

In-Depth Review Report
of the
Major Projects Overview and Scrutiny Panel
on

Milsom Street and Green Street

20th March 2003



Review Panel Members

Les Kew (Convenor)

John Bailey

Del Herod

Jeff Manning

Marian McNeir

Caroline Roberts

Julie Stiddard

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Objectives of the overview & scrutiny review
3. Scope
4. Method
5. Findings
6. Conclusions
7. Recommendations
8. List of Appendices

1. Introduction

The Major Projects Overview and Scrutiny Panel have undertaken a review of recent streetscape works on Milsom and Green Street in Bath city centre, with a view to making improvements to council processes in the way it develops similar schemes in the future. Development of the Milsom & Green Street project began in October 1999 and was completed in May 2002.

This report sets out the Panel's approach, findings, conclusions and recommendations.

2. Objectives of the Overview & Scrutiny Review

The objective of the consideration of the issue by this Overview & Scrutiny Panel is:

- In its **Overview** role – to give comments to the Council Executive to assist it in developing improvements in council processes for urban design and similar major projects in the future. This has involved considering officer, member, community stakeholder, external practitioner, and public views received as written and oral evidence.
- In its **Scrutiny** role – to ensure that decision-making processes are robust, e.g. that relevant information, as much as was available, was brought to decision-makers, that extensive consultation was undertaken, and members of the public had suitable opportunities to express their views in the development of the scheme.

3. Scope

As stated in the Terms of Reference (appendix 1), the Milsom Street In-depth Review was commissioned to specifically:

- Examine the scope of works carried out and the reasons / consultations that determined the scope of the review
- Determine whether or not the objectives of the works were realistic
- Determine whether or not the objectives of the works were achieved
- Identify any shortfall in achieving objectives to include whether the original scope of works should have been different
- Determine what would have been required to address any shortfall identified and what (if anything) could have been done differently to improve the effectiveness of the scheme

- Make recommendations on changes to working practices and / or decision making that would make the implementation of future schemes better

4. Method

4.1 Approach to the Review

The Review has taken a project-managed approach by breaking activities into the following key stages:

- Agreeing the terms of reference and scope for the review
- Project planning and agreeing public meeting dates
- Agreeing research topics, then undertaking and reviewing the research
- Conducting interviews with relevant witnesses.
- Consideration of conclusions
- Make recommendations for inclusion in a final report.

4.2 Research

The review has used a number of research methods to gather information, including a review of original project documentation, benchmarking of best practice in urban design and direct questioning of witnesses. Specific activities that have been carried out are:

- 4.2.1 Director's Overview of Key Issues (post project review)
- 4.2.2 Project History of Milsom Street and Green Street including recorded minutes of the Cl:TE working party (a collation of original project documentation).
- 4.2.3 A review of urban streetscape award nominees and winners including judging criteria, with a view to understanding perceptions of best practice.
- 4.2.4 A review of published streetscape design guidance including other local authority, professional organisations and private practitioner guidance.
- 4.2.5 The role and position of The Bath Streetscape Manual, produced March 1999
- 4.2.6 Views expressed in letters and emails written by the public either directly to the panel convenor or to the Bath Chronicle in response to specific press releases.
- 4.2.7 Written and verbal representations from the public at public panel meetings.
- 4.2.8 Interviews with selected witnesses (officers, members, community stakeholders & external practitioners from private practice and other local authorities) at a public meeting on 18th November 2002 (see appendix 2 for details).

The public witness session held on 18th Nov, 2002 was a key method of collating information for the review, the format of which was:

- a) An initial presentation by a B&NES Conservation Officer who was involved in the CI:TE team and particularly the Milsom & Green Street design and implementation. Questioning by the panel followed to the Officers who were involved in the project.
- b) The Panel then called upon the experience and advice of Urban Design experts from other authorities as well as an independent Urban Designer in private practice. Each gave a short presentation of similar projects they have been involved with and answered questions.
- c) The third session heard the views of local business stakeholders and community groups that had been consultees of the original scheme.
- d) A session with Councillors involved in the Milsom/Green Street Project allowed the panel to ask questions about decision making during scheme development.
- e) Finally, officers returned to clarify any outstanding points that had been raised in earlier sessions.

4.3 Themes for Analysis

Given the spread and numerous sources of information collated during this review, there has been a need to take a thematic approach to considering the lessons of the Milsom/Green Street project. This report is therefore structured to provide the panel's findings under six key themes:

- Project Organisation & Management
- Consultation
- Decision Making Process
- Finances
- Scheme Development
- Public Opinion

5. Findings

5.1 Project Organisation and Management

The panel clarified the structure of the project team and its method of operation:

- A core CI:TE project team was established, comprising a full time project leader and part-time secondee (both with extensive background experience in urban design). There was also dedicated full-time administrative resource and external design and engineering consultants were used as required to supplement the skills of the team. In the latter stages, as the scheme developed towards implementation, additional technical resource was brought on-board from the Councils Engineering Services Team, particularly to oversee contractual issues with suppliers and to co-ordinate works on site.
- The CI:TE team comprised two full time members of staff and two part time members of staff: a Team Leader and Urban Designer; a Technical Support Officer (both full time posts); a Conservation Architect (half-time secondment from Planning Services); and a Consulting Traffic Engineer (three days per week).
- Due to internal restructuring of what is now Transportation, Access and Waste Management during the life of the CI:TE team, the team had a series of different Heads of Service and acting Heads of Service. There was therefore poor continuity of management.
- A CI:TE Working Party was established, comprising Councillors (of the PTE sub committee – see details under 5.2 Decision Making), various council department representatives and local community & stakeholder groups.
- The aim of the CI:TE Working Party was to be a feedback forum on scheme development with the aim that delegates go back to their representative groups for further consultation and feedback to the CI:TE project team.

