



AGENDA

HIGHWAYS ADVISORY BOARD

Tuesday, 4th March, 2008, at 10.30 am
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County
Hall, Maidstone

Ask for: **Karen Mannering**

Telephone **(01622) 694367**

Tea/Coffee will be available 15 minutes before the start of the meeting.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

1. Substitutes
2. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 14)
4. Kent Highway Services - The Director's Update (Pages 15 - 28)
5. Highway Maintenance Budget for 2008/09 (Pages 29 - 36)
6. Dover Priory Station Approach - Detailed Design Concepts (Pages 37 - 44)
7. Progress Report on Major Capital Projects (Pages 45 - 54)
8. Highway Tree Inspections - Customer Care (Pages 55 - 58)
9. Speed Management in Kent (Pages 59 - 60)
10. Free Travel for 11-16 Year Olds (Pages 61 - 64)
11. A26 Yew Tree Road/Speldhurst Road Junction Improvement, Southborough (Pages 65 - 72)

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership
(01622) 694002

Monday, 25 February 2008

Please note that any background documents referred to in the accompanying papers maybe inspected by arrangement with the officer responsible for preparing the relevant report.

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

HIGHWAYS ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the Highways Advisory Board held on Tuesday, 8 January 2008 at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone.

PRESENT: Mr R F Manning (Chairman), Mr J R Bullock, MBE, Miss S J Carey, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr C G Findlay, Ms A Harrison (substitute for Mr T J Birkett), Mr W A Hayton, Mr C J Law, Mr R A Marsh, Mr J I Muckle, Mr R A Pascoe, Mr A R Poole, Mrs P A V Stockell, Mr R Tolputt and Mr R Truelove.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Harrison-Mee, Director, Kent Highway Services; Mr D Hall, Head of Transport and Development; Mr N Bateman, Head of Technical Services; Mrs R Best, Transport Planner (Rural and Cycling); Mrs C Bruce, Head of Network Management; Mr J Farmer, Regeneration and Projects Manager; Mr K Hills, Head of Community Operations; Mr M Palmer, Head of Finance; Mr I Procter, Road Safety Manager; and the Head of Democratic Services (represented by Mrs K Mannering).

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairman informed the Board that the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Joint Transportation Boards had been invited to attend the meeting. The Chairman welcomed those present.

Petition

Mr Hall formally reported receipt of a petition from Mr G M Prosser, MP relating to improvements on the A258. Mr Hall was Chairman of a Working Group set up to look into the matter. He informed Members that a report of the Working Group's recommendations would be submitted to the Board.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**1. Minutes**
(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

2. Kent Highway Services – The Director's Update
(Item 4 – Report by Director, Kent Highway Services)

(1) The Director's Update report looked back on the last 12 months and highlighted some of the achievements from Kent Highway Services' hard working staff in Kent County Council, Ringway, Jacobs and TSUK. Staff from across the Alliance had been involved in organisational review for well over a year yet still delivered some significant, innovative improvements to service delivery, and kept pace with the challenging performance targets that were now published monthly in the report to all Members.

(2) The Alliance Board had developed a key set of indicators that reflected the broad range of services delivered by KHS and that helped put focus and drive into the service. In the last 12 months staff had worked hard to come to grips with a stronger performance

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culture and, whilst progress had been made, more needed to be done and the new organisation structure for KHS would help to deliver further improvements. Some key successes to note were:-

- continued good number of compliments KHS received, averaging at almost 50 per month
- significant reduction in streetlight repair time from 17 days in April to 5 days in the most recent set of results. Over 5,000 faults were fixed each month.
- 98% achievement of response to emergency sites within 2 hours
- significant improvement in 12 months of letters answered within 10 days. In September 2007 we achieved only 50% within target, we were now achieving over 80%. We receive nearly 1200 letters each month.
- Regular achievement of over 85% of all waste material being recycled.

(3) As the seven new teams became fully operational in April next year the Director planned to drive the performance and evidence based working within KHS, and recognised that there were some parts of the service that were not yet measured sufficiently to provide the information to understand how service delivery could be improved.

(4) In order to help in the understanding of the accountabilities and responsibilities of the seven new service groups, set out below were some examples of service improvements or actions over the last year:-

Community Operations (Kim Hills)

- We had placed the order with Commercial Services for over 60 new vans that could run on 30% bio-diesel fuel and raised the profile of our inspectors and enforcement officers across Kent.
- We were setting up a training programme for our highway inspectors to ensure they had a formal qualification and gained the recognition they deserved for the key role they played.
- We have trialled a new 'quiet' surfacing on the A26 in Tonbridge that had received rave reviews from local residents.

Technical Services (Norman Bateman)

- We had replaced the streetlights on A229 Bluebell Hill with longer life, low maintenance lanterns that lasted longer and reduced maintenance costs.
- We had started the asset data collection for streetlights, safety barriers, signs, trees and drainage that would help us get a better understanding of the asset and improve our maintenance regime and improve efficiency.
- We had been instrumental in developing new national guidance for the management of bridges.
- LED Streetlight pilot.

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Countywide Improvements (Behdad Haratbar – acting)

- We were on target to deliver over 500 maintenance and improvement schemes this year.
- We had achieved a prestigious national award for the 'Fastrack' scheme in Dartford.
- We had co-ordinated all Alliance partners to programme the resurfacing of the up lane of Blue Bell Hill in a weekend road closure early next year.

Transport & Development (David Hall)

- We were recently awarded 'Transport Authority of the Year' – a great achievement.
- We had successfully launched the travel pass for 11-16 year olds with a bigger roll out planned.
- We were leading the way with school travel plans and had over 300 in place.

Network Management (Caroline Bruce - acting)

- We were the first Authority to replace all traffic lights with LED's
- We had opened the Traffic Management Centre and planned to roll the coverage out to Canterbury and Tonbridge/ Tunbridge Wells next year.
- We had launched the traffic and travel website with the plan to record all roadworks on an interactive mapping system.

Business, Performance and Communication (David Beaver - acting)

- We were the first authority to have a dedicated page in a local newspaper to get our message across.
- We had developed and published a monthly set of key performance indicators that reflected the full highway service.

Finance (Mike Palmer)

- We had appointed a Head of Finance onto the management team who had commercial, private sector experience.
- We had received an 'extra' £15 million of budget
- We were on track to exceed our income target of £2.55 million.

(5) Despite all the changes and uncertainty for staff we had delivered a significant amount of innovative and nationally recognised good work so far this year. We were on track to re-shape the service by April 2008 and there would clearly be a period of bedding down.

(6) During discussion Mr Hall informed Members that a report relating to Kent Freedom Pass would be submitted to the Board in March.

(7) The Board noted the positive progress being made to improve service delivery and would support staff through the period of significant change that still lay ahead.

3. Transforming Kent Highway Services

(Item 5 – Report by Director, Kent Highway Services)

(1) The paper gave a brief summary of the presentation given by Geoff Harrison-Mee (Director of Kent Highway Services) and Kim Hills (Head of Community Operations). The presentation updated HAB on the implementation of the new Highway Service in Kent.

(2) KHS had been through progressive changes over the last 2½ years which had seen:-

- The transfer of functions and staff from 12 districts, with the creation of 3 new Divisions.
- Mobilisation of a new Alliance contract. This had created a partnership of four organisations (KCC, Ringway, Jacobs and TSUK) coming together as the Kent Highway Services Alliance working together to deliver the highway service.
- Transformation – a root and branch review of the highway service and an in depth challenge of operation and processes.

The next stage was to implement a highways service from 1 April 2008.

(3) KHS believed that there were significant opportunities for improving service delivery by joining up processes across the Alliance and in particular with regard to efficiency, increasing customer satisfaction and engaging with the community.

(4) KHS wanted to:-

- (a) drive efficiencies through integrated processes across organisational boundaries:
 - negating the need for double handling and input of data to multiple systems;
 - freeing up staff time and other resources; and
 - maximising work on the ground.
- (b) improve customer satisfaction:
 - designing customer-focused services to meet community expectations;
 - being clear about what they could do and when they'll do it; and then
 - delivering on that commitment.
- (c) deliver high quality services through:
 - innovation;
 - effective business systems; and
 - motivated, high performing teams.
- (d) provision of operational accommodation and facilities
 - Co-location / co-working

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- 24 hour operational facilities
- Modern winter maintenance service

(5) The presentation covered:-

The journey so far

New delivery structure

Customer and Community

Use of information technology

Accommodation / facilities

The challenges ahead

The vision

(6) A significant amount of work had already been completed over the last 12 months in remoulding the highway service. Implementation of the new structure had commenced. The next 12 months would be a vital part of the process.

