with a mixed response, from both the general public and other professionals. However, the need to accommodate other uses within the street requires a different approach.

### Bollards to bollards

One method used in Liverpool to discourage illegal parking and loading was to provide litter bins and special 'blocks' (functioning as seating or a visual feature) where problems were anticipated. Also acting as bollards, they help to reduce clutter on the route and tie in with the urban design and streetscape improvements common to the wider objectives of the scheme.

7.2.2 The urban space specialists and highway engineers need to collaborate closely to ensure the practicality of the concept through to delivery. This can take several revisions, and the stakeholders should not be excluded. It is important that access consultants or dedicated local groups are fully involved throughout the process to understand the needs of people with impaired mobility and pedestrians.



## ‘Shared use’ carriageway

Oxford created a 20 mph section on the Cowley Road along its narrowest part and laid coloured, high-friction surfacing with no centre line marking and cycle symbols in the centre of the carriageway (Figure 7.1) to encourage cyclists to adopt a safer, more central road position through this section of the route.

*Figure 7.1 The 20 mph section of the Cowley Road, Oxford (WSP)*



“ I've only just found out about the little turning knob to show when it's safe to cross – what a good idea. ”

7.2.3 There are few design guidelines for urban high streets. In many circumstances the approach required to address local requirements will not be documented by existing guidance. The development of design elements that are sensitive to local needs has been shown to have a positive impact on outcomes.

7.2.4 For such concepts to be developed and delivered, a number of things need to be in place:

- the use of innovative approaches needs to have been sanctioned early on in the process;
- sufficient time needs to be allowed for in the programme to obtain any necessary approvals; and
- ensuring that appropriate monitoring regimes are in place to allow the performance of the measures to be assessed.

## *Design by data – ‘The numbers don’t lie’*

Hull was able to use extensive survey data to help develop and justify the design by accurately identifying pedestrian desire lines. As a result of this work, one Pelican crossing was removed altogether, with no direct replacement provided.

7.2.5 As part of this process, but to build for the future, the authority should seek to develop networks with professional bodies and other authorities to improve awareness of previously successful innovation across the country and to allow this experience to be used to the advantage of the scheme.

### Subtle signals

The Norwich scheme incorporated 'rest on red' for their pedestrian crossings, so that the signals reverted to red to both traffic and pedestrians in the absence of demand. This has assisted in the significant reduction in excessive speed along Prince of Wales Road in times of low traffic volumes.

“ They've done a good job – it's not perfect, but people have to be realistic about juggling all the different views. The bottom line is: it's better than it was. ”

### 'Shared space' junction areas

At one staggered crossroad junction on Newland Avenue in Hull, a shared space area was created with coloured surfacing and no road markings either at the side road junctions or in the centre of the carriageway. The aim was to encourage road users to acknowledge each other's presence and therefore exercise caution through this section of road.

### Informal crossing markings

In order to accommodate the large number of crossing points highlighted in the initial data collection exercise, Hull City Council opted to install a number of informal crossings on the scheme using non-standard 'piano key' markings to assist pedestrians in identifying convenient locations to cross. These crossings required special authorisation from the Department for Transport before they could be installed.

The uncertainty that these markings creates for road users encourages, like the shared space areas, a greater level of interaction between pedestrians and road vehicles but with a similar result in operation to that of a Zebra crossing, albeit without the legal requirement for vehicles to stop. DfT has extended the approval of these markings until 2009 when 36-month-after monitoring data will be available for review.

### Diagonal crossings

At the scheme in St Albans new Puffin crossings at a busy crossroads allowed for diagonal pedestrian crossing movements in addition to the standard ones across each arm of the junction.

## 7.3 Designing with partners

7.3.1 By involving groups on a neighbourhood basis, schemes developed around an existing, recognised focus, or the need for one, can add substantially to the success of the scheme.

7.3.2 Community-based design workshops have proved an effective way of developing a design sympathetic to the desires of the end user. In this way, the design is driven by the needs of the community, before being developed with more traditional engineering solutions. While this has obvious benefits in terms of the buy-in from stakeholders, there is a need to ensure that all parties are aware of the design restraints in place, to limit the expectations of those involved and steer them towards a range of feasible design options.

### Creating community space

With the additional regeneration funding made available to Liverpool City Council, the project team was able to create a number of quality public open spaces along the route, including planting, benches and high-quality street lighting.