Questioning of witnesses sought to understand the strengths and weaknesses of these arrangements.

- Project officers said it was exciting to involve dedicated people including the use of an external consulting engineer. The project was able to push the boundaries and interpret standard guidelines. It involved cross-departmental working
- An integral multi-disciplined approach is very important in achieving successful scheme development.
- The team was small and at times, stretched in its capacity. It was acknowledged that project workload snowballed and expectations were high as to what could be delivered. Also that their comments as to what they were and were not able to take on were not accepted by others.
- In view of the workload, it was also stated that the administration support of the team could have been greater, e.g. for accurate filing and better records – the project team was under-resourced in this area. Details of discussions were not minuted. Rather, a summary of notes of meetings was kept.
- Certain PTE spokespersons praised officers for what they achieved in terms of quality of materials and design.
- Milsom Street / Green Street was seen as first step towards transport management in Bath and therefore, a key part of a city-wide CI:TE strategy.

- There was a disjointed approach to installation of the street furniture and the paving. The street furniture was procured and installed under a separate contract and arrived 6-8 months after the paving was laid, whereas it could have been integrated as part of the main contract.
- External practitioners emphasised the existence of consumer awareness and 'competition' among world-wide city destinations in providing streetscape facilities for visitors. In Britain, Bath is in the premier league of such cities but there is recognition that, as a nation, we underestimate the importance and potential of well designed public spaces.
- Local authority specialist staff have the design skills to undertake this work as well as having detailed local knowledge and a working knowledge of local authority procedures. However, it was suggested that sometimes specialist consultants should do the design, so that they are able to provide pure design input and not get bogged down by the conflicts within local government.

B&NES officers provided examples of how project team structures are already evolving in light of the CI:TE team experience and the emerging Public Realm Strategy:

- CI:TE has highlighted the need to work across boundaries and now the council is using similar processes for other schemes. Methods have been developed to include external stakeholders in leading roles on projects. The concept of an integrated approach is essential when dealing with partners and stakeholders, now an internal multi-disciplined group has been established for Public Realm and meets monthly cross-council.
- The specialism of Project Management is now better valued to provide objectivity and ability to manage complex issues and logistics away from the technical and subjective issues of the project.

5.2 Consultation

The extent of consultation undertaken during scheme development has been a main focus for the review, particularly given the extent and nature of public comment following the schemes completion. The panel was particularly interested to find out:

- What consultation had been undertaken and how?
- Whether consultation was sufficiently extensive?
- Whether the results of consultation had made any affect on scheme design?

The panel found that a wide range of consultation methods had been used by the project team, including:

- The CI:TE team commissioned specific street histories on Milsom Street and New Bond Street in addition to a detailed Bath Historical Streetscape Survey before commencing the design work.
- A CI:TE project team website with information about the Milsom/Green Street development.
- 2,500 brochures. A specific leaflet on the Milsom/Green Street scheme produced early in the project, outlining existing problems and improvement opportunities with concept drawings for the proposed scheme.
- All residents and businesses on Milsom Street, New Bond Street, New Bond Street Buildings, Old Bond Street and Burton Street were invited to two evening workshops to discuss the development of the proposals. Approximately 35 people attended each workshop. The meetings provided opportunities to discuss issues such as retail servicing & delivery, parking, taxi ranks, etc.

- Public Exhibitions at Bath Central Library and the Guildhall and a display of the initial choice of bollard in the Guildhall Foyer.
- Various local interest groups including Bath Preservation Trust, Bath Chamber of Commerce and Bath Federation of Residents' Groups were represented on the CI:TE Working Party. The Party met regularly to review and discuss the range of CI:TE projects including Milsom/Green Street.

The panel sought comments from original consultees as to their perceptions of the success and involvement in the consultation exercises and any impacts that had resulted on scheme development. The panel also tested the robustness of consultation methods:

- Rejection of an initial bollard design was made in response to adverse public comment. However, the decision over which final bollard to use was made by Planning Transportation and Environment Committee Spokespersons without further public consultation due to time constraints of the project.
- Public opinion had perceived that the scheme would result in a traffic-free Milsom Street, at least in terms of parking, to allow easier pedestrian movement across the road and to reduce the visual clutter of parked cars on each side of the street. The outcome of discussions held with traders and residents was the desire for daytime orange badge holder parking, servicing, and bus stop and evening residents' parking, general parking, taxis and bus stop. These proposals were clearly indicated on the CI:TE Milsom Street/Green Street broadsheet, exhibition and web site. Standard parking still remains on the street, albeit with a small reduction in spaces.
- The Council's Access Officer had been consulted on the scheme about the needs of people with visual and/or mobility impairment. The Team had been advised that, other than the inclusion of high reflective white bands on all bollards, there should be no physical aids for people with visual and/or mobility impairment. The technology of types of tactile paving and the method of their integration was still developing. Consultation meetings had been held resulting in the provision of non-slip paving stone.
- CI:TE Working Party representatives were unable to comment on whether they were involved in a structured approach to the evaluation, analysis and public return of results for consultation.
- Comments were made that the representatives on the CI:TE Working Party did not always represent their organisation's views and that they would speak from a personal point of view. This was partly due to the immediacy of discussions at Working Party meetings. In some cases a synopsis of what had been discussed would filter back to organisations but such processes rarely allowed for detailed consideration by that organisation. There was a view that expert consultees should be consulted over specific issues over which they can give an opinion and that there should be a focus on specialist advice and interest where it can add value.
- Planning, delivery and analysis of the consultation was undertaken by the CI:TE project team itself, rather than by independent researchers. This raised concerns over the objectivity of analysis by a project team, particularly if resultant comments were against the views of the designers. It appeared that there was no published analysis of the public consultation that had been undertaken.