(7) The Board supported the next phase of implementation.

4. The Future of Highway Drainage

(Item 6 – Report by Head of Technical Services)

(1) As part of the Transformation of Kent Highway Services, many of the fundamental maintenance activities were given a much clearer focus in terms of maintenance delivery. One of those critical service activities was highway drainage, not only in the maintenance of the existing drainage provision but in the delivery of fundamental improvements to the systems and the creation of new systems where necessary.

(2) It had always been recognised that highway drainage systems received not only the rain that fell on the highway network but also the run-off from many other catchment areas, examples being large car parks, farmers fields, private driveways and many others.

(3) It was proposed that although individual businesses/residences might have to be tackled separately, the National Farmers Union might provide a working partner for co-operation in many rural areas. Field management techniques and ditch maintenance were two maintenance opportunities.

(4) Existing highway drainage systems and their maintenance were fundamental to keeping customers safe on their journeys. This safety issue plus the need to ensure that highway drainage did not cause the flooding of dwellings, were the two main priorities for the immediate future.

(5) At present, a drainage working group had been delivering proposals for the future provision of the service. Staff from across the Alliance had been pooling knowledge and resources to revamp the service. Transformation made highway drainage a critical deliverable with a Countywide Drainage Team reporting to the Head of Technical Services for all aspects of the service.

(6) A full asset collection for all parts of the drainage infrastructure was underway. Every item of drainage hardware would be identified and located by electronic means either specifically or where maintenance took place. Every highway gulley would be

identified and placed on a cleansing schedule as would all catchpits, soakaways and outfalls. All drainage lagoons would also be maintained together with all highway ditches.

(7) At this stage, it was important to identify all locations in the county where flooding took place on the highway and to determine the root cause of the problem. To this end, every possible source of information on highway flooding was being engaged and their knowledge recorded on a countywide GIS mapping base and a demonstration of the technique was on show for Members.

(8) All highway engineers and inspectors were being interviewed and the information collected from them would be recorded in the map base with the reason for the flood problem.

(9) The following other sources of information would be engaged:-

Fire Brigade

District and Parish Councils

Environment Agency

Internal Drainage Boards plus others

Members would also provide a very knowledgeable local source of information.

(10) The new drainage team would provide a very clear focus for this important part of the maintenance service. All recorded information would help determine future maintenance regimes, identify clearly locations for future capital investment and support the need to provide a safer environment for the travelling public.

(11) Mr Bateman informed the Board that he would be sending information to all County Members about their contributions to the highway flooding database.

(12) The Board noted the report.

(A copy of the slides used during Mr Bateman's presentation are attached as an addendum to these Minutes)

5. Fort Hill De-dualling, Margate

(Item 7 – Report by Capital Programme Manager)

(Mr C Hart and Mrs E M Tweed were present and spoke to this Item)

(1) In support of Turner Contemporary and the adjacent Rendezvous site the intention was to de-dual Fort Hill. The purpose of the report was to explain the background, programme and funding and to present the scheme proposal for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste for formal approval.

(2) Fort Hill was a short section of local dualling constructed many years ago that sits out of context with the rest of the B2051 coastal route between Margate and Cliftonville. The coastal side of Fort Hill was the site of Turner Contemporary and to the east beyond the RNLI Lifeboat Station, the Rendezvous development site.

(3) From the very inception of Turner Contemporary, the idea had been to return Fort Hill to a single carriageway. This would reduce the perception of severance and integrate Turner Contemporary and the Rendezvous development with the Town and particularly the old town. It would also free up surplus land that would contribute to the two developments either directly or in the context of improving the setting. It was as much

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about perception as reality but the single carriageway and associated improved street scene should help strike a better balance between the needs of pedestrians and drivers.

(4) The scheme would utilise the southern westbound carriageway which was the original alignment of Fort Hill. The junction with Turner Contemporary would remain signal controlled. The signals were mainly to cater for pedestrian movements and in particular to close the junction down in the event of the launch or recovery of the lifeboat that had to manoeuvre within the junction to access the slipway. Towards the top of Fort Hill, a right turn lane protected by island refuges would maintain good access to the Police Station. This area of the scheme might be subject to change post construction depending on the future access arrangements to the Rendezvous site. This was unfortunate but the difficulty was that the Rendezvous proposals were not yet defined and there was an obligation to commence the Fort Hill de-dualling in April 2008 to complement the Turner Contemporary programme. While the carriageway would be conventional asphalt, higher quality materials would be used for the kerbing and footway paving to raise the standard of the public realm.

(5) Outside of the basic scheme there was the opportunity to carry out complementary improvements to improve general pedestrian access and ambience. The pedestrian area between the Promenade running into the Turner Contemporary entrance and towards the Pier could benefit from improvement. King Street was also a key pedestrian route between the town and Turner but was dominated by two traffic lanes at the expense of narrow footways. Thanet District Council had proposals to revert to just one lane of traffic and widen the footways.

(6) The scheme was a lessening of highway and within the highway boundary and did not require planning consent. The nature of the scheme was such that specific public consultation had not been appropriate although the proposals had been implicit within the various submissions, exhibitions and recent public meeting related to Turner Contemporary. The intention would be to inform the residents and business that front the works and in the area prior to construction and to erect a Notice Board on the site with a plan of the scheme.

(7) Kent Highway Services had given a commitment to commence the scheme construction in April 2008. The works would be carried out by the term contractor Ringway and were expected to take 6 months and be completed by October.

(8) The estimated cost of the de-dualling scheme was £0.750m. The available funding was £0.750m composed of £0.550m underspend on the capital programme and £0.200m Cabinet Member allocation for footway improvements.

(9) A bid for Objective 2 funding had been successful with £0.850m awarded for 'Opening of the Eastern Seafront' and some of the funding should be available for top-up funding of the enhanced public realm. While the priority was the de-dualling, the objective was to carry out the more wider regeneration improvements to the adjacent King Street and the Promenade entrance to Turner Contemporary subject to funding availability.

(10) The Board agreed that the scheme for the de-dualling of Fort Hill and associated works on The Promenade and King Street shown on Drawing No. B0647400/20 be referred to the Thanet Joint Transportation Board.

(Please see clarification attached to these Minutes)

6. Circular Roads 1/2006 Setting Local Speed Limits, Update

(Item 8 – Report by County Transportation Manager)

(Representatives from the Association of British Drivers were present for this item)

(1) The results of the work carried out on the speed limit review to the south of Maidstone were set out in the report. This was the latest in a series of HAB reports (September 06 & January 07) on the speed limit review. It explored the results of the demonstration area south of Maidstone and a “rough sort” of the remaining “A” and “B” road network to establish the way forward. The principle aim of the project was to provide a consistent standard for speed limits across the county. The report also considered the circular as a potential policy document for the county.

(2) The demonstration area lies to the south of Maidstone and included a total of 12 roads. Key to the work being undertaken was that it should produce the opening statement of Circular Roads 1/2006 that being “Speed limits should be evidence led, self explaining and seek to reinforce people’s assessment of what was a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance and not be seen by drivers as being a target speed at which to drive in all circumstances.” It was essential that the right balance between the needs of local residents and drivers was met. In the past, some lower speed limits had produced little or no change in driver behaviour and in some cases brought into disrepute previously well observed speed limits.

(3) The reports were split into three specific areas. Speed limit changes, signs and TRO’s. They indicated changes to some 27% of existing speed limits, improvements to signs and this issue was covered in greater detail in paragraph 7 of these Minutes plus modifications to TRO’s. Work on improving signing, particularly gateways would take place over the next two years. Detailed design and full consultation of the demonstration area would take place during the next financial year 08/09 with implementation of the demonstration area in 2009/10.

(4) Rough sort work indicated that the county should be split into three areas on a rolling programme with completion in 2012/13 starting in Mid Kent.

(5) In communications with the parish councils it was clear that enforcement was a key issue. Although enforcement of speed limits rested with the Chief Constable it was clear that all limits must be properly signed. Of equal importance was that all speed limits were understood and accepted by drivers so that enforcement levels were kept to a minimum.

(6) Meetings with Kent Police had taken place and they had accepted the methodology used to determine the speed limits within the demonstration area. They had in the past raised concerns and objections regarding the implementation of some lower speed limits.

(7) Local communication with Parish Councils in the demonstration area had been through John Wilson of East Farleigh PC who had agreed to act for all councils within the demonstration area. His role was to reassure the Parish Councils within the area that the County Council’s approach was robust and in line with the Government’s guidance.