7.3.3 In the later design stages, once a concept is established, input can be sought from groups representing stakeholders whose needs and concerns enter into the finer details of a scheme (Figure 7.2). This has applied across a number of schemes, where local disabled groups, cycling groups and traders associations have provided valuable input into such issues as crossing provision, road space allocation, loading and waiting restrictions through to material specification.

*Figure 7.2 Involving the community in Hull (Hull CC)*



### You just can't please everyone

Even within specific groups of people (cyclists, traders, etc.) there is a struggle to reach agreement. With narrow running lanes and busy parking and loading activity on the Cowley Road route, cycle lanes were not viable along the full length of the scheme, despite public demand. The resulting provision of special areas with a 20 mph limit and cycle symbols proved controversial, yet the design team was able to convince the public and cycle groups of the intended aims and expected benefits.

## 7.4 Making compromises

7.4.1 Mixed Priority Routes can help develop a greater pride and responsibility in users for the care and wellbeing of their surroundings. Successful design translates these concepts into a different outdoor environment where traffic still has access, but not to the exclusion of other activities. High-quality materials and finish show that the space differs from a conventional highway. Footways and carriageways may still be maintained, but the emphasis is on reducing the free space for vehicles.

7.4.2 In achieving such objectives, demands of stakeholders need to be balanced against strategic demands and priorities. Ensuring that stakeholders appreciate that compromises will have to be made throughout the design process can help to ensure that the emphasis is on providing solutions rather than creating conflict.

## 7.5 Meeting standards

7.5.1 The Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB)<sup>2</sup> sets the standards for trunk roads and motorways. Local authorities set their own standards for their roads and may adopt DMRB as they deem appropriate.

### Standard and guidance – not cast in stone

Part of the consultation for Cowley Road, Oxford, included a detailed audit of different options for crossing facilities by a disabled group. The findings from this consultation led the design team to choose traditional Pelican crossings (as opposed to the recommendation by the DfT for all new crossings to be of the Puffin type), taking on board the opinions of the end user rather than the guidance.

### A crossing too far?

Desire lines were used to dictate the location of pedestrian crossings throughout the Liverpool scheme. Consultation also made it clear that crossings made in one movement were far preferable to two-stage staggered crossings with a central refuge area, the result being that many of the signalised crossings were wider than would normally be specified.

7.5.2 Overcoming barriers needs the full support of senior officers and officials, with a common vision of what is to be achieved. In a number of schemes, road safety auditors' comments have been noted and, when appropriate, actioned. In other instances, designers have given their response via exception reports providing reasoning and including details of how certain measures contribute to the scheme concept in terms of safety and wider objectives.

## 7.6 Materials and sustainability

### Know your history

While agreeing a materials palette with English Heritage and the District Council, the Hertfordshire Highways team discovered that there was no historical precedent for the use of York stone in St Albans – one of the materials that would have been difficult to include on the basis of cost alone.

<sup>2</sup> Highways Agency (various dates) *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges*. London: TSO



7.6.1 An early issue to resolve is the choice of materials, taking account of the affordability, ease of construction and future maintenance of the scheme. A successful scheme requires input from all parties in the design process and additional involvement from contractors as well as other services.

7.6.2 There are repeated issues with choice of materials because of long-term maintenance and replacement issues. Increasingly public space is becoming more complex and materials more varied. Many authorities are developing their own streetscape manuals for general application, and there is more agreement on a palette of materials that is acceptable both in terms of creating a different visual environment and maintenance.

7.6.3 Sustainability and materials can introduce an element of conflict, particularly balancing material costs with sustainability issues. For example, Chinese granite is considerably cheaper than that sourced from the within the UK or the EU, but it has to be shipped across the globe.

### Material changes

The Wandsworth Road project, Lambeth, London, made use of sustainable materials such as glassgrit (recycled crushed glass sourced from south London boroughs). Approximately 1400 tonnes of glassgrit were used as bedding material for paving slabs. Recycled road materials included the use of existing granite kerbs along most of the scheme length; 3000 tonnes of recycled crushed concrete; and 500 tonnes of recycled material were used in the resurfacing element. At informal crossing points, lighting for the keep left signs is powered by solar panels on centre island columns, thus saving energy in the long term.

7.6.4 Various practices have been put into place as part of a sustainability agenda, from employing local companies to ensuring materials removed are reclaimed for use on other local schemes. Further to this, many authorities have used high-specification materials which may help reduce and defer future maintenance.