In seeking to establish good practice in consultation, external practitioners reported on their own experiences of similar projects:

- During the regeneration of the Edinburgh Royal Mile, a client group was set up comprising of local stakeholder groups including the main consultant contractor, Enterprise Ltd. an economic regeneration group, the Old Town Renewal Trust and others. The two-year programme included a communications strategy involving extensive consultation and publicity. Traders were invited to meetings and a shop window was set up where anyone could ask about progress during the two-year scheme.
- For a Salisbury scheme, workshops with stakeholders were arranged, allowing round-table discussions to talk openly about various ideas and constraints at a very early stage, before formal scheme development began. Sessions were very creative and hands-on to allow those involved an understanding of the issues and become involved in the design process.
- Cambridge produced a regular newsletter for a scheme and held a database of more than a hundred interest groups.
- General advice from all external practitioners concerning consultation stressed that public ownership should begin at the strategy stage of a project. This would identify at an early stage what the passions and controversial issues are so that design of the scheme can take account of them. Consultation on such aspects can then be made at an early stage involving people who live and work in the street and local area. If people are part of decision making process they will feel protective over what is done so it is important to carry people along with the project. Consultation should aim to achieve understanding with people over the questions of why works and specific details of the scheme are required. This should involve lots of publicity and effort into a communications strategy. Such consultation promotes ownership of issues and ideas from the start.
- There should be a strand of emphasis in all consultation that reminds people of the bigger picture, e.g. the aims, objectives and benefits of scheme and the end result that is being sought.
- Consultation needs to have a feeling of real partnership, joint ownership of decisions and an ability to show evidence that views are taken on board and considered.

B&NES officers provided examples of how the consultation process for similar urban design schemes is already evolving in light of new practices. In particular:

- The impact of the Council's developing Public Realm Strategy is highlighting areas where the council needs to work together with a full range of stakeholders before implementation.
- A new consultation technique, the 'Place Improvement Plan', has been recently trialled.

5.3 Decision Making

The panel was keen to understand the process for decision making on the Milsom Street scheme.

- How were key decisions arrived at?
- Did decision making rest with Councillors, project officers, directors or a combination of these?
- To what extent was the CI:TE Working Party involved in decision making.

Witnesses and research provided the following:

- The decision over which bollards to use was made by the three Planning, Transport & Environment (PTE) committee spokespersons in conjunction with a project officer, in response to negative public opinion over the first choice.
- It was reported that there had been a delay in erecting 20-mph signs at the top of Milsom Street although the poles for them had been installed. The project team was subsequently instructed by the Director, not to install 20mph signs, to remove the poles and consider alternative methods of signing, as the Director wanted the boundary of the 20-mph zone to be reviewed. In the witness sessions Councillors had not known that such a decision, not to pursue a 20mph speed limit, had been made.
- The continued volume of parked traffic in Milsom Street was a concern (removal of general parking had been an objective of the scheme – see section 5.5) and it was unclear why the planned changes did not happen. Project officers remain confused as to how this decision was made. The PTE Spokes claimed that parking policy was beyond their remit. They were not aware of the change to the decision, only aware that there would be provision for parking, not of the classification of these spaces (e.g. standard or disabled parking) suggesting instead that such detailed decisions would be made by the Transport sub-committee in conjunction with relevant Parking Services officers.
- In the main, general design decisions were made by officers of the CI:TE team in full consultation with the CI:TE Working Party and the Transportation Sub-committee spokespersons. Some external members of the CI:TE Working Party were not aware exactly who were making the key decisions and felt that there was no real co-ordination of decision making. Certainly, the CI:TE Working Party was not empowered to make decisions, and representatives could only speculate that it was probably the Head of Service and CI:TE team leader. A Councillor on the CI:TE Working Party clarified his view, that the Working Party did not have decisions to make but were commenting on proposals.
- The CI:TE Working Party was formed as a consultative group to assess and comment on initiatives brought forward by the CI:TE team. Update reports were required to go to the Council's Transportation Sub Committee who had responsibility for agreeing detail issues on schemes as they did for all highway and transportation capital projects. Decisions could also be taken where appropriate by officers under delegated powers or by the parent Committee Planning Transportation and Environment (for matters of policy). On occasions officers would take decisions after discussion with spokespersons of these committees. The above was the way in which all schemes would have decisions made upon them and the CI:TE projects were no different to any others.
- Comment was made that the decision making process was unsatisfactory and did not conform to the above. Concern was raised that detailed views of some of the participants were not taken account of, for example, over street furniture and the poetry carving on the paving. Overall there was a lack of recorded analysis of decisions taken and by whom. The regular reporting to the sub committee did not occur as frequently as originally planned.
- Overall, there was a lack of recorded analysis over decisions and consultation results.