(8) During 08/09 once detailed designs and draft TRO’s had been produced then full consultation would begin. This would follow the normal Kent process with adverts and a formal request to statutory bodies. We would also discuss the methodology used with formal groups and organisations.

(9) At this time there was insufficient time and funding to also consider “C” and unclassified roads although they should not be completely ignored. Where a crash analysis indicated that a lower limit was wholly or partly the measure required to reduce

crashes then a crash remedial report could be produced and funding for that scheme provided through the Transport and Safety Package PIPKIN.

(10) One key objective of the report was to test circular roads 1/2006 to see if it was fit for purpose. The report concluded that in the main the document provided a consistent standard to be applied. There were a few issues to resolve and further work would be undertaken along with consultation with the DfT, other highway authorities and Kent Police to see if national or local flexibility was required.

(11) The work carried out indicated that although the review of the counties "A" and "B" road network would be completed by 2011, implementation of the recommendations would not be completed until 2012 / 2013 at the earliest. Bids for the funding of the review would need to be included within the LTP process but it must be noted that with limited crash savings likely to come from the review PIPKIN assessments might be low. Funding for this should not therefore be at the expense of crash remedial works as to do so might endanger the chances of achieving the government's 2010 target of reduced casualties.

(12) It was also clear that Circular Roads 1/2006 offered us the chance to achieve a consistency of standard for speed limits on Kent's Roads. We would need to ensure that the balance between the needs of residents and drivers was fairly maintained. Further work, assessment and consultation was needed before 1/2006 could be recommended as a county policy.

(13) The Board noted the recommendations of the reports and the progress towards the 2011 target.

7. Signing Policy Review

(Item 9 – Report by Head of Technical Services)

(1) A report on work to be undertaken on reviewing current policy and including new policy for signs and road markings was circulated for information. The report also included information on the review of speed limits.

(2) As part of the Transformation process the highway asset had been split into various service groups. The asset group of non-illuminated signs, road markings and safety barriers was tasked with various key deliverables, one being to develop KHS policy for this asset group.

(3) The current policy regarding signs was published in 2002. It had not been formally reviewed as a whole document since it was first published. As revised legislation and best practice had emerged officers had been updated through bridging sessions, however, the main document had not been updated in line with emerging legislation and best practice. The result being that officers were working to different standards dependant on what courses they had attended and documentation retained.

(4) Whilst the policy document provided valuable information it was not suitable for the new asset group as it dealt solely with signing. The results of the work carried out on the speed limit review were set out for information to support the current state of this asset group.

(5) Signs that were covered by the speed review survey reported in paragraph 6 of these Minutes were:-

- Speed Limit Signs
- Warning Signs
- Direction Signs (Advanced and Flag types)

- Other Signs (e.g Tourist, Parking etc.)

(6) Details of the existing signing stock within the demonstration area enabled identification of any signing which was superfluous and could be removed in addition to the indicative costs of maintaining the signing stock in the future. The results from the survey were reviewed in comparison with DfT guidance (TSRGD 2002) and KCC's existing signing policy.

(7) The site surveys were carried out between March and May 2007. The vegetation at this point was not considered fully grown and the survey results could not take into account any further damage which had happened to a sign since the survey dates. All road signs were assessed in terms of their appropriateness, condition and visibility to the road users.

(8) The surveys identified the poor state of the existing signing stock, a lack of maintenance and poor visibility of them, a particular problem in rural areas.

(9) The results shown in Appendix 1 of the report were taken from a draft of the Speed Limit Review report. Further work was still being undertaken in the demonstration area and therefore the results were accurate at this time but might change.

(10) A larger amount of damaged signs were present on the A roads. This might be due to the high flow of traffic along the routes. A couple of B roads had high numbers of damaged signs and this could indicate that the routes were often used by HGV's or agricultural vehicles. Damaged signs could also reflect poorly sited signs on rural B roads.

(11) The A roads had the highest number of vegetation covered signs which might be affected by private vegetation which was difficult to get cleared. The B roads were predominately rural and vegetation coverage was generally expected.

(12) There were a high number of speed limit changes along B roads but varied degrees of speed limit terminal signing. The gateway features were more effective on the A roads. The gateway features ranged from only speed limit terminal signing to the full gateway with yellow backed signs, red surfacing, dragon's teeth and speed roundels in the carriageway.

(13) Costs and budget allocations for the reviewed signs and lining policy and the speed limit review demonstration area would be reported at the Highways Advisory Board in March 2008.

(14) It needed to be highlighted that the demonstration area covered only 7% of the county's A and B road network. Further work was needed to identify the state of signing on the C class and unclassified roads.

(15) The speed limit review survey had found the Kent Signing Policy was generally robust. The general ethos of the policy allowed for consideration of a number of matters including road safety, rural location etc. The problems had been in the application of the policy. Mis-application of the policy ranged from illegal signing to poorly located signing.

(16) The policies set by KHS for signing within the current document were not clearly defined. The framework for how signing and lining was delivered and funded was lost amongst the good practice elements which also formed the current signing policy document.

(17) Policies set for signing and road markings needed to clearly define the level of service KHS would be able to achieve, easily monitored and along with this the appropriate levels of annual funding obtained to deliver on any policies set.

(18) The Board noted:-

- (a) the work needed to be undertaken and its impact on current projects; and
- (b) that the revised policy on signs and road markings would be presented to a future meeting of the Board.

8. Fees and Charges for 2008/09

(Item 10 – Report by Director of Kent Highway Services)

(1) The report sought approval of revised fees and charges for 2008/09 in respect of a wide range of services provided by Kent Highway Services. The Local Government Act 2003 (Section 93) provided the power for charging for discretionary services but also stipulated that local authorities might only cover their reasonable costs in providing such services. This year the changes had been reviewed in the light of fees and charges made by other counties. The annual report was prepared earlier than last year to allow more notice to be given of planned increases prior to April 2008. The estimated total income for 2007/8 was £2.9m. This was mainly comprised of energy charges, highway searches and development related fees (£1.7m) and RASWA charges (£1.1m).

(2) The main source of income was from developers who were required to pay S38 or S278 fees relating to supervision of new estate road construction and in some cases commuted sums for future maintenance of new highway infrastructure.

(3) The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 [RASWA] and subsequent regulations determined charges for sample inspections, defects, licences, etc. The Road Safety team also provided a range of services, including cycle and minibus driver training for which a charge was made either to individuals or other departments and organisations.

(4) For most other fees and charges, where there was no specific evidence that the cost of processing and monitoring applications had changed significantly, increases of approx 3% were proposed which reflected the expected increase in staff costs and overheads. In most cases these were rounded up to the nearest £1.00 but an attempt had also been made to standardise charges for similar services. The proposed new fees and charges for 2008/09 were set out in the Appendices to the report. However some other charges which were statutory and for which there was no local discretion had not been included.

Highway Definitions, Land Charges, Information and Searches

(5) Following a review of Highway Definitions, Land Charges, searches and information it was recommended that charges were increased by 3% in line with the anticipated rise in staff and administration costs. Following a review of Freedom of Information Act requirements the charge of 10p per sheet for photocopying would remain unchanged although separate fees would now be applied for larger sized sheets or colour copies. The £10 minimum charge would be removed.

Developer Funded Highway Schemes

(6) The main source of developer fees was the standard charge of 8% of the estimated works value for the supervision of new estate road construction under S38 of the Highways Act 1980. This charge was in line with that charged by other local authorities and was currently adequate to offset supervision costs. There were also charges for supervision and fixed consultancy fees for advice to developers re alterations to the existing highway under S278 of the Highways Act.

(7) In addition commuted sums were sought wherever there was an ongoing maintenance cost relating directly to new infrastructure [e.g. for maintaining new traffic signals or inspecting structures]. The DfT in conjunction with leading Local Authorities, the Home Builders Federation and URS (lighting) were currently conducting a review of the approach to commuted sums in England and Wales. This was due to be completed during 2008/9. KCC would be providing input to the process at the working group stage. In the light of the review it was proposed to reconsider KCC's own commuted sum policy and amend it where appropriate during 2009/10. The current level of commuted sums and S278 charges was to be increased by 3% in line with the anticipated rise in staff and administration costs.