### Designing for maintenance

One of the prominent issues on Renshaw Street/Berry Street in Liverpool prior to scheme development was the condition of the footways. Ensuring the durability of the footways was a key part in the material specification and detailed design work – as a result a large part of the footway, where possible, was laid on a full concrete foundation. This did incur a significant additional cost but in contrast, the ability to guarantee the quality of the public realm for a ten-year period without additional maintenance provision was a stipulation from the Northwest Regional Development Agency for additional funding.

## CHAPTER 8

# Implementation

### Summary

All schemes in the MPR Demonstration Project were implemented successfully using a variety of approaches in order to minimise disruption while ensuring cost-efficient construction. Local authorities have to balance the needs of local communities and retailers' access arrangements (often extremely challenging) with safe temporary traffic management arrangements and the overall construction programme.

- It is essential to keep the businesses informed about the scheme programme and implementation.
- Early statutory undertaker and contractor involvement is essential.
- Preliminary sub-surface surveys will help in identifying construction constraints prior to the implementation stage.
- For large schemes there needs to be budget and programme flexibility to allow for working around public holidays and local events.
- Risk and cost management exercises are vital throughout the implementation stage.
- Implementation of schemes on main roads is likely to be constrained by the need to maintain traffic flows. Early consideration of such issues at the planning stages can reduce cost during implementation.
- Be prepared for the need for re-design during construction as a result of unforeseen circumstances.

## 8.1 Selecting a contractor

8.1.1 Early contractor involvement in the design process helps to ensure that the design requirements are accurately and efficiently translated to the physical works and that the various elements can be constructed in a practical way.

## Selection criteria for contractors

The key criterion for the contractors working on Renshaw Street/Berry Street in Liverpool was a proven record in traffic management and stakeholder liaison, plus the ability to demonstrate quality of workmanship. These considerations took precedence over price, and the chosen contractors (with one of the highest cost proposals) were very successful in the delivery of the scheme, meeting the city council's expectations throughout.

## 8.2 Buildability

8.2.1 The Best Value approach is sometimes interpreted as replacing expensive materials with more conventional ones to the detriment of the overall objectives. Where contractors are aware of the importance of the design constraints, they can inform the selection of suitable materials and the choice of construction approaches.

8.2.2 The selection and visual appearance of highway materials are important to road users. During the construction process, modifications to the specification of materials or the detailed design may be necessary to address emerging problems or concerns. Such changes need to be sensitive to the overall objectives of the scheme and must be carefully assessed in relation to the impact on the original design, the project programme and costs, and the traffic management arrangements..

“ I thought I would lose trade with the lack of parking – but more people seem to walk around here now. ”

## 8.3 Contract conditions

8.3.1 Some authorities were able to benefit from early contractor involvement by using the New Engineering Contract (NEC). This form of contract provides for the formal involvement of the contractor during the design stage, allows more time for development of traffic management and ensures transparency in the costing of schemes. More traditional arrangements with term contractors and procurement using the ICE Conditions of Contract, fifth edition, were also used without any notable problems for delivery of the construction element.

### Early contractor involvement (ECI)

Liverpool City Council employed contractors under the New Engineering Contract (NEC) with an option to include early contractor involvement. This arrangement facilitated the use of the contractors' proven expertise in complex traffic management arrangements and the provision of input during the detailed design stage to improve buildability.

## 8.4 Communication

8.4.1 Constructing a scheme in a busy commercial area causes disruption for both residents and businesses, so contractors must keep in close contact with them throughout to advise on each stage of construction.

### Supporting local traders through construction

Cowley Road in Oxford has a mixed retail environment made up predominantly of independent traders for whom profit margins are tight. Retailers were particularly concerned about the impact upon trade during construction. Oxfordshire County Council developed a publicity strategy to inform the public of business as usual and also held a launch event with further publicity in the run-up to Christmas following completion.

8.4.2 Detailed programming and phasing of the works is important to manage the inevitable disruption. The phasing needs to consider not only the physical extent of construction works at each stage, but also any other works that are needed, such as service diversions.

8.4.3 Authorities need to keep businesses, residents and other road users fully informed throughout the process. Authorities often held regular progress meetings with contractors, designers and key users to identify potential problems and to discuss solutions, thus avoiding conflict. The establishment of key contacts within both the authority and contractor teams helps to maintain clear lines of communication and responsibility.

## 8.5 Maintaining access

8.5.1 One major benefit identified by authorities was having contractor involvement in the development of temporary traffic management proposals. This approach assisted with the two key access issues: frontage access (Figure 8.1) and access for through traffic, and ensured that the contractors

had advance warning of any restrictions arising from the need to maintain access to residents, retail frontages and limiting access to buses and taxis with closure to general traffic.

