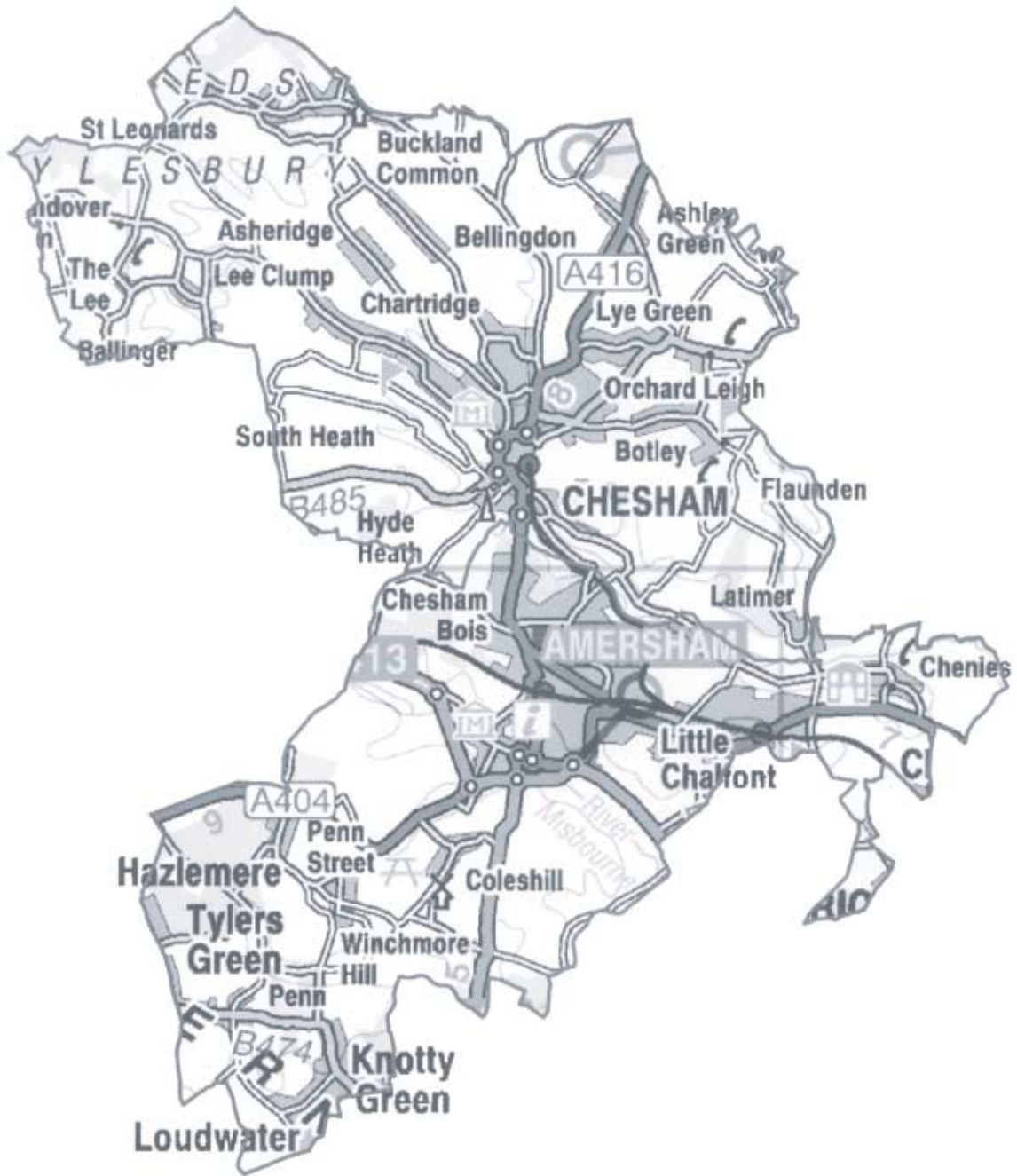


2.2 Chesham and Amersham Area Action Plan

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Figure 1 - Amersham and Chesham Urban Action Plan area



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INTRODUCTION

The County Council's Second Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out a twenty-year vision for transport, and describes the authority's priorities, strategies and plans for the next five years (2006 to 2011). The five transport priorities for Buckinghamshire are:

- Enhancing accessibility
- Tackling congestion
- Improving the environment
- Improving road safety
- Managing and maintaining the transport asset

Four of the five (accessibility, congestion, environment and safety) reflect the Government and Local Government Association's 'shared priority for transport' whilst the fifth responds to the needs and aspirations of people who live, work and travel in Buckinghamshire.

This urban action plan explains what the LTP means for the Chesham and Amersham Area (shown in Figure 1). This approach is in line with the County Council's 'Getting Closer to Communities' initiative that aims to match services to local needs and address local priorities.