External practitioners commented on their experiences of decision making on similar projects:

- There was comment that the new modernised Executive (Cabinet) process of local government should add clarity to decision making. In particular, there were suggestions that it would be more effective if appropriate Executive members can be clear about specific portfolios of project activity.
- Cambridge gave example of a Project Board System and the use of executive, scrutiny and statutory planning committees. The role of a project board is to have clear responsibility to make the scheme move forward.

- In general external practitioners recommended that there be some separation between decisions made on the primary objectives of the project and those made on the nitty-gritty design details.

5.4 Finances

Two sets of financial figures regarding the Milsom and Green Street schemes have been provided to the panel:

1. Directors post-project review of Milsom Street
2. Milsom Street & Green Street: A project history

Presentation and detail of this information varies so to provide clarity, key figures and dates have been drawn out and presented in a summary flowchart to show how the project evolved, how additional budget was allocated and an analysis of variance between budget, tendered and final costs. See Appendix 3 – Budget/Cost history **for Milsom Street** (not including Green Street). Final scheme costs, as at 7 November 2002 were £726, 546 for Milsom Street and £107, 936 for Green Street.

The panel found:

- Paving works were completed on schedule and to within 1.5% of the contracted value.
- There was a lack of proper notes or minutes in recording financial decisions and allocation of budgets and the Panel's review of the meeting notes left more questions than answers. Where was the money for Milsom & Green Street found? Could it have been better spent on other highway maintenance & repairs? Money seems to have been 'found' from different budgets, though it is unclear how it was allocated.

Discussion with external practitioner witnesses sought views on the financial aspects of their work.

- An example from Edinburgh of a street regeneration scheme showed how initial budget costs of £1,000,000 rose to £4,000,000 but that the scheme gave good value for money as assessments since implementation show a return on investment of £26,000,000 for the local economy.
- External practitioners stressed the importance of being in for the long haul, that the project should not be worried by ebbs and flows of funding and should not down specify elements (e.g. street furniture) in the attempt to make money go further.

5.5 Scheme Development

The panel sought to understand the key objectives of the Milsom/Green Street scheme and the details of how the scheme was developed.

Environment

- To create a clean, secure and attractive environment designed to put the pedestrian first.
- To help Bath compete with other shopping centres by improving the environmental quality

Residents

- To keep traffic slow, particularly at night by the introduction of a 20mph zone and traffic calming measures

- To reduce the number of cars and lessen congestion, noise and fumes by removing general parking .

Pedestrians

- To create an environment where cars are not a dominant feature
- To create a safer place to cross the road on a level surface

Buses & Taxis

- To introduce taxi ranks for the convenience of shoppers, pub users and people with disabilities.
- To retain the Milsom Street Bus Stop

Traffic

- To ensure traffic speeds are kept low 24 hours a day by introducing a gateway feature and traffic calming measures.

Parking

- To ensure less congestion and hold ups by removing general parking and allowing only various permit holders parking privileges

Servicing

- To provide for quicker and easier access for delivery vehicles by introducing dedicated servicing bays at regular intervals along the street.

Key objectives *during* scheme implementation:

- Protection of pedestrians
- Access to shops at all times (during process of works) through appropriate sequences of work and contractor deadlines for completion of various stages.

What the Project Team did to minimise disruption during implementation:

- Weekly progress meetings throughout works period between CI:TE project team and contractors.
- Maintained paving into shops during opening hours. Contractors worked outside normal hours to bridge gaps.
- Storage of materials off-site to avoid disruption.
- In the main, stone cutting done off-site to reduce noise and dust.
- Where cutting required on site, provision of screened working areas to limit dust.
- Complaints were received over noise in the last three weeks of work, and litter became an issue. The site was temporarily closed by the team for a clean-up.
- Meeting held with police due to high number of pubs, expectation of late night damage, etc. Hence, high mesh barriers were installed to limit disruption but in event, no serious vandalism or disorder occurred.

What witnesses and research found:

- With regard to the style and design of street furniture, officers put forward the view that the choice of street furniture was still right, that they were specific to their location in Bath, of their time and not a 'heritage-ville' solution. It could have been different but it works well.
- The CI:TE team undertook a detailed stone audit of 19 different natural stones. The audit first choice was Welsh pennant stone. Ten weeks before work was due to start on site the company producing the Welsh pennant ceased production. The stone audit second choice was pietra serena, an Italian sandstone. The stone was delivered on programme and within budget.
- The bollards are in place due to a need to protect the paving and the vaults underneath by preventing vehicles driving and parking on the pavements. The space between these vaults, services over the vaults and the shop door thresholds means that there is only sufficient depth for paving of 50mm depth and its bedding which is not able to support being overrun by traffic. A paving depth of a minimum of 90mm and suitable bedding would be required if traffic were to overrun the paving. The rusty bollards were a common point of concern. They did not meet agreed specification so not paid for yet, awaiting resolution by repair or replacement.
- Officers commented that the contractors performed well and developed good relationships with shop owners and traders. They were on first name terms with many, which allowed adhoc communications over installation and resolution of problems.
- External witness stressed that design influence should come from the unique context of the place and that the project should not get bogged down in administrative details. This view of the local design influence had been shared by the CI:TE team which had believed the key to Milsom Street and New Bond Street was its local distinctiveness.