*Figure 8.1 Maintaining frontage access during construction, Oxford (Oxfordshire CC)*

“ It's much better for staff now – they have noticed the difference travelling along the road – they are not nearly as late as they used to be, so you have to congratulate the Council for that. However, we do desperately need more buses. ”



8.5.2 Traffic management arrangements differed widely across the demonstration schemes, but generally fell under the following categories:

- closure of the route to all traffic (includes limiting access to public service vehicles);
- closure to traffic in one direction, with diversionary routes in place; and
- phased construction with temporary traffic lights to manage through traffic flow.

### Maintaining access to retail premises

Being situated within Liverpool city centre, the Renshaw Street/Berry Street scheme has a considerable amount of retail frontage, including Lewis's department store and Rapid Hardware, the largest independent home and garden retailer in the city. Maintaining access for deliveries and customer collection was vital, particularly given the nature of produce sold at Rapid Hardware. The traffic management arrangements ensured that customer collection bays were maintained throughout and clear signing was in place to avoid confusion to traffic requiring access.



8.5.3 Variations upon these themes were used throughout, with some carriageway surfacing works requiring full closure for short periods. Different working times were employed according to seasonality, nature of local economy and traffic impact in order to minimise disruption to stakeholders.

### What traffic chaos?

With extensive publicity, including road signs/diversion on all major routes into St Albans city centre, the Hertfordshire team was able to undertake construction phases without the anticipated disruption to local traffic and no apparent effect on strategic routes. Access to St Peter's Street was maintained for buses and taxis but closed to all other traffic. Bus operators were extremely positive about the works – with the exclusion of traffic, they reported that punctuality improved during the construction works.

8.5.4 Mixed Priority Routes often have sensitive retail environments, i.e. independent outlets with low profit margins that do not have sufficient resources to survive significant disruption to trade. To minimise such disruption, methods range from publicity for the retailers through the local media, to special arrangements for frontage access, delivery/customer collection bays and facilitation of refuse collection.

8.5.5 Making such provision within the traffic management arrangements invariably requires significant additional planning, work and cost. Consequently the costs of temporary traffic management (Figure 8.2) for an MPR scheme can be considerably higher than envisaged in preliminary estimates.

*Figure 8.2 Night-time removal of traffic management in Oxford (Oxfordshire CC)*



## 8.6 Phasing

### Sometimes, there's no avoiding conflict

With the limited timescales applied to scheme funding and a strict programme of maintenance throughout the city, Oxfordshire County Council was simply unable to avoid constructing the scheme without some works taking place at the same time to further works on another southern arterial route into the city.

8.5.6 There are a variety of motivators for the phased construction approach, the primary reason being to maintain the through-flow of traffic. However, there are other benefits to be realised by taking this approach:

- it increases the amount of time available to finalise designs and resolve outstanding issues with areas in the later phases;
- each phase of the contract can be let separately, providing an incentive to the contractor to maintain standards in view of future contract award and allowing flexibility to bring in additional resources or different skill sets if required; and
- initial construction phases and preparatory works can be undertaken earlier than is possible with single-site works – this can help with keeping stakeholders on board by providing a tangible demonstration of progress with an on-site presence.

### Phasing the construction works

Construction on Newland Avenue, Hull, was undertaken in seven separate phases. This gave a number of benefits. It:

- minimised the impact on traffic and traders;
- allowed design work to continue on later phases; and
- introduced an element of competition between the two contractors employed, with each phase being let individually as the scheme progressed.

## 8.6 Flexibility

8.6.1 There will always be unanticipated events that have to be catered for in the construction phase, such as utilities, community events, religious festivals and national events, which will impact upon scheme delivery. Making provision for unidentified delays within the construction programme can accommodate the impact of any such event. Similarly, project cost estimates should make provision for some element of unidentified delay.

## Construction flexibility for unexpected events

Construction on the Renshaw Street/Berry Street scheme in Liverpool was under way for a full 12 months, so it included the Chinese New Year (Chinatown is adjacent to the scheme). This was not accounted for in the construction programme. However, the team was able to suspend works during the celebrations without affecting the overall programme.

8.6.2 One method identified by the demonstration projects to help with flexibility, particularly in terms of budgetary control, was been the maintenance of a risk register and associated resource allocation. While this is standard practice during the construction stage of schemes, its use throughout the entire project lifecycle has been highlighted retrospectively as something that can be an invaluable tool for project managers.