Preparing the Area Action Plan

To ensure that the Area Action Plan addresses local priorities, we have considered information, feedback and comments collected from a number of sources, including:

What you told us

- Transport Matters' surveys (returned by 1500 Buckinghamshire residents)
- Local project consultations
- Annual Transportation Service surveys
- Letters, phone calls and emails
- Consultation on the Second LTP
- Consultation on the draft Area Action Plan
- 'Transport Matters' event for Chesham & Amersham

What the community told us

- Internal professional Area Action Planning days
- Annual transport symposia for Members and stakeholders
- Market town health checks, village appraisals and parish plans
- Local Committees and Local Area Co-ordinator activities

We have also collected supporting data and technical information to prioritise actions that will be most effective at addressing locally important issues. In the Chesham and Amersham Area, information has also been taken from the evolving Chesham & Amersham Transport Study (CATS), and other studies, including the Chiltern Special Parking Area, Central Chilterns Traffic Management Project and work prepared by the Amersham Action Group.

CHESHAM AND AMERSHAM ACTION PLAN

The urban area covers the town of Chesham and Amersham, and adjoining parishes including Chartridge, Cholesbury, St Leonards, Chesham, The Lee, Latimer and Ashley Green, Amersham, Penn, Coleshill, Chenies and Chesham Bois. The population of this wider area exceeds 50,800 and is the third largest combined settlement in Buckinghamshire (after High Wycombe and Aylesbury). Figure 1 shows the extent of the Action Plan area.

The transport network in Chesham and Amersham is dominated by the local topography. Both Chesham and Amersham are set within the Chiltern Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and are surrounded by Green Belt Land. This poses unique problems for the expansion and improvement of the transport network.

The main road link connecting Chesham and Amersham is:

- **A416** – running north to south between A41 and A355

There are three other key road links:

- **A404** – Linking Amersham with High Wycombe and north-west London (M25)
- **A413** – Linking Amersham with Wendover and Aylesbury to the north and Denham and the M25/M40 to the south
- **A355** – Linking Amersham with Beaconsfield and the M40

In addition Chesham and Amersham have rail services connecting to London. Chesham station is served by London Underground (to London via Chalfont & Latimer) whilst Amersham station is served by both London Underground (to London) and Chiltern Railways (to Aylesbury & London).

The town centres of Chesham and Amersham provide retail, commercial, health, further education and leisure services for both towns and the surrounding areas. The towns are also key locations for employment.

The Chesham and Amersham Transport Study (CATS) is being developed to consider and tackle the significant transport challenges facing the urban area. CATS aims to encourage safer and more sustainable use of the transport network, enhance accessibility and preserve the natural environment across the area. This Area Action Plan will be further developed and refined during the Second LTP to reflect the recommendations of CATS.

Transport and land use planning are inextricably linked, therefore the emerging Local Development Framework (being prepared by Chiltern District Council) will also influence and determine the proposals and actions in this Area Action Plan. Chiltern District Council has a key role to play in the successful implementation of actions, given its responsibilities for the management of both on and off-street parking, taxis, concessionary travel and air quality management activities.

Any schemes or proposals identified by this Area Action Plan or CATS will be subject to prioritisation using the Scheme Assessment Matrix (described in Part Three of the Second LTP) to ensure that they meet wider transport objectives and targets and demonstrate value for money.

ACCESSIBILITY

To enhance accessibility we have to improve everyone's ability to access key services (employment, education, healthcare and shopping). Access solutions might be transport provision, but could include delivery services, changing opening hours of facilities or improving internet access. Accessibility issues are not only limited to rural areas. Access to essential services can be equally difficult within urban areas like Chesham and Amersham due to the largely linear nature of bus services.

What you told us

- *Public transport information needs to be updated and accessible*
- *Public transport is not good enough to rely upon for isolated / vulnerable groups*
- *Problems in town centres with illegal and obstructive parking*
- *Pedestrian access is poor in some areas*
- *Access to hospitals is difficult and needs to be improved*
- *Innovative public transport (e.g. demand responsive transport and taxi-buses) should be considered*

What the community told us

- *Improve integration of public transport (bus – rail) and maintain frequency of Underground services*
- *Improve access for residents to key local facilities*
- *Lack of services to main centres and hospitals*

What we've already done

- Annual investment of more than £297,000 on public transport services in the area
- Lobbied London Underground to retain peak-time through services between Chesham and London
- Introduced enforcement of on street parking (Chiltern Special Parking Area - SPA) in conjunction with Chiltern District Council
- Worked with neighbouring authorities and other partners as part of the Central Chilterns Traffic Management Project to improve access to footways & bridleways
- Developed the accessibility strategy of the Local Transport Plan
- Developed 'Getting Closer to Communities' to identify local accessibility issues

Data and technical assessment

To identify current accessibility in the Chesham and Amersham Urban Area we have completed audits for peak time and off peak public transport access to major centres for all households.