Regarding the re-design of Green Street:

- A PTE spokesperson had requested that Green Street have a shared surface (i.e. that the carriageway be raised to the level of the footpaths as at Upper Borough Walls), with the street closed to traffic between 10am and 4pm seven days a week, on the basis that it would enable easier pedestrian access.
- The CI:TE team advised against this course of action citing the fact that the existing kerb face channelled all surface water along Green Street there being no other highway drainage in Green Street and, that if there was to be a shared surface, it would be necessary to have bollards to protect the pavements, vulnerable shop canopies and vaults under the pavements (permanent bollards have not yet been installed; temporary bollards have been replaced on several occasions but have been regularly damaged).
- Traders did not agree to the proposed seven-day a week closure, a Saturday closure was introduced instead.
- The stone dish channels define the edge of the carriageway; the inset channels provide the main drainage to the street.
- The green surfacing to the street was requested by an individual trader with the support of an individual councillor and was subsequently carried out against the advice of the CI:TE team and the Engineering Consultancy.

Regarding a CI:TE Master plan:

- Representatives on the CI:TE working Party said they were aware of there being a master plan for the streets of Bath but understood that each element would be dealt with separately, that there was no synergy and that Milsom/Green Street works happened in isolation.

- There was a view that the Priority Access Scheme (Busgate) was physically close to Milsom/Green Street but bore no resemblance in design terms. (It should be noted that as the busgate was for an experimental period its construction was required to be of a temporary nature.)
- Others were not aware of the existence of a Master plan.
- Councillors indicated that the master plan was designed to manage cross-city traffic and that Milsom Street was an integral part of that strategy as was the closing of Pulteney Bridge and Priority Access Scheme (Busgate).
- A visit to Cambridge (to review the Cambridge City Council/Cambridge County Council busgate) for performance benchmarking was undertaken by the project team.

External experts said:

- The scheme had been implemented with a high quality of work, particularly the paving.
- Suggestions to reduce the street clutter: put ticket machines into walls; is street furniture really required - particularly the bins? There was a suggestion to use the building in the middle at the bottom and put bike racks etc. down the side – less obtrusive. Is traffic calming (speed tables) really required given the narrowness of the road and obvious pedestrian dominated nature of the street?
- Suggestions to be bold and ban vehicles altogether.
- Create a pedestrian piazza in the large open space at the bottom of Milsom Street.
- Review issues around tactile paving and signage.
- Remove anything that suggests a gate at the top of Milsom St. In terms of layout, Bath doesn't end there, so extend scheme to rest of the streets.
- Restore curbs instead of bollards from Green Street and upwards, provide simple setting for Grade 1 listed building (Somersetshire Buildings).
- A representative from the Pedestrian's Assoc. felt that overall there was not an improvement for Milsom Street in terms of pedestrianisation. Chamber of Commerce rep. said customer feedback stated that the scheme is confusing to pedestrians if heading up to Milsom Street from the lower city centre. Therefore, need to ensure that the pedestrians understand the principles of the street, need something to make them aware of the area through which cars are allowed that it is fundamentally different from the other areas. But generally a scheme that helps move pedestrians around the city is positive. Also comments that the traffic was lighter.

In response to the above comments from external witnesses, Bath & North East Somerset Officers replied with the following clarification points:

- Officers believed they had achieved a Piazza at New Bond Street.
- Positioning parking machines in walls was considered but rejected as all buildings in Milsom Street are listed and such works would not be an acceptable alteration.
- Large litter bins were a particular requirement to reduce litter.
- Bike racks and benches were deliberately located away from buildings to prevent them from being climbed on and reduce the risk of buildings being vandalised. Bike racks were specifically located at build outs to prevent vehicles overrunning pavements.
- Shared surfaces were required to enable access for all.

- Speed tables were required as traffic calming measures to ensure self-policing of the 20 mph zone.
- Shared surfaces were required to enable access for all.

5.6 Public Opinion

The Panel's review took account of views of the public expressed in writing to the Convener during the period of the review, following his requests in the local press for comment on the issues. In total 53 letters, emails and feedback forms were received. The main themes are summarised below:

5.6.1 Street Furniture

The style and positioning of the street furniture in Milsom Street has been a dominant and contentious topic in the letters and emails received from the public. General opinion of the Street furniture was that it was too modern and not in keeping with the style of Bath or of Milsom Street. Public opinion overwhelmingly agreed that the bollards were 'ugly', with a large number commenting on the rust appearing around their bases.

Also in the line of fire were the benches. The public were not concerned so much with their existence but again their modern design, the materials used and the fact that they didn't have backrests. There was a general call for the more traditional benches with arms and backrest as seen elsewhere in Bath.

Overall, a reduction in street clutter with more consideration as to the placement of the items would be in keeping with public opinion.

5.6.2 Pedestrians

There opinion that Milsom Street should be fully pedestrianised, banning vehicles all together, at least in daytime hours. Along the same lines, many of the public expressed a concern over the confusion as to who has the right of way between the pedestrian and the car. They feel that the new scheme is potentially dangerous.