## 8.7 Maintenance

8.7.1 Future maintenance should be a major consideration in the design of MPR schemes, especially as many authorities take the opportunity to draw funding from maintenance budgets in lieu of deferred future maintenance works.

8.7.2 Materials and street furniture choices need input from maintenance departments and contractors in order to sustain the quality and cleanliness of the street scene. In some cases, contractors employed on scheme construction were also responsible for wider maintenance and therefore held a vested interest in ensuring straightforward maintenance requirements.

## CHAPTER 9

# Scheme evaluation

### Summary

Because MPR schemes involve a number of different agencies and funding sources, it is vital that the success of the scheme is evaluated against all relevant criteria. In order to achieve this, clear objectives need to be set at the start and sufficient data need to be collected, or existing sources identified, before work begins. It's too late afterwards.

- Suitable data may already be available within other parts of an authority. This needs to be checked before work starts.
- It is always better to collect more data than less at the outset.
- Make sure the data specification is consistent in the before and after evaluations.
- Full statistical significance is not always necessary for all evaluation elements.
- Softer issues can be evaluated by changes in user attitudes.
- Publicising early indications can help to gain support.
- Approaches developed through MPR may be appropriate for strategic application across the authority.

## 9.1 What to measure and why

9.1.1 Authorities should establish at the outset how they will measure the success of these types of scheme and collect sufficient 'before' data to cover most eventualities. While it can be difficult at the start to envisage what will be implemented, the setting of specific objectives indicates the aspirations of authorities and communities. With increasing emphasis on delivering value for money in schemes, effective monitoring and evaluation will become an increasing requirement.

9.1.2 Data collection can be an expensive part of any scheme. In deciding what data to collect, authorities not only need to consider the objectives that have been set for the scheme, but also the available sources of data. Different departments and agencies are all required to monitor their service delivery, and other departments may cover many of the issues identified for

these schemes. Access to police statistics for local crime data, and social services and property vacancy information can supplement background information.

9.1.3 Together with the scheme objectives for the local authority, it is worth considering the wider benefits as perceived by the stakeholders. Although this is often somewhat anecdotal in nature, measuring the ‘softer’ benefits can give an easily interpreted yardstick to accompany the hard facts and figures (Figure 9.1).

9.1.4 Any Mixed Priority Route scheme will come under some public scrutiny, be it via direct approaches to the local authority or letters to local newspapers. The availability of data for publicity use will enable press officers/PR personnel to pre-empt inevitable criticism. Therefore the required outputs from any surveys undertaken are worthy of careful consideration, especially in terms of their presentation, so that they are clear, concise and easy to understand.

9.1.5 For the evaluation results of this scheme, please refer back to Chapter 3.

*Figure 9.1 Inspecting the finished scheme in Crewe (WSP)*





## 9.2 When to measure

### Going public

9.2.1 Standard practice for data collection in terms of providing comparable data sets should be applied. There are additional monitoring activities that can be of benefit in terms of providing public information and publicity following scheme implementation. Key targets such as increasing crossing movements, pedestrian footfall, journey time improvements and public opinion/perception can all be measured soon after implementation and be used as positive publicity while public interest is still high. There are likely to be some caveats involved in releasing such information at an early stage, but more robust data 36 months after completion is unlikely to reach its audience.

### Learning lessons

9.2.2 Given the range of lessons learned across all ten local authorities involved in the Mixed Priority Route Demonstration Project, considerable thought needs to be given to the dissemination and transfer of experience gained from such schemes to subsequent projects. In many instances, methods first used in the development of a Mixed Priority Route scheme have become part of the wider standard 'toolkit' for aspects of local authority work. Consultation in particular has yielded some splendid examples of good practice that can be applied far beyond the remit of highways and engineering.

9.2.3 It is likely that stakeholders who have been involved throughout the project lifecycle will be able to contribute valuable feedback to project teams. Their perspective can help to establish the benefits that can arise from innovative partnering relationships with local authorities.



This document reviews the experience from the ten schemes involved in the Department for Transport’s Mixed Priority Route (MPR) Demonstration Project and presents the lessons learned through the project to assist other authorities in developing similar successful schemes. It is intended that this report should give advice to project managers and senior technical staff who might be involved in the development and delivery of MPR schemes in the future, to learn from the experience of those that have already been through the process and understand the issues involved.

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