- 93% of households can access a major centre within 30 minutes using public transport in the morning peak period
- 93% of households can access a major centre within 30 minutes using public transport at off-peak times

Actions to enhance accessibility

During the Second LTP period we will:

- Continue to lobby London Underground to retain peak-time through services between Chesham and London beyond 2008
- Press London Underground to accelerate plans for accessibility improvements to Chesham, Amersham and Chalfont & Latimer stations
- Work with the Primary Care Trust to ensure that the Chesham Healthzone is fully accessible for all groups and individuals
- Identify and progress improvements to the Rights of Way network to enhance access to key services and facilities
- Identify and progress improvements to cycling and walking routes to enhance access to key services and facilities
- Work with partners to develop and implement accessibility action plans for employment, education, healthcare and shopping
- Work with the local community to identify accessibility needs, and develop and implement a local accessibility action plan, incorporating innovative public transport solutions where appropriate
- Review vehicular access arrangements in Amersham town centre (Sycamore Road) and progress appropriate proposals to enhance access and support economic vitality

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CONGESTION

To tackle congestion we have to identify and improve routes and junctions that are most prone to delays, usually because they carry the most traffic, and encourage everyone to consider whether some trips could be made by bus, train, cycle, on foot, or by sharing the journey with others.

What you told us

- *High levels of congestion around town centres*
- *Improve public transport & cycling provision to reduce reliance on the car*
- *Congestion around schools*
- *Use school buses more efficiently to help reduce congestion*
- *Priority has to be given to congestion in the centre of Chesham*

What the community told us

- *Congestion along A416 from Chesham to Amersham*
- *Rat-running through villages to avoid congestion*
- *AM/PM peak congestion is a major problem around schools*
- *Parking problems are creating high levels of congestion*

What we've already done

- Introduced Chiltern SPA in conjunction with Chiltern District Council
- Launched the enhanced Line 336 service to widen travel choices
- Majority of schools across the area with active or developing School Travel Plans
- 94% reduction in delays caused by our roadworks on traffic sensitive streets
- 9% reduction in car use on the school run across Buckinghamshire
- Increased the number of people travelling by bus in Buckinghamshire

Data and technical assessment

In our annual survey we ask residents to identify congestion hotspots on roads across Buckinghamshire (see Figure 2). The survey results match our assessment since they both identify that Chesham and Amersham experience significant congestion problems along the length of the A416 and at junctions on the route.

As a result the A416 corridor has been designated a Priority Congestion Management Corridor (PCMC) in the Second LTP and will therefore be prioritised for action. We are carrying out more detailed assessment of the corridor to pinpoint the junctions or sites that create 'bottlenecks' and need to be treated first.

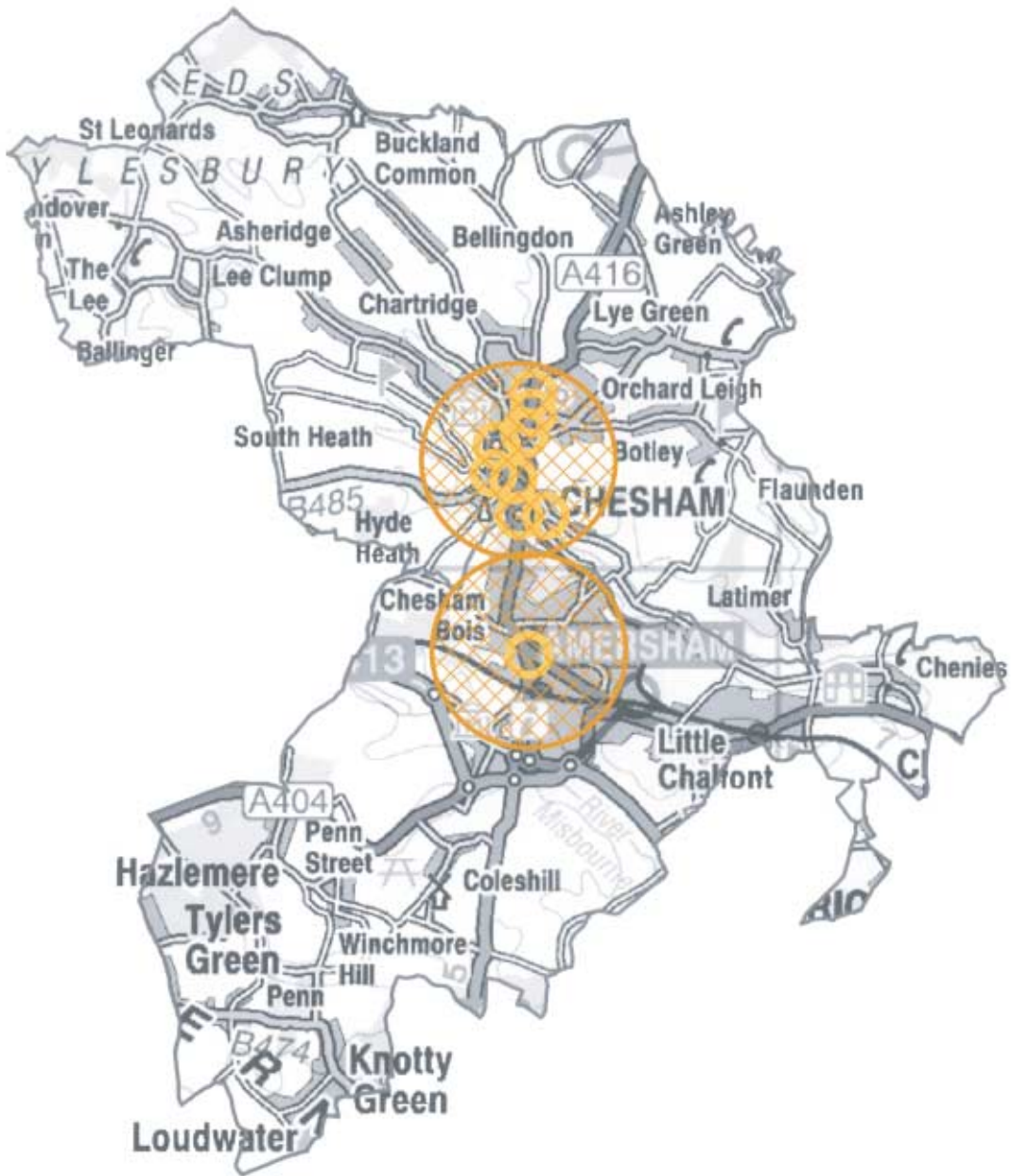
Local residents also identify the Amersham bypass as another route that suffers from congestion, particularly at peak times.