5.6.3 Traffic Calming

The public were also confused about the overall objective of the scheme. Many shared the opinion that the traffic speeds of cars driving through Milsom Street did not need a calming scheme as it was already slow moving. Many recommended that the curb be put back and questioned why the road needed to be levelled with the pavement at all.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Decision Making

- There was a lack of clarity over who had responsibility for making decisions, this was evident in the process of choosing the bollard. Unclear ownership led to ineffective outcomes.
- There is a need to justify why decisions are being made, whether it agrees with the majority or the minority view. The panel saw no evidence of any justification being made for decisions, particularly for the unpopular ones.
- Whilst there were established mechanisms for decision making for all schemes it appears that there was a lack of clarity about who had made the various decisions throughout the Milsom Street project. Unclear ownership led to ineffective outcomes.
- There was insufficient reporting of the Working Party discussions to the Transportation Sub Committee, and where policy decisions were required to the Planning Transportation and Environment Committee. This led to some members of the Working party being unhappy with the process taking on board their views and comments.
- Given the importance of the Working Party (as defined by the project team itself) the panel felt it a pity that more emphasis had not been put upon quality notes to record their discussions and recommendations.

6.2 Consultation

- There were a wide variety of consultation exercises undertaken and these gave a clear direction to the public about scheme design. However there appeared to be a lack of analysis or taking account of the consultation feedback to inform the final design.
- There seemed to be a lot of investigation into the history of the street but not much evidence of investigation into existing consultation processes elsewhere in the country, the trip to Cambridge appeared to be linked to the busgate project rather than Milsom Street.
- There was little flexibility of thought over scheme development or finalisation. For example, the process of choosing the final bollard didn't take into account public comment. It seems that certain decisions were reached independent of public opinion, and sufficient time was not planned to allow for such changes in the closing stages of scheme development.
- The council should not always indicate which is a preferred option when presenting schemes but should conduct the consultation objectively. Consultation must be appropriate for the occasion, for example it may be best to be open at the start of a scheme but with stronger leadership over preferred options when decisions need to be made. The panel did recognise that if consultation is totally open at the beginning of a scheme it could lead to public suggestions being beyond project deliverables, which has the danger of leading to disappointment and low public opinion. Expectations need to be carefully managed.
- Consultation can be meaningless if it is out of context of the wider scheme for the whole city. The public appeared to be unaware that Milsom Street was part of a grander scheme.
- Overall, in the context of this project, consultation processes were poor, outcomes were not clear and expectations for how public comment would be used was not clearly articulated at the outset.

6.3 Project Management

- The panel was unable to unravel the management structures responsible for the project.
- Under the old committee system there seemed to be too many lines of communication and a lack of knowledge as to who was responsible for making decisions.
- The main points of concern over the scheme appear to be a result of the process failing.
- The officers who project managed were also technically and creatively involved in the scheme. The panel was concerned that they were unable to separate the objective requirements of project management from the technical and creative aspects of scheme design.
- Most of the contentious comments have surrounded issues relating to the end product of the project, which is unsurprising given that the public eye focuses on final results, not the process of how the scheme was developed.
- It appears that the team did not make full use of all available resources before commissioning its own studies. During 1998, the CI:TE Team commissioned a historical survey of some of Bath's streets (Bath Streetscape History) but chose to ignore a another Streetscape report (Bath Streetscape Strategy and Manual) that had also been commissioned by the Council over a similar period.
- Overall, the panel was not confident that the council had all the relevant project management expertise for this project or they were not made available for this project.

6.4 Finances

- Looking at how the money was allocated, the scheme was initially proposed to reduce traffic speed. No one took on board that the busgate was installed at the same time and the fact that this was going to change the traffic pattern.
- The rising costs and allocation of budget over the period of the scheme is a concern given the number of other highway maintenance backlog issues.
- The panel voiced concerns that as momentum for the project gathered, the council had to spend the money to complete it.

6.5 Scheme Development

- There appeared to be no rationale for the Scheme at the outset that was publicly announced - it seemed vague. This mitigated against a sense of ownership and against a drawing together of areas of control, e.g. the elected members had no idea what was happening with regards to the parking regime, indicating the need for areas of expertise to come together.
- There appeared to be no mechanisms in place to measure the success of the scheme, nor any clear thought as to how success or failure of the scheme would be judged.
- To inspect recent 'best practice', one CI:TE team member had made personal visits to Sheffield, Manchester, Birmingham, Durham and Newcastle. The visits were made during holidays and at the employee's own expense. The panel were concerned that the value of such visits are not recognised within council processes as being an aspect of professional development that should be encouraged to add value to scheme development.
- The panel was unconvinced of the rationale and need for level changes to the roadway, leading to the extensive use of bollards.

- It was clarified that the purpose of the bollards is to prevent vehicles parking on the pavement and damaging it, thus mitigating against high costs of repair. The Panel points out that that proper parking enforcement could also overcome the problem.
- There was a general perception that the cycle racks, benches and bollards were not in keeping with the street, the general view of the consultees was that a better design in keeping with Bath could have been adopted.
- The panel found that the new paving had been well laid and incorporated high quality materials and details, for example on the crossing points.
- The panel would have liked to have more information on why the paving was sourced from Italy (other recent major schemes in Bristol and Edinburgh sourced their stone from the UK).
- The panel concluded that the commissioning of special bollards and seating appeared costly. Tried and tested items were available which would fit in with the environment.
- Whilst Bath & North East Somerset specialist staff have the skills to undertake urban design work such as Milsom Street and have detailed local knowledge and a working knowledge of local authority procedures, other authorities have successfully employed consulting architects for similar projects.