Skips and Scaffolding

(8) The skip/scaffolding/hoarding/materials licence fees covered the administration costs in the issuing of licences for placing of these items on the highway. The income generated was used to offset divisional costs in overseeing the safe positioning of them on the highway including enforcement action where necessary. The current charge was £15 per week. Skips were placed on the highway for no longer than was absolutely necessary. The permit was recharged via the skip companies. An increase to £16 was proposed for the current year. There were no changes proposed for vehicle crossings as these were determined by RASWA regulations but an increase of £5 on the administration fee was recommended. A separate licence was being considered for scaffolding/hoarding in future, possibly with a higher fee. Consultation with local Kent scaffolding companies would be carried out prior to a recommendation being made to the Board.

Road Safety

(9) Cyclist training was offered to Year 6 children through their primary school. Currently the Road Safety team provided cycle training for around 7,000 children per annum; approximately 43% of the total year group across the county. It was proposed to keep the cyclist training fee at £15.

(10) The National Driver Improvement Scheme (NDIS) and Speed Awareness course (SAC) were administered by the Road Safety team as the service provider for Kent Police. The schemes must be totally self-financing; no excess income could be generated for KCC. A small fee increase was recommended for the NDIS to ensure that the costs of running the scheme could continue to be met without the need for a subsidy. As the partners 'set-up' costs for the SAC had now been repaid and the level of the current fee was considered a deterrent for some drivers attending the course it was proposed to reduce the fee from the existing £115 to £95.

(11) The Road Safety team provided minibus driver courses and reassessment [every 3 years] for KCC drivers. A small increase to the fee was proposed in line with wage cost increases. It was recommended that the fees were increased to £113 and £31 respectively.

(12) The Road Safety team provided monitoring and training functions for the School Crossing Patrol service managed by Education & Libraries Directorate. This was arranged through a Service Level Agreement (SLA). The current level of SLA income covered existing costs and so the charge for this remained unchanged.

(13) 'Theatres in Education' was a valuable activity that delivered key road safety messages to students in an innovative and exciting way. Annually the Road Safety team organised performances for year 12/13 students with a focus on driving issues including anti-drink drive and anti-drug drive. The team subsidised this for participating schools which allowed greater coverage within the available budget. It was recommended that the proportion of the subsidy (50%) should remain at the current level.

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(14) The Board supported the proposal for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that the proposed Fees and Charges for 2008/09, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report, be implemented with effect from 1 April 2008.

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Kent Highway Services – The Director’s Update

A report by Geoff Harrison-Mee, Director, Kent Highway Services, to the Highways Advisory Board on 4th March 2008.

Introduction

1. This Director’s Update sets out some of the key issues and developments in KHS that I think the Board will be interested in.

Key issues and points of interest

2. **Traffic Management Centre** - the recent heavy rain gave us an unexpected insight into life without the Traffic Management Centre (TMC) and the effects it has on Maidstone town centre. The heavy rain led to flooding and the evacuation of our Traffic Management Centre on 15th January and as a result we were not able to change the traffic signal timings to respond to varying traffic flows and prevent queues building nor to use the roadside variable message signs to inform people. This led to pretty big queues in and around Maidstone. Fortunately we were back up and running in two days. This shows the benefit of the system that is now being rolled out into Canterbury and Kent Thameside. At a recent Maidstone Business Forum meeting with the Town Centre Manager, Borough Council Members and business representatives all agreed the TMC was helping and a real benefit. This is good news and a real sign of approval of the hard work of staff and investment by KHS. Caroline Bruce, acting Head of Network Management is leading on this.
3. **Public satisfaction tracker survey** - Kent Highway Services latest residents survey is showing increasing levels of public satisfaction. Every year 1200 residents from across Kent are asked their views on the condition of roads, pavements and streetlights in the County. The headline 2007 results are set out in the table below and we traditionally measure our progress through something called 'Net-Satisfaction'. This is a figure calculated by taking the % of people who are dis-satisfied with our service from the % who are satisfied. This gives a true reflection of the service and a balance between the those happy, those un-happy and those who are not sure. Members will remember that we achieved positive net satisfaction in 2006 for the first time since surveys began 20 years ago.

	% of residents who are . . .							
	Satisfied		Neither satisfied or dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Net satisfaction	
	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Condition of roads	46%	51%	12%	16%	41%	32%	+5%	+19%
Condition of pavements	44%	48%	16%	17%	40%	32%	+4%	+16%
Streetlights	59%	64%	13%	15%	27%	20%	+32%	+44%

So progress to raise the profile of the highway service is going well with branded KHS vehicles and the page every week in the Kent on Sunday paper, increased press releases about the service and not forgetting the 15,000 calls each month handled by the Contact Centre. There is still more to do and the new shaped KHS will be ready for the start of the new financial year. But, through all the change that has been going on in KHS over the last year, staff from across all the Alliance partners (this includes Jacobs, Ringway and TSUK who make up the KHS Alliance) have shown how dedicated and committed they are by delivering a service that is recognisably better than last year, as

Kent Highway Services – The Director’s Update

measured by the residents who receive the service. The full report will be available shortly and presented to the next Board.

4. **Dealing with service requests and calls** – we are now reporting our progress on dealing with service requests on a weekly basis to managers and staff. This reporting by the new seven service groups ensures managers get regular information about how their teams are performing. Over the last few months we have reduced the number of service requests that were still open after 28 days from over 2000 to under 500. We still have more to do however to meet the answering letter target within the 10 working day target. Again we are reporting results on a weekly basis but are currently achieving around 85% replied in 10 working days. More still has to be done to provide a more responsive service to the public and as the new teams are fully in place we will be driving this harder.
5. **Annual Operating plan** – the draft of the 2008/9 KHS Operating plan is well underway and a draft is available for any member of HAB who would like to review and comment on the draft document. David Beaver, acting Head of Business, Performance and Communications is leading on this.
6. **Inspector Vans and IT ‘handhelds’**– The new highway and RASWA roadworks inspector vans will be rolled out during March and April. We will have 60 KHS branded vehicles out and about across the County. Pictures of the van livery will be available at the Board. Inspectors are now being trained on their new ‘handheld’ devices which are mini computers that can be used on their inspections to speed up communications and the logging of faults. One of the ‘handhelds’ will be on display at the Board. Kim Hills, Head of Community Operations is leading on this work.
7. **Response to Insurance Claims** - Over the last year the performance of processing insurance claims has been patchy. With potential changes to legislation proposed requiring shorter time scales, a review of the system is necessary. Initial meetings have been held with the corporate insurance team and the authority’s insurer, Zurich. A small working group has been established and some areas of improvement already identified. These include a new electronic claims form (ensuring appropriate information is provided by the claimant), greater use of the contact centre and the new KHS IT systems and earlier site visits. Kim Hills, Head of Community Operations is leading on this work
8. **EDF and connections for streetlights** – we continue to be affected by EDF failure to deliver a responsive service for power supply faults and new connections. Norman Bateman the Head of Technical Services is leading the work to get a better service and EDF are committed to a ‘Excellence in Un-metered Connections’ project to meet and exceed Ofgem targets. The project will cover connections, faults and emergencies in relationship to street lighting, targeting timescales and reporting procedures. We are keeping a close eye on this project and monitoring connection times to ensure that it delivers improvements.
9. **Highway Drainage** – a paper on highway drainage was presented to this Board at the last meeting. Information on highway flooding is still being collected and this will be the basis of future improvements to the drainage system and asset. The new Drainage team within Norman Bateman’s Technical Services Group are reviewing all programmed gully cleansing activity to ensure we have better information about when work is planned and better cyclic maintenance of known hot spots.
10. **A229 Bluebell Hill, Aylesford resurfacing** – We are putting in place a weekend closure on the uphill stretch of the A229 between 28th and 31st March to resurface this

Kent Highway Services – The Director’s Update

road. This will be from 21.00 hrs on 28th March until 05.00 hrs on 31st March. We have decided on a short, sharp hit over a weekend to ensure disruption is kept to a minimum. Our crews will be working 24 hours a day for both days laying 6,400 tonnes of material using 3 paving machines on the 3km scheme length. We will be putting in place an extensive publicity campaign to advise residents and road users as this is a key strategic route and the closure will cause disruption. Behdad Haratbar, Acting head of Countywide Improvements is leading on this.