Actions to tackle congestion



During the Second LTP period we will:

- Measure variability in journey time on both the A416 PCMC and the Amersham bypass to identify the junctions and sites that create 'bottlenecks'
- Set a target for journey time reliability on the A416 PCMC
- Develop and implement improvements at targeted 'bottlenecks' on the A416 PCMC and the Amersham bypass
- Identify and progress improvements to cycling and walking routes to encourage an increase in sustainable journeys
- Develop specific urban and inter-urban bus services, and demand responsive public transport services (utilising taxis where appropriate)
- Work with London Underground and Chiltern Railways to explore the feasibility of a taxi bus to improve public transport access to the stations
- Work with London Underground and Chiltern District Council to improve pedestrian, cyclist and bus passenger facilities
- Work with schools and businesses in the area to promote travel planning and the adoption of appropriate travel initiatives
- Complete the strategic network hierarchy (SNH) to identify key routes for use by different users and traffic types
- Work with operators and District Councils to develop a countywide freight strategy (possibly including route agreements) to ensure Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) use appropriate routes

Figure 2 - Congestion Hotspots on roads in area



Map Key

-  Perceived Congestion Hotspot
-  Perceived Urban Congested Area



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ENVIRONMENT

The environment in Buckinghamshire is one of our greatest assets and transport can have negative impacts on that environment unless carefully managed. It is important that we work with others to enhance public spaces and streetscapes, and improve air quality. Sensitive delivery of transport schemes to maintain and enhance the quality of the environment will be central to the Chesham and Amersham Area Action Plan.

What you told us

- *Road congestion adds to poor air quality*
- *Berkhampstead Road is an issue – it needs a health warning!*
- *Air quality is the most important transport issue in the area*

What the community told us

- *Poor air quality outside schools from parked vehicles with engines running*
- *Concerns about air quality along Berkhampstead Rd*
- *Keep traffic moving to reduce pollution in the town centre*

What we've already done

- Worked with Chiltern District Council to agree air quality monitoring arrangements for Berkhampstead Road
- Introduced sensitive rural signing and traffic management measures as part of the Central Chilterns Traffic Management Project
- Set the Bucks Air Quality Standard (BAQS) that exceeds national standards and establishes 'buffer zones' to prevent air quality deterioration
- Established the Bucks Air Quality Management Group and developed an Air Quality Strategy with Milton Keynes Council and all District Councils
- Followed environmental guidelines to reduce the impact of transport schemes
- Promoted and improved sustainable access to rural areas
- Reduced the impact of staff travel by cutting solo car use by 27% in six years
- Completed the Strategic Environmental Assessment of the LTP

Data and technical assessment

The first air quality review and assessment for Chiltern District, was completed in March 1999 and determined that a stage three review was not required, since it was predicted that air quality standards would be met for all pollutants. In July 2003, an air quality updating and screening assessment was carried out, indicating that some sites would require passive monitoring.

The monitoring programme was reviewed, and equipment redeployed to areas likely to show increased levels of NO₂. This has highlighted that Berkhampstead Road in Chesham may need to be declared an Air Quality Management Area in 2006.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment has considered how transport policies and plans will affect the environment, including biodiversity, fauna, flora, human health and landscape. It has also helped to identify measures to reduce or eliminate the environmental effects of transport.

