POPE of Major Schemes Summary Report

Scheme Title	**A6 Clapham Bypass**	Major Schemes No:	12
Opening Date	December 2002		
POPE Stage	Five Years After		

Scheme Description

Construction of 5 km new dual carriageway, bypassing the village of Clapham, Bedfordshire, and online widening of 300m of A6 immediately south of the bypass. A new roundabout has been built where the southern end of the bypass diverges from the old A6, and there are two grade-separated junctions, one at Oakley Road and one at Highfield Road. There is one other overbridge to provide access to a farm.

Objectives	Objective Achieved?
• Improve road safety.	Yes
• Relieve congestion.	Partially
• Provide the opportunity for environmental improvement in Clapham by removing through traffic.	Yes

Main Impacts

Environment

- Impacts generally as expected, with greenhouse gas emissions being better than expected.
- Landscape: Earthworks, cuttings and low profile bridges in the floodplain help minimise the impact. Environmental barriers have been provided. Planting is generally establishing satisfactorily but will take time to screen views and require continuing aftercare.
- Biodiversity: Mitigation provided for protected species, but as post opening surveys were not a contract requirement there is limited information to evaluate effects. Species rich grass areas were not in evidence. Badgers appeared to be using the badger tunnels.
- Heritage: Area of unknown archaeology discovered leading to the disturbance of the heritage resource, however the investigation has led to greater knowledge of local settlement history.
- The EA believe that the scheme may have had an impact on local groundwater, but the HA believe this unlikely.

Safety

- Injury accidents have reduced by 6.3 per year – almost as predicted.

Economy

- Actual traffic flows lower than predicted.
- Outturn cost £41m, 4% higher than predicted.
- Outturn benefits £53m, 12%lower than predicted.

Accessibility

- Benefit to pedestrians and cyclists in village; but no journey time benefit on old road used by bus services.

Integration

- The scheme has been part of the expansion of Clapham;
- The scheme has not furthered the specific local policies that were identified at the appraisal stage.

Detailed Traffic Impacts

- Traffic flows have generally increased at rate lower than background growth observed across the county as a whole;
- Traffic flows FYA opening are broadly comparable to those observed at the OYA stage suggesting the re-assignment impacts stabilised within a year of opening;
- There is some evidence of small amounts of local re-routing via Church Lane between Oakley and Bromham (between the OYA and the FYA) – this is likely to be attributable to the A428 offering a quicker route into Bedford during the AM peak where there are significant delays at the southern end of the A6;
- Clapham) by around 1000vpd, and higher than forecast on Oakley Road and Church Lane by 1,000vpd and 300vpd respectively;
- Traffic flows in 2008 were higher than forecast on the old A6 south of Clapham.
- Traffic volumes on the A6 bypass were 16-42% lower than forecast – this equates to around 3,200 – 12,700 vpd less than forecast;
- Journey time reliability has improved despite some congestion issues south of the bypass;
- NRTF89 growth assumptions used in the modelling exercise has resulted in traffic being less than forecast on most links in the Do Min and Do Something scenarios;
- Journey times have typically improved by 2-3 minutes on the new route, however they have deteriorated to pre-opening levels since 2004 due to congestion at the Sainsbury Roundabout (south of the bypass);

Economic Summary

	Forecast	Actual
30 year Benefits (2002 prices & values)	£61m	£54m
Costs (2002 Prices & values)	£39m	£41m
Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)	1.6	1.3

Key Findings

- In appraisal terms, this evaluation has demonstrated forecasting of scheme benefits was relatively accurate. Both cost and benefit were within 15% of forecasts
- This scheme provides further evidence that the use of NRTF89 results in over estimates of the traffic flow forecasts;
- The observed accident savings were broadly consistent with COBA low growth predictions, but had not fallen in line with lower than expected traffic flows on the old and new road;
- The appraisal underestimated the likelihood of re-routing attributed to the scheme impact and ongoing congestion at the Sainsbury roundabout;
- Outstanding congestion problems at the Sainsbury roundabout has eroded some of the benefits from the bypass by increasing journey times in the AM resulting in realised benefits closer to the low growth scenario;
- With the exception of the AM peak, journey times were broadly as expected;
- Traffic using the old road was marginally higher than forecast - this could be a result of traffic from Clapham using the old route into Bedford rather than the new route due to lengthy delays at the Sainsbury roundabout
- Whilst archaeological work was carried out efficiently, reporting was slow.

The section of the A6 which includes the Clapham bypass has now been de-trunked and ongoing responsibility for maintenance and management of this scheme now lies with the Local Highway Authority.