11. **Traffic Management Act update** – The Traffic Management Act 2004 has offered the opportunity for local highway authorities to introduce a permit scheme across their networks. These schemes have been designed with the aim of improving the management and co-ordination of all activities on the highway therefore minimising disruption and providing more reliable journey times for the travelling public. Kent County Council (KCC) has taken the decision to make a bid to the Secretary of State for Transport to run a permit scheme across the highway network in Kent. Our formal bid will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Department for Transport in May 2008. It is our intention to begin the introduction of our Permit Scheme in the last quarter of 2008 by permitting our own works for a 4 month period. It must be stressed that these dates can be only indicative at the current time. KCC will be one of the first authorities across the country to make an application for a permit scheme and there are many processes and guidance documents to be put in place. All local highway authorities are reliant upon the IT software providers to release the necessary applications around August time. Until these packages are released, installed and tested we will not be in a position to confirm the roll out date of our full permit scheme system. Caroline Bruce, acting Head of network Management is leading on this.
12. **Speed Management in Kent** - a successful launch of a new ‘Understanding’ leaflet and the PIPKIN process to assess schemes that ‘change’ the highway layout was held with Members and Parish Town Councils on 10th January. The conference chaired by Keith Ferrin was designed to explain KHS’s new policy on local speed limits and traffic management schemes. In future any request for us to make improvements to the road must be supported by the local community in the area (for example through a known group, parish or town council). Information has been sent out to Members and Parishes who were unable to attend the conference and copies of the leaflet are on display. David Hall. Head of Transport and Development is leading on this.
13. **New Quiet Surfacing** – following the successful trial of a new low noise surfacing on the A26 at Tonbridge we will be developing a policy and priority system to ensure sites for resurfacing are chosen fairly and prioritised in a quantitative manner. I will be bringing this policy to the next Board. Behdad Haratbar, acting head of Countywide Improvements is leading on this.
14. **Re-organising KHS** – the new KHS structure is now around 75% populated with on-going recruitment processes both internal and external to fill the remaining posts by April. Two recruitment fairs have been organised to attract new talent to the Alliance. The changes to the Environment and Regeneration Directorate Resources Division will have an impact on the Business, Performance and Communications Group and the Finance Group and I am working closely with Adam Wilkinson to ensure this does not affect service delivery on the front line. The organisation structure and posts currently filled is detailed on the attached Appendix.

Kent Highway Services – The Director’s Update

15. **Graduate programme** – I am pleased to announce that a new engineering stream has been added to the successful Corporate ‘Kent Graduate Programme’. This will roll out in June and we hope to have two graduates working across the Alliance and ultimately taking up full time employment with us. This first phase is focussed on Transport and Development where there currently is a skills shortage. David Beaver, acting head of Business, Performance and Communications is leading.

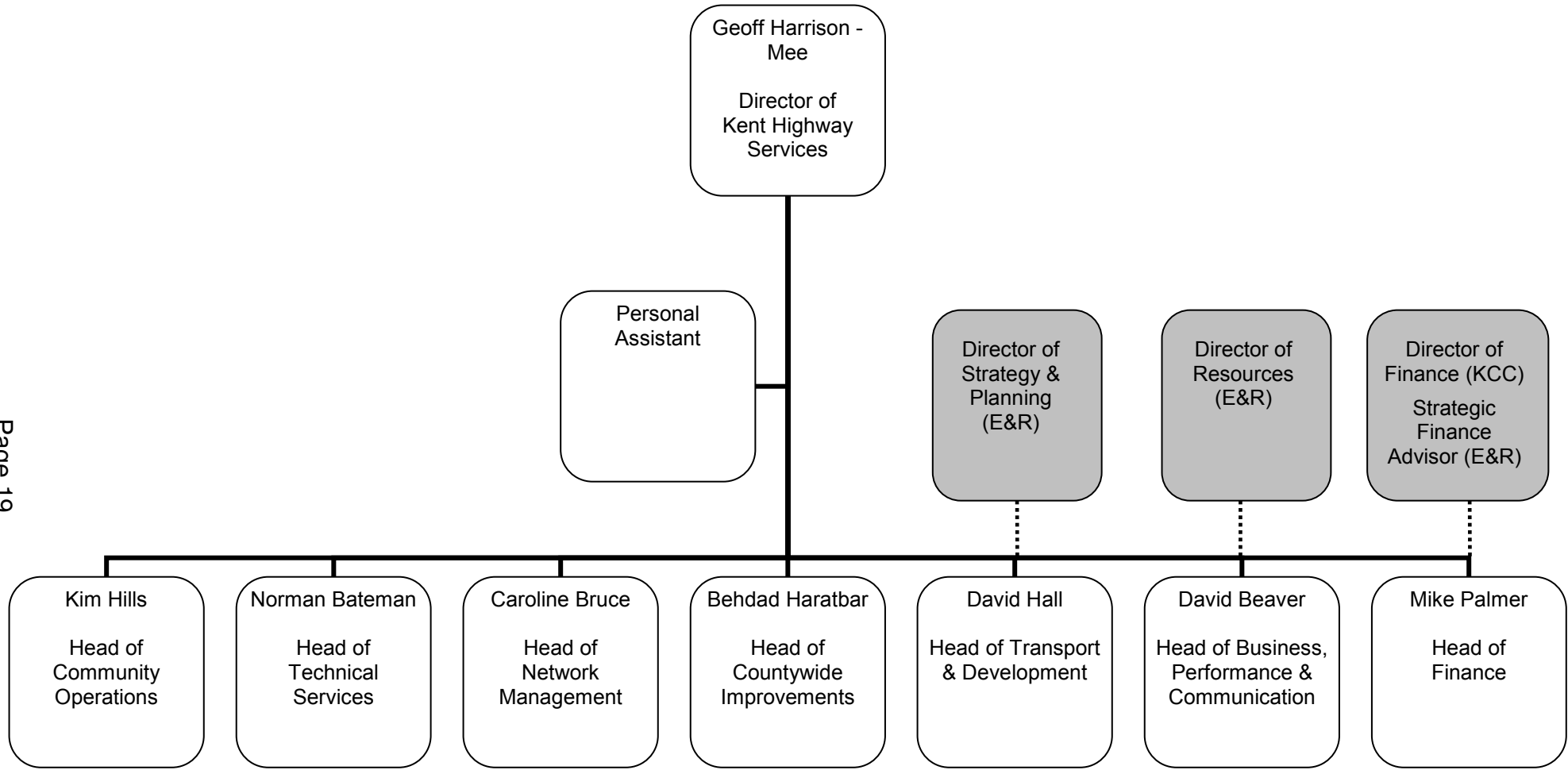
Conclusions

16. This Highways Advisory Board report is for information and Members are asked to note and comment on the positive progress being made to improve service delivery and are asked to give their support to staff through the period of significant change that lies ahead.

Contact Officers:

Geoff Harrison-Mee 01622 694776

Director and Heads of Services



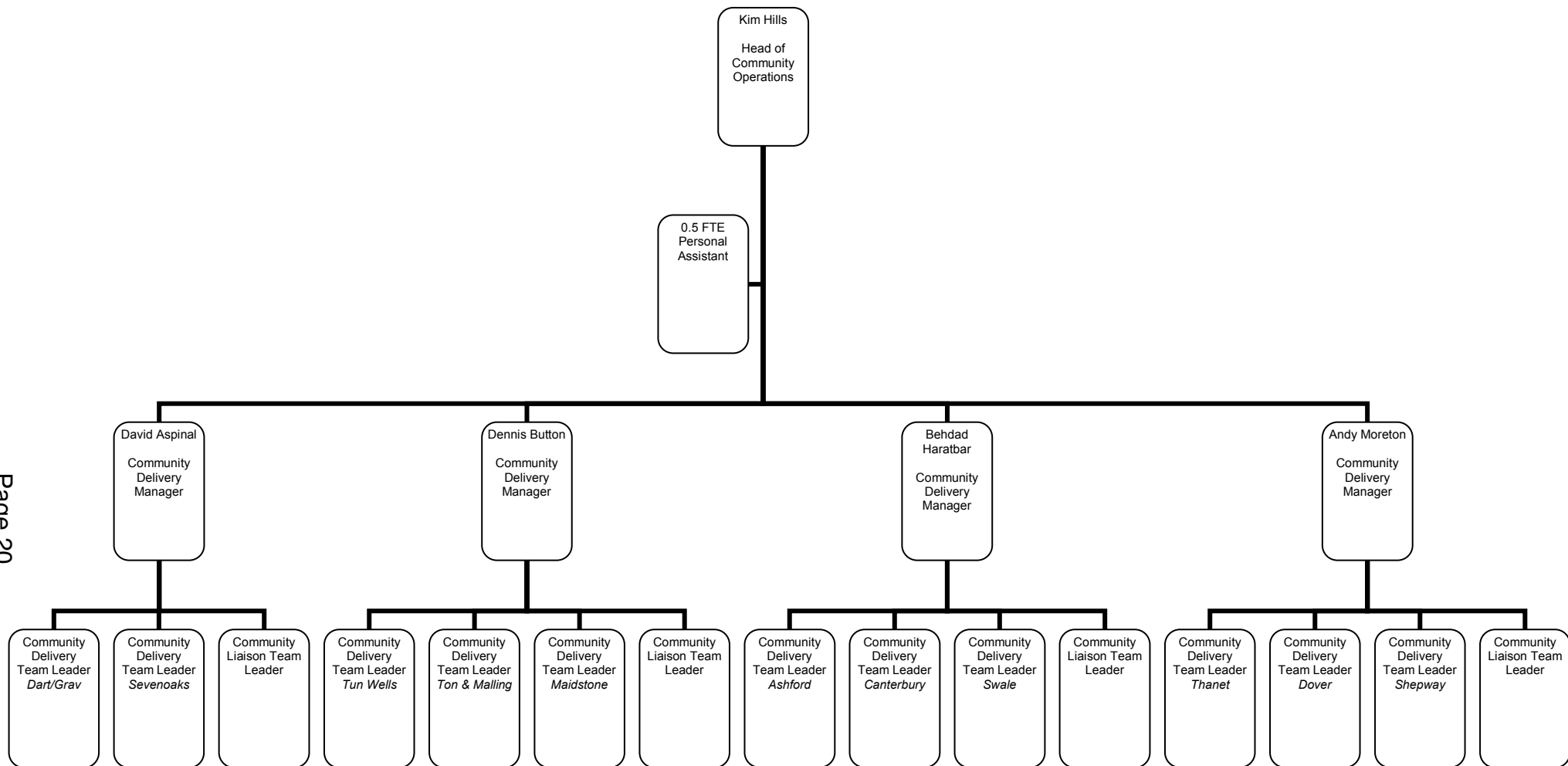
Detail by service group:

KHS Staff will be working within one of the seven service groups – Community Operations, Technical Services, Network Management, Countywide Improvements, Transport and Development, Finance and Business, Performance and Communications.

Each service group will be led by a Head of Service, who will have full accountability and control for their area of the business.

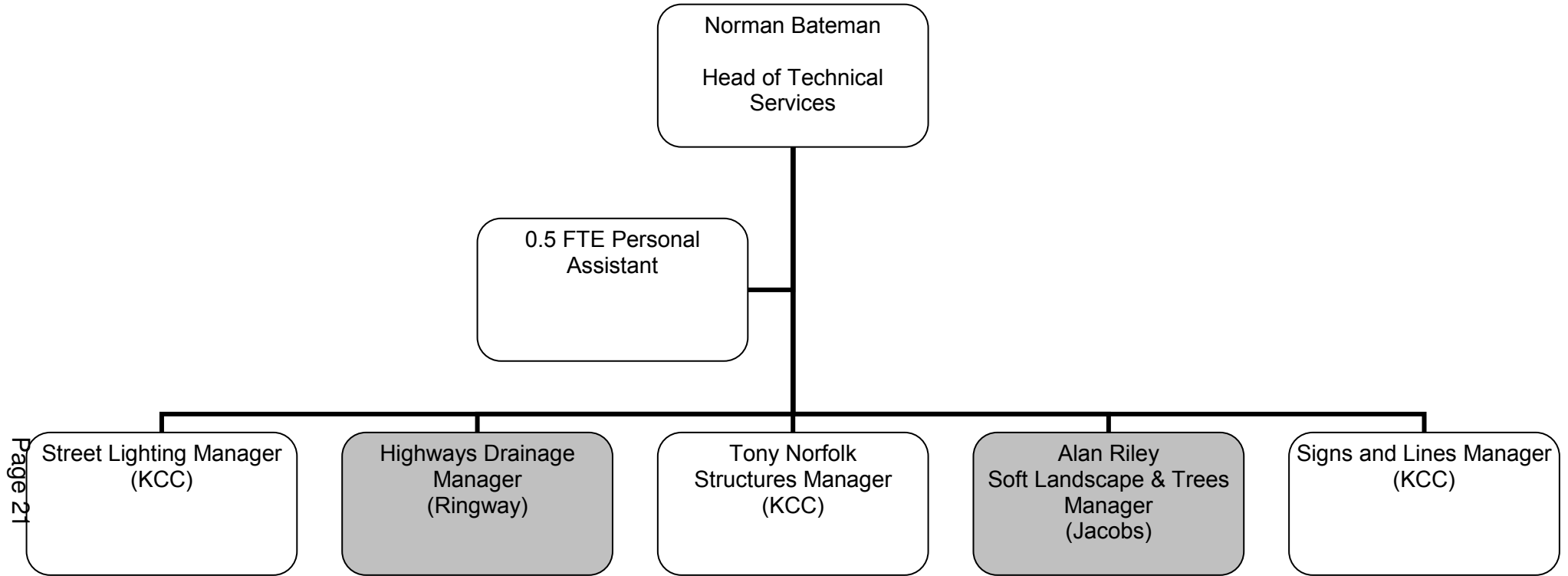
Community Operations Service Group

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Community Operations - This service group will be the public face of Kent Highway Services and will be delivered by teams structured around district boundaries. Staff in Community Operations will be responsible for inspecting and maintaining roads and pavement, but they will also be the focus for regular contact with parish councils and locally-accountable bodies such as the Joint Transportation Boards. The four community liaison teams will also ensure that the service provided to the public, Members, Boroughs, Parishes and other key stakeholders is consistent across the county and meets the high standards our customer expect.

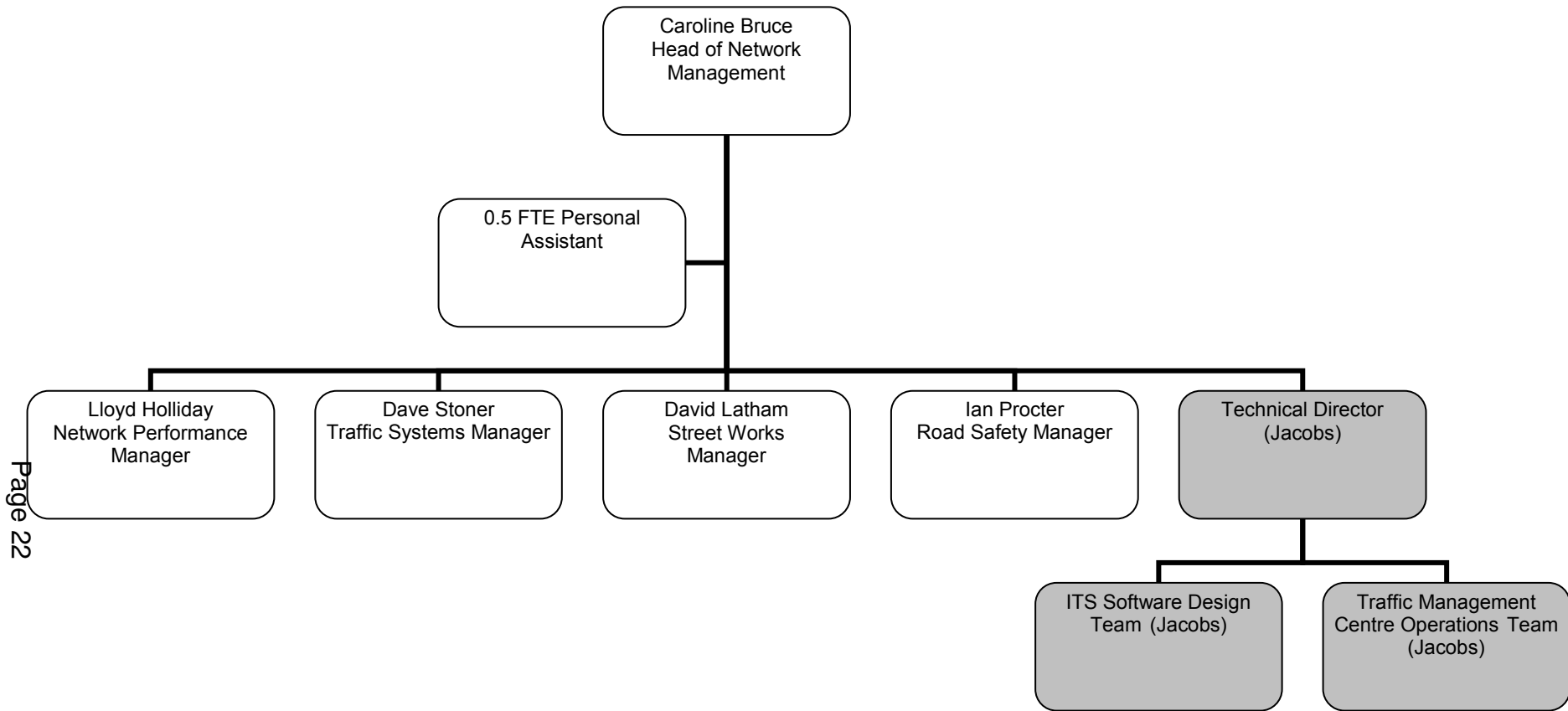
Technical Services Service Group



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Technical Services - This service group will manage the street light, drainage, structures, trees and soft landscaping, and signs and lines assets. It will operate countywide in teams focusing on one asset type. In a radically new way of delivering the service, there will be a strong Alliance approach with responsibility being with the Alliance partner best placed to manage the asset.