Actions to improve the environment

During the Second LTP period we will:

- Work with Chiltern District Council to monitor air quality and traffic flows on Berkhamstead Road and determine main contributors to air pollution
- Work with Chiltern District Council to develop an Air Quality Action Plan if Berkhamstead Road is declared an Air Quality Management Area
- Continue to monitor other sites and develop action plans where there are exceedences of BAQS
- Work with local partners to complete street scene audits and reduce clutter, particularly in both Chesham and Amersham town centres
- Continue the development and implementation of the Central Chilterns Traffic Management project in conjunction with appropriate partners
- Maintain verges & hedges at junctions in rural areas to keep vision splays clear
- Establish appropriate sign cleaning / maintenance arrangements with Parish / Town Councils
- Identify and progress improvements to the Rights of Way network to enhance access to rural services, facilities and the countryside for leisure purposes
- Continue to raise awareness of air quality issues using a range of media

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ROAD SAFETY

Research shows that human error is a major factor in 95% of all crashes and therefore to improve road safety we need to target road users that are most at risk, to influence driving and riding behaviour. All transport schemes will also need to prove that they have considered the safety of road users, and efforts to improve the road environment will continue.

What you told us

- *Need a reduction of speeds around schools and on village roads*
- *Introduction of visible speed cameras in town centres*
- *Very concerned about pedestrian safety*
- *Need lower speed limits on certain roads*

What the community told us

- *Speeding vehicles in the area as drivers are unaware of speed limit*
- *Safer crossing facilities needed for pedestrians and cyclists*
- *Need to improve pedestrian safety*

What we've already done

- 12% reduction in casualties across Buckinghamshire in last five years.
- Developed 'Be a Better Biker' campaign to reduce motorcyclist casualties
- Completed countywide Speed Management Strategy and begun countywide Speed Limit Review
- Implemented Area 4 Speed Limit Review proposals in January 2006
- Launch of 'Make the Commitment' campaign to encourage drivers and riders to drive within the speed limit.
- Introduced Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) for loan by groups and organisations
- Increased customer satisfaction with road safety by 7.3% between 2004 & 2005
- Salted approximately 44% of routes across the county to help reduce collisions.

Data and technical assessment

The national road safety target is to significantly reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured (KSIs). Figure 3 shows the average number of KSIs per kilometre on roads within the Chesham and Amersham area. The map shows the only route in the area that has an average KSI/km rate above 1.51 is the A416.

This is the only route that would be considered for engineering solutions, and proposals for safety improvements will be combined with congestion management measures to secure maximum benefits for the travelling public. Other reductions in casualties will be achieved by targeting 'at risk' groups using education, training and publicity.

Actions to improve safety

During the Second LTP period we will:

- Complete the speed limit reviews for:
 - Area 2 – in 2006
 - Area 10 – by summer 2007
- Develop and implement co-ordinated congestion and safety improvements at identified sites on the A416 PCMC
- Review collision data to identify and treat other sites where the road environment is a major factor in collisions
- Identify and progress improvements to cycling and walking routes and facilities to improve access and enhance safety for these vulnerable groups
- Reduce KSI casualties by targeting drivers and motorcyclists in high risk groups with appropriate education, training and publicity
- Work with the Police and other partners to reduce casualties and respond to local concerns, with targeted enforcement activities
- Integrate safety considerations into other strategies and programmes through 'mainstreaming safety'

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MAINTENANCE

Residents of Buckinghamshire have made it clear that managing and maintaining transport assets, such as roads and pavements, is an important priority. To ensure that we sustain and improve the quality of these assets, our activities need to be guided by both technical assessment and customer concerns, whilst seeking to meet wider transport objectives.

What you told us

- *Need more maintenance of road drainage*
- *Improve maintenance of roads and clearer markings*
- *Repair potholes and improve pavements for pedestrians*
- *Cycle and pedestrian routes are not maintained*
- *Concerns about identified winter maintenance routes*

What the community told us

- *Street lighting – not enough where needed, too much where it isn't*
- *Need to improve surfacing of routes for disabled people*
- *Hedges need maintaining to provide better vision for motorists*

What we've already done

- In 2005 Buckinghamshire was the top performing authority for the condition of principal and non-principal roads
- Increased customer satisfaction with the overall condition of roads and pavements by 53% since 2002
- 97.5% of dangerous potholes repaired within 24 hours of customer reports
- Improved response times to customer concerns with the establishment of a dedicated customer services team (Highways On Call)
- National recognition for improvements to service delivery with 'Transport Team of the Year' award

Data and technical assessment

Figures 4 & 5 identify the current condition of roads and pavements across the area, using technical data collected by regular inspections of the network. These will be updated and supplemented by subsequent assessments and therefore represent only a 'snapshot' of current conditions.

Lengths assessed as lower priority (green) are unlikely to be treated during the LTP period because they are in a good condition, medium priority lengths (amber) may be treated by 2011, whilst higher priority lengths (red) are likely to receive attention during the next five years.