6.6 Repairs and Maintenance

- Whilst officers did consider street cleaning requirements when designing Milsom Street, the Panel is not convinced that the Council's current practices in cleaning are providing satisfactory results.
- Maintenance and repair of the street leaves something to be desired. There are areas of minor damage to stone that have been repaired with tarmac, e.g. the pedestrian crossing on New Bond Street, and utility operators are not replacing paving after their works to the same high standard to which it was originally laid.

7. Recommendations

The panel's recommendations are split into two categories:

- Milsom Street specific (sections 7.1 – 7.3)
- General recommendations for all future major projects (sections 7.4 – 7.10)

7.1 Recommendations specific to Milsom Street

In view of the strong public perception over the design of street furniture in Milsom Street, the panel recommends a considered design review of the scheme with an objective to reduce the visual clutter, quantity and prominence of street furniture in the street. The panel recommends that an independent consultancy team carry out this work. The public must be fully consulted (in accordance with recommendation 7.2 – below) regarding the proposed changes.

Particular areas for improvement are:

7.1.1 Bollards

We would like to see the bollards removed and replaced by an alternative design, such as the existing standard items, available at a reduced cost and used in other areas of Bath. They should be installed in fewer numbers, used only where absolutely necessary.

7.1.2 Benches

Taking account of criticism over materials, modernist design, lack of arm and back rests, and the money spent, in the fullness of time as they require repair or replacement, the benches should be removed and replaced by alternative seating in keeping with the historic status of Bath. Any new benches should be subject to a review of positioning before they are installed. For example, to reduce visual intrusion and increase usage, new benches should be repositioned further away from the main roadway.

7.1.3 Bins

Bins should be set back from the main thoroughfare to reduce visual prominence.

7.1.4 Cycle Racks

Cycle Racks should be moved to a less prominent position, so that when they are filled with parked bikes they are less of a visual intrusion on the street scene.

7.1.5 Signage

A review of signage should seek to remove obsolete posts and unnecessary signs which clutter the pavements.

7.1.6 Parking

Parking provision in Milsom Street needs to be thoroughly reviewed in line with original objectives of the scheme.

7.1.7 Piazza

Regarding the confusion surrounding pedestrian or vehicle priority at the bottom of Milsom Street and the high number of bollards currently installed to define roadway boundaries, the panel recommends a complete re-think of this aspect of the scheme. For example, implementation of a piazza area, where pedestrians have priority and vehicle access is hampered to the extent that drivers feel they are intruding on a pedestrian space would slow down traffic and create a safer space for pedestrians. This proposal is likely to require a

reduction in the traffic moving down Milsom Street but in the fullness of time, combined with traffic reduction such a feature would add an important focal point to the scheme.

7.2 Estimated Costs of Milsom Street Recommendations

The table lists the recommendations for Milsom Street with associated estimated costs.

Recommendation	Estimated Costs			Estimated Quantity *1	Total Estimated Cost
	Removal & making good	Unit cost for new item	Installation cost		
7.1 Independent design review	n/a	£10,000	n/a	1	£10,000
7.1.1 Remove & replace bollards *2	£7,400 *3	£150 ea	£30 ea. *4	50	£16,400
7.1.2 Replace & reposition selective benches	£500 ea.	£500 ea.	£600 ea.	5	£8,000
7.1.3 Bins	£300 ea.	£400 ea.	£400 ea.	6	£6,600
7.1.4 Reposition Cycle Racks	£500 ea.	n/a	£800 ea.	4	£5,200
7.1.5 Signage review		Part of 7.1 above			
7.1.6 Parking review		Part of 7.1 above			
7.1.7 Piazza review & development					£50k–300k depending on scheme.

Notes

- *1 The actual quantity of work will be dependant on any recommendations that may be made as a result of the independent design review.
- *2 A specification to rectify the faults with the bollards is currently being finalised, once the faults are rectified a sum £15,770.00 will be paid to the supplier.
- *3 The sum is based on reinstating 40 vacated bollard sockets.
- *4 The sum assumes the existing sockets will be used, if the bollards are relocated a sum of £173 per bollard should be added.

7.3 Potential Source of Funding

With regard to the issue of funding, the Council's capital programme for Transportation is yet to be allocated for 2003/4. If the Council decided to carry out further works in Milsom Street, rather than other priorities, they could be funded from within that programme.

The timescale for reviewing the public realm and consultation on a Piazza idea may mean that there is little expenditure next year and it might be 2004/5 before there was any significant spend.

General Recommendations for all Future Major Projects

7.4 Consultation Methods

Consultation processes for future major projects affecting the public realm need to be improved. The panel makes a number of recommendations in this area under the following themes:

7.4.1 Independent Consultation

For consultation to make a successful contribution to projects, it should be conducted separately from the officers who are designing the scheme and initially, at least, would benefit from being undertaken independently by consultants with a proven capability of successful consultation. Analysis of consultation results needs to be objective and not carried out by the officers involved with the project. The aim would be to provide objective consultation rather than starting a consultation exercise by presenting the Council's pre-conceived ideas for a scheme.

7.4.2 Early Consultation

Engaging with consultees at an earlier stage should enhance the consultation process by engaging people with scheme development at a stage where they can influence its direction and comment on details. The project issues should be presented to the consultees so that they can provide views on the problems and support development of a range of potential solutions. In recommending this approach, the panel recognises that consultees expectations of what can be delivered will need to be managed, since raising expectations of what might be possible could lead to disappointment later.