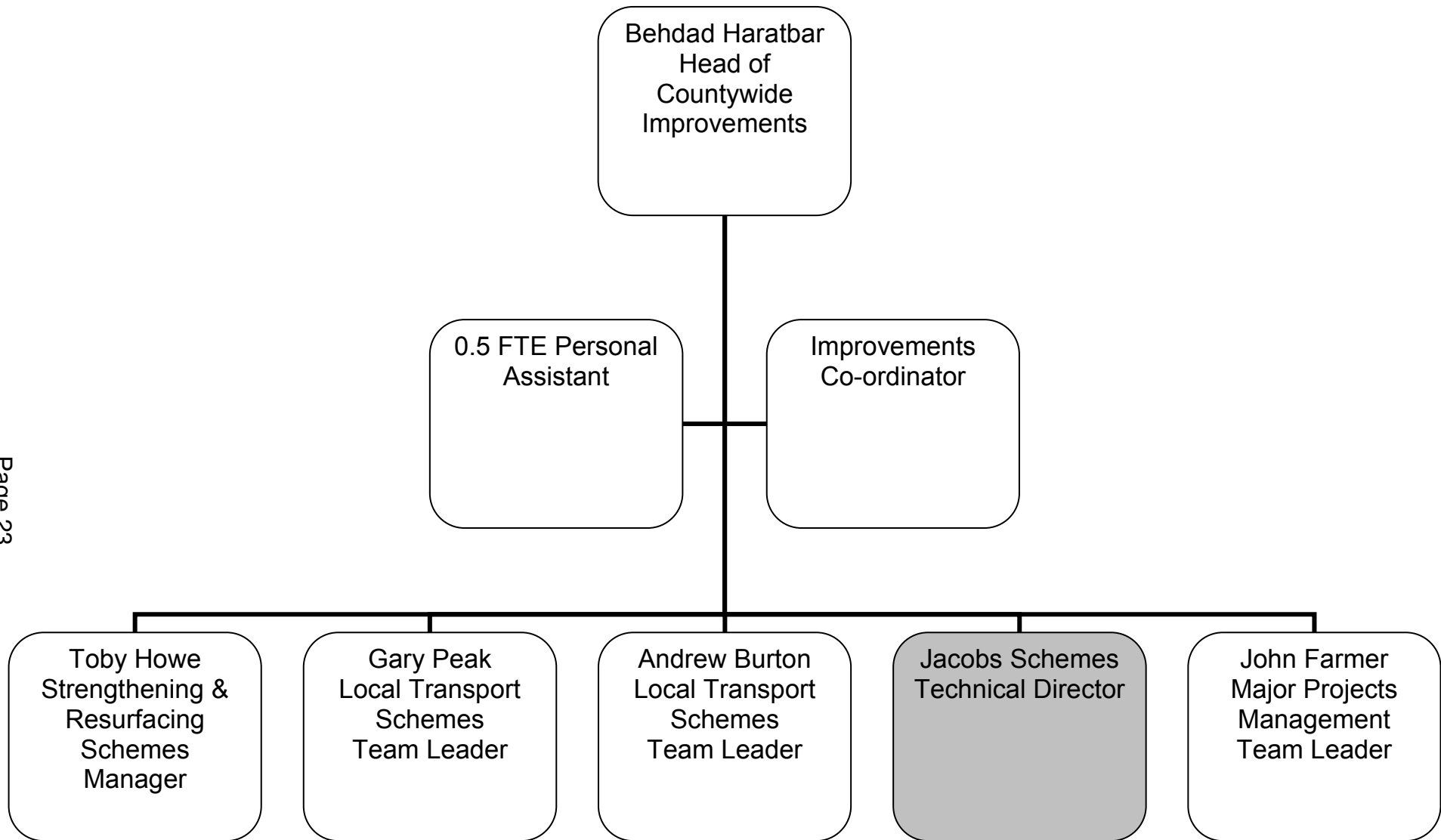
Network Management Service Group



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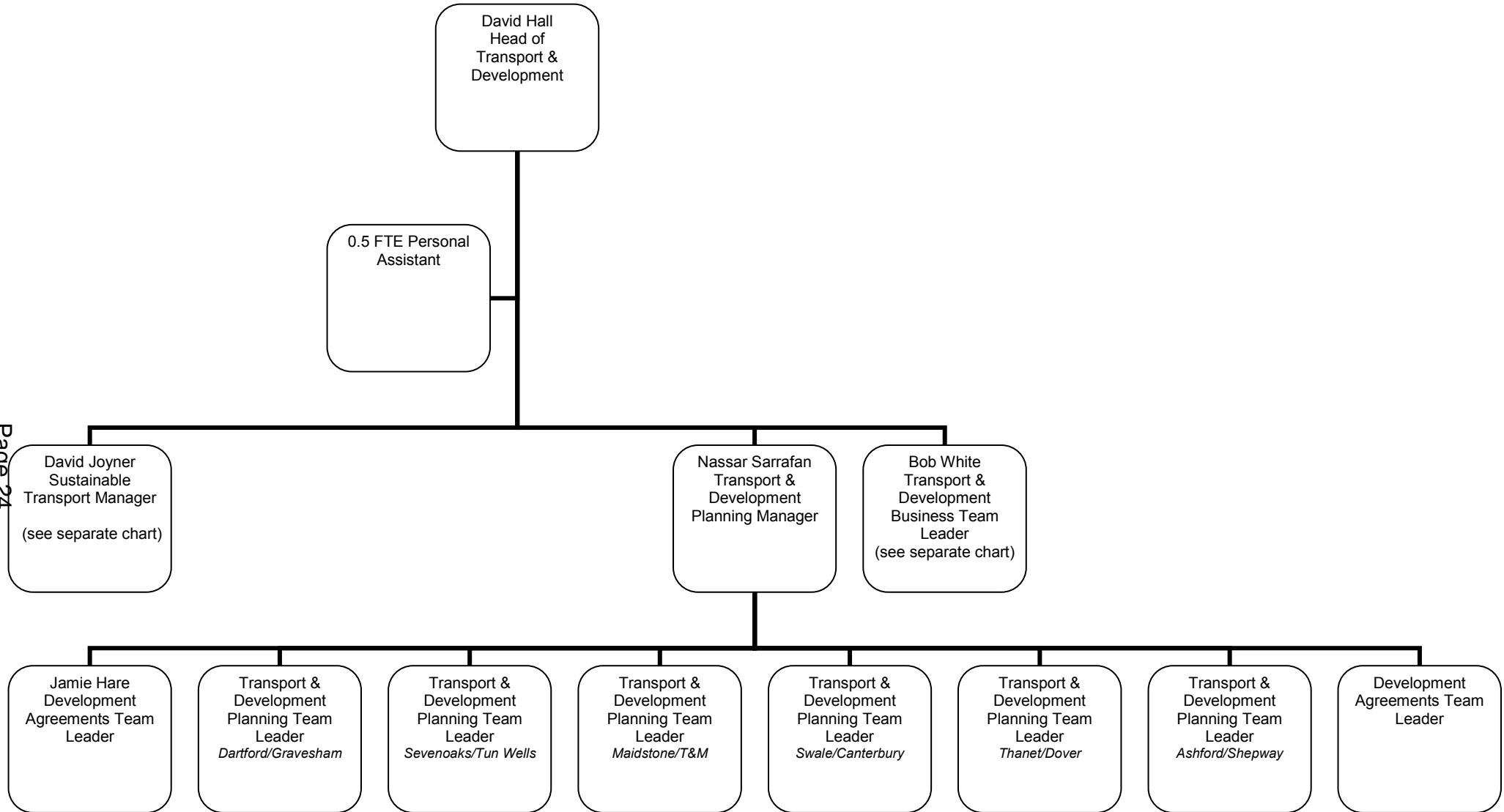
Network Management - This service group will be responsible for the safe movement of the public on our road networks, proactively managing congestion and improving journey time reliability. This includes exploiting the benefits of innovative traffic systems and influencing the behaviour of the travelling public to improve road safety and providing information on alternatives to the car. The Traffic Management Act will provide new opportunities to manage congestion which KCC will be piloting along with two other local authorities.