The maps show that most footways in the Chesham and Amersham area are currently in a very good state of repair with none categorised as high priority. The general carriageway condition is very good, although the technical assessment does indicate small sections, which will be prioritised during the second LTP.

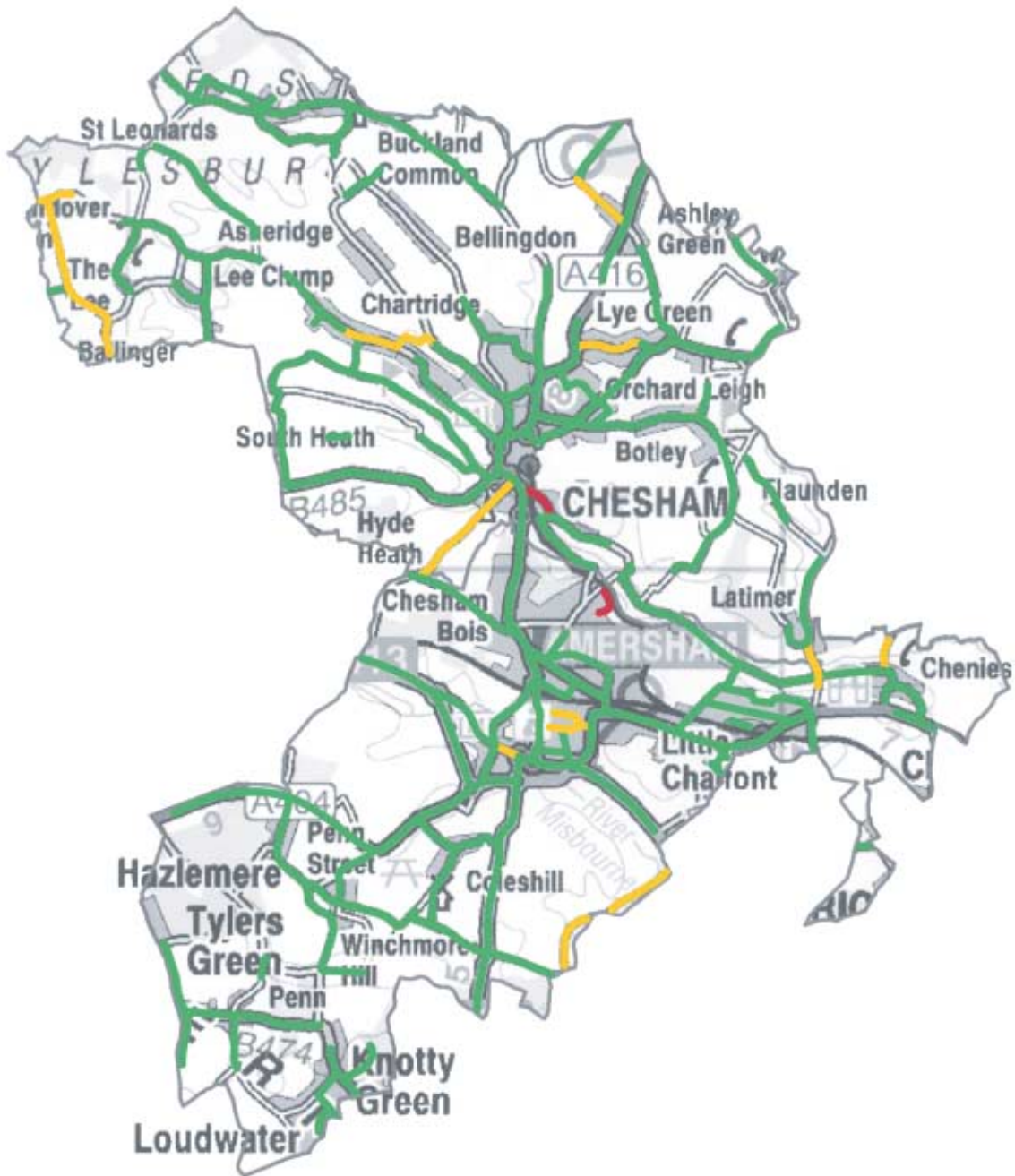
Actions to manage and maintain the transport asset

During the Second LTP period we will:

- Improve the condition of roads and footways in accordance with priorities established by our technical assessment and Transport Asset Management Plan
- Use customer feedback to develop maintenance programmes that respond to local concerns in the Chesham and Amersham area
- Increase our emphasis on the maintenance of footways and cycle routes across the area to enhance accessibility and support sustainable travel
- Seek to exceed our current standard for pothole repairs
- Identify sites for trials of intelligent road studs as an alternative to or replacement for standard street lighting
- Introduce improved testing regimes for all street lighting columns
- Increase the use of recycled materials in maintenance activities, wherever possible

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Figure 4 - Carriageway condition map