7.4.3 Regular Consultation

This only serves to underline the importance of early, regular and consistent consultation sessions run independently of the project team. Scheme design should only be pursued after public consultation has set the direction for a project. As projects progress into a detailed design phase, the role of project officers would become greater. Consultation should include the views of experts, the general public, other council departments, and local interest/stakeholder groups.

7.4.4 Documentation

Consultation processes and outcomes should be documented and published.

7.4.5 Context

Consultation for a specific scheme should be carried out within a framework of the 'bigger picture'. For example, there was genuine confusion over the context of Milsom & Green street works being required to support the Priority Access point (busgate) nearby at the end of Bond Street. Information to consultees should include the context of the project in relation to wider schemes. Future schemes need to look wider than just their immediate area of impact so that schemes are take account of alterations to traffic volumes elsewhere.

7.5 Project Management

The panel recommends that there should be greater emphasis on a project management approach separate to the detailed aspects of scheme development. A project management function should provide more objectivity and be independent from the design, consultation or implementation resource. It can plan resource allocation (people and finances) and bring a proactive approach to planning key stages and deliver benefits in making sufficient time to oversee consultation and respond to outcomes. Overall, a project management function can balance the various conflicting requirements of a major project and maintain a long-term view of the desired outcome.

7.6 Notes of Meetings

In reviewing the notes of meetings and seeking to understand how key design or financial decisions of the Milsom/Green St. scheme were arrived at, the panel found the task difficult due to a lack of recorded detail of discussions, recommendations or decisions of the Working Party. It is therefore recommended that notes and minutes of major project meetings should include much greater detail, particularly in recording the rationale for key development and financial decisions.

The recommendations relating to project management (7.3 above) should support the allocation of suitable resource to projects to service this role.

7.7 Decision Making

The panel found evidence of a great deal of confusion over the definition of Member and officer roles and responsibilities around decision making on the Milsom/Green Street Project.

The panel recommends that there needs to be a clearer definition of member and senior officer (heads of service and directors) responsibilities for decisions and line management on projects. The new political arrangements of an executive cabinet with designated portfolio members, balanced with overview and scrutiny panels should provide improved clarification of roles compared to the old committee decisions.

The Major Projects overview & scrutiny panel would, itself, like to clarify its own role in supporting key decisions on future major projects. It suggests that it could work more closely with the executive in formulating the proposed direction of a project to take regular updates, scrutinise decisions and report back to the executive member. The executive member should remain as the designated portfolio holder, to give leading direction for the project and be held to account.

7.8 Financial Management

Whilst the panel was able to clarify the costs of the Milsom/Green Street scheme, it found difficulty in assessing whether the end result justified the money spent. There was no information in original project documentation or officer presentations that showed any 'cost versus benefit' analysis had been undertaken to demonstrate the value of the scheme.

The panel recommends that future major projects should include a greater emphasis on undertaking a thorough cost justification exercise. A corporate cost/benefit analysis procedure should be developed to support this. Benchmarking of similar schemes around the UK would also be of benefit in order to demonstrate that council resources are being deployed effectively.

Responsibility for such work would lie with the project management role (see recommendation 7.3) that would hold a responsibility for financial management of the project.

7.9 Streetscape Research and Guidance Documents

Regarding the various streetscape design guidelines produced by the Council over the period of the Cl:TE project (Bath Streetscape Strategy and Manual, Bath Historical Streetscape Survey and Public Realm Strategy), the Panel asks the Executive to undertake an investigation of how these documents were commissioned, researched and what they cost, so that use of resources can be maximised and future strategy be developed coherently for the Council.

7.10 Maintenance

The Council should ensure the long-term return on investment in street works is not lost by ensuring that there is effective budgetary provision for street cleaning, repairs and maintenance after improvements have been implemented.

8.0 List of Appendices

1. Terms of Reference
2. Directors Overview of key Issues (post project review)
3. Project History of Milsom Street and Green Street
4. A review of Urban Streetscape award nominees
5. A review of published streetscape design guidance
6. The Bath Streetscape Manual 1999 and summary page
7. A summary and copies of public views expressed in letters or emails
8. Notes of the Review Meetings
9. Membership of the Cl:TE Working Group
10. Budget/cost history for Milsom Street (not including Green Street)

In order to save paper, appendices of this report have been made available separately. Copies are available in the following locations:

- *at public inspection points (these are listed on the papers for Council meetings).*
- *in Council Members' political group rooms.*
- *by contacting the Overview and Scrutiny Team, Corporate Performance Unit, Guildhall, Bath, BA1 5AW. Tel: 01225 477329.*

Structure and Organisation

O&S Panel:	Major Projects
Convenor:	Les Kew
Panel Members:	John Bailey Del Herod Jeff Manning Marian McNeir Caroline Roberts Julie Stiddard
O&S Project Officer:	David Langman
Information & Review Officers:	Winnie Longhurst Anna Burgess
Democratic Services Officer:	David Taylor
Director:	Clive Thomas, Economic & Environmental Development
Head of Service:	Steve Howell, Transportation, Access & Waste Management
Service Areas contributing:	Transportation, Access & Waste Management Planning Services Engineering Consultancy Team