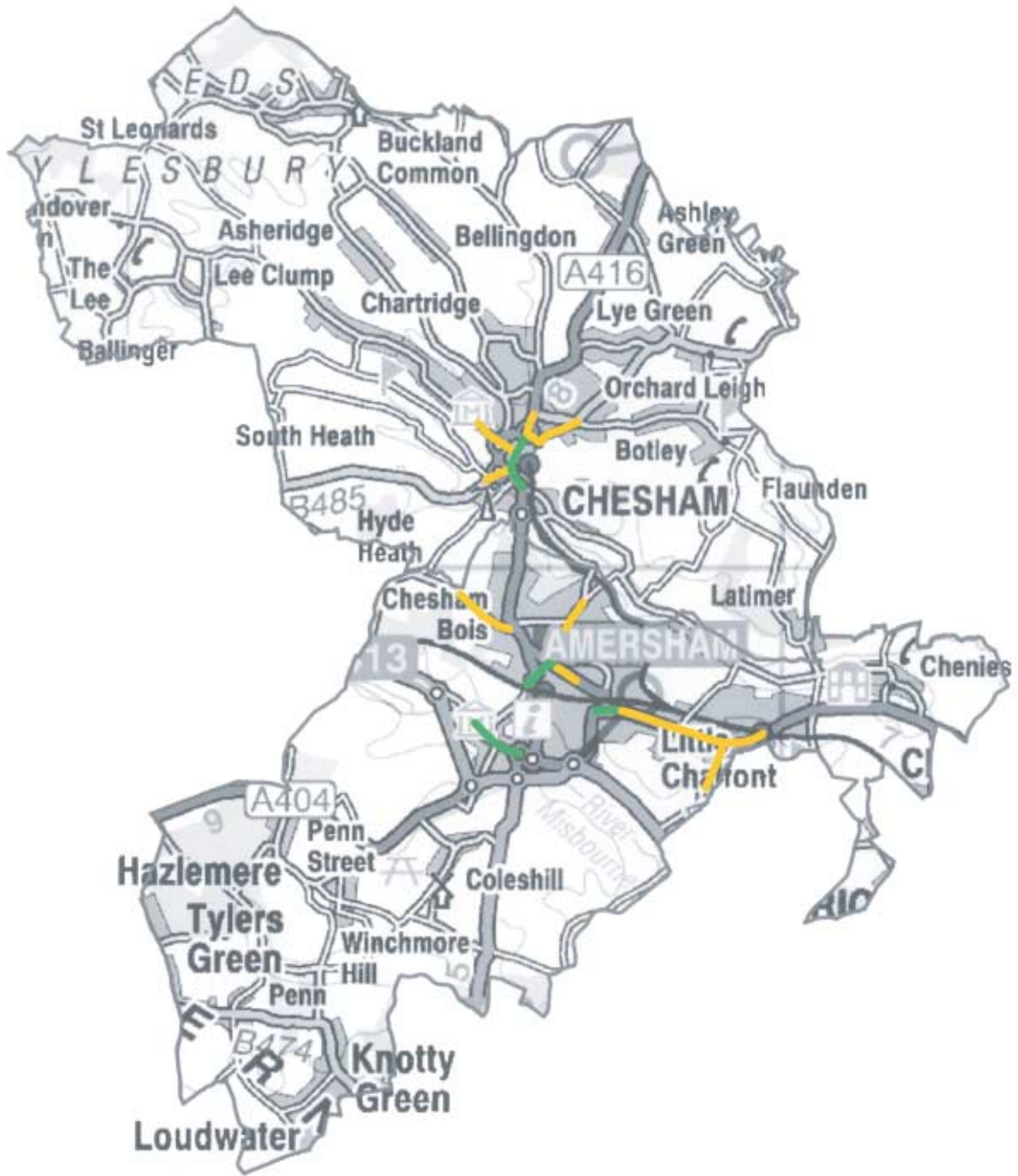
Map Key

- Lower priority
- Medium priority
- Higher priority



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Figure 5 - Footway condition map



Map Key

- Lower priority
- Medium priority
- Higher priority



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OTHER SCHEMES

Chiltern Special Parking Area

The Chiltern Special Parking Area (SPA) was introduced in September 2005. It may be necessary to introduce on street charging (pay and display) in some locations in year 3 (2007/8) to ensure that the SPA is self-financing.

Central Chilterns Traffic Management Project

Since the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is located only 35 miles from London it is under ever increasing pressure from traffic. Whilst the car brings many benefits to rural life it is also having an effect on the environment and the quality of life in many communities in the Chilterns. With this in mind we are continuing to work with Hertfordshire County Council, The Chilterns Conservation Board, Chiltern District Council and the Countryside Agency to look at implementing new and innovative ideas in rural traffic management through the established Central Chilterns Traffic Management Project. This includes:

- New and revised speed limits
- New traditional style directional signage
- Establishment of a Quiet Lanes network
- Rights of Way improvements
- Information about cycling, riding or walking in the Central Chilterns area

Rail developments

We continue to work with Chiltern Railways, London Underground and Chiltern District Council to maintain and improve rail services, improve bus / rail interchange and enhance accessibility.

Taxi bus feeder services

Where potential demand justifies investment, we will develop taxi-bus feeder services, using Silver Rider as a model. These services can offer good value for money since a high proportion of passengers were previously travelling by car. We are currently considering the feasibility of and demand for services in Chesham and Amersham with rail operators. We will prioritise these projects based on their potential to achieve modal shift and the level of available resources.

DELIVERY PROGRAMME

LTP monies will be prioritised across the County using the Scheme Assessment Matrix to prepare annual work programmes that maximise value for money and meet transport objectives. We will also work with Chiltern District Council and other partners to identify and secure third party and external funding to accelerate the delivery of proposals, schemes and actions during the second LTP period.

| CHESHAM AND AMERSHAM LOCAL COMMUNITY AREA ACTION PLAN | |
|--|--|
| Enhancing accessibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to lobby London Underground to retain peak-time through services between Chesham and London beyond 2008 • Press London Underground to accelerate plans for accessibility improvements to Chesham, Amersham and Chalfont & Latimer stations • Work with the Primary Care Trust to ensure that the Chesham Healthzone is fully accessible for all groups and individuals • Identify and progress improvements to the Rights of Way network to enhance access to key services and facilities • Identify and progress improvements to cycling and walking routes to enhance access to key services and facilities • Work with partners to develop and implement accessibility action plans for employment, education, healthcare and shopping • Work with the local community to identify accessibility needs, and develop and implement a local accessibility action plan, incorporating innovative public transport solutions where appropriate • Review vehicular access arrangements in Amersham town centre (Sycamore Road) and progress appropriate proposals to enhance access and support economic vitality |
| Tackling congestion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure variability in journey time on both the A416 PCMC and the Amersham bypass to identify the junctions and sites that create 'bottlenecks' • Set a target for journey time reliability on the A416 PCMC • Develop and implement improvements at targeted 'bottlenecks' on the A416 PCMC and the Amersham bypass • Identify and progress improvements to cycling and walking routes to encourage an increase in sustainable journeys • Develop specific urban and inter-urban bus services, and demand responsive public transport services (utilising taxis where appropriate) • Work with London Underground and Chiltern Railways to explore the feasibility of a taxi bus to improve public transport access to the stations • Work with London Underground and Chiltern District Council to improve pedestrian, cyclist and bus passenger facilities • Work with schools and businesses in the area to promote travel planning and the adoption of appropriate travel initiatives • Complete the strategic network hierarchy (SNH) to identify key routes for use by different users and traffic types • Work with operators and District Councils to develop a countywide freight strategy (possibly including route agreements) to ensure Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) use appropriate routes |

CHESHAM AND AMERSHAM LOCAL COMMUNITY AREA ACTION PLAN

Improving the environment

- Work with Chiltern District Council to monitor air quality and traffic flows on Berkhamstead Road and determine main contributors to air pollution
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- Continue to monitor other sites and develop action plans where there are exceedences of BAQS
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- Continue the development and implementation of the Central Chilterns Traffic Management project in conjunction with appropriate partners
- Maintain verges & hedges at junctions in rural areas to keep vision splays clear
- Establish appropriate sign cleaning / maintenance arrangements with Parish / Town Councils
- Identify and progress improvements to the Rights of Way network to enhance access to rural services, facilities and the countryside for leisure purposes
- Continue to raise awareness of air quality issues using a range of media

Improving road safety

- Complete the speed limit reviews for:
 - Area 2 – in 2006
 - Area 10 – by summer 2007
- Develop and implement co-ordinated congestion and safety improvements at identified sites on the A416 PCMC
- Review collision data to identify and treat other sites where the road environment is a major factor in collisions
- Identify and progress improvements to cycling and walking routes and facilities to improve access and enhance safety for these vulnerable groups
- Reduce KSI casualties by targeting drivers and motorcyclists in high risk groups with appropriate education, training and publicity
- Work with the Police and other partners to reduce casualties and respond to local concerns, with targeted enforcement activities
- Integrate safety considerations into other strategies and programmes through ‘mainstreaming safety’

Managing and maintaining the transport asset

- Improve the condition of roads and footways in accordance with priorities established by our technical assessment and Transport Asset Management Plan
- Use customer feedback to develop maintenance programmes that respond to local concerns in the Chesham and Amersham area
- Increase our emphasis on the maintenance of footways and cycle routes across the area to enhance accessibility and support sustainable travel
- Seek to exceed our current standard for pothole repairs
- Identify sites for trials of intelligent road studs as an alternative to or replacement for standard street lighting
- Introduce improved testing regimes for all street lighting columns
- Increase the use of recycled materials in maintenance activities, wherever possible

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