Countywide Improvements Service Group



Countywide Improvements - This service group will provide a disciplined and programmed approach to schemes and major projects. Schemes will include major road maintenance enhancements i.e. strengthening and resurfacing, as well as transport enhancement schemes such as traffic calming and junction improvements.

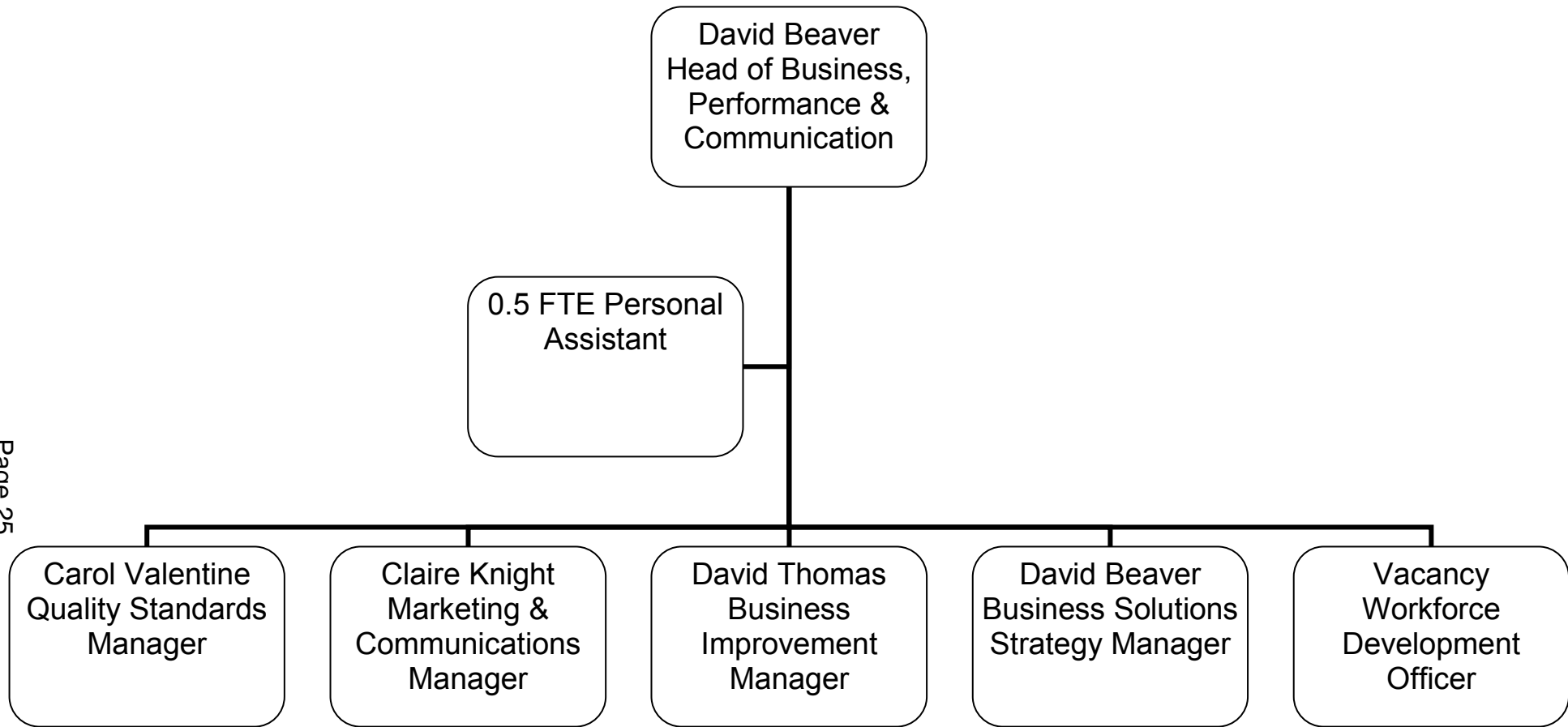
Transport & Development Service Group



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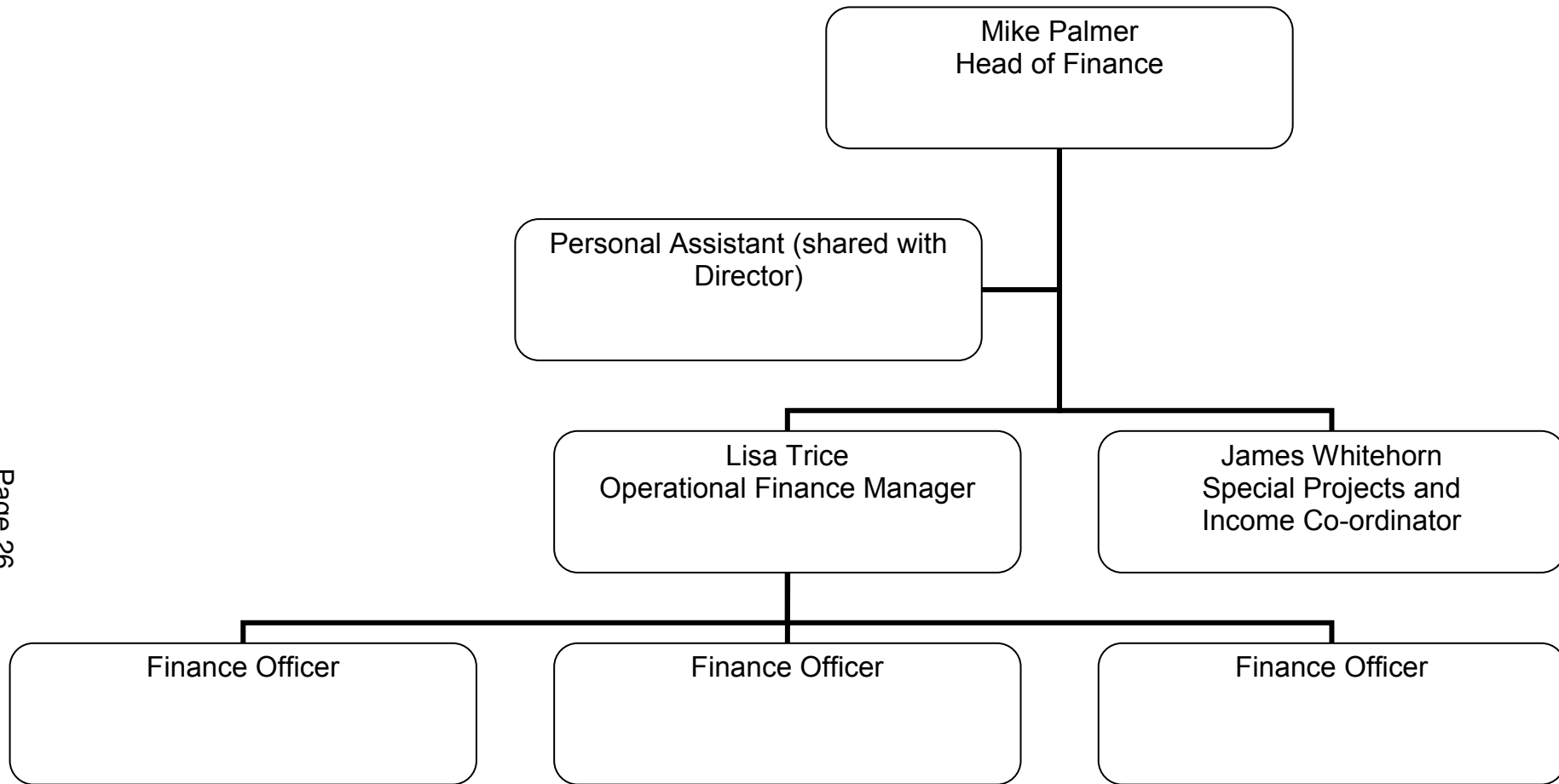
Transport and Development - This service group brings together the development planning and transport functions into multi-disciplinary teams built around district boundaries. The group will work closely with District Councils to develop Local Development Frameworks and the transport implications arising from them. The group will also lead on sustainable transport options and work closely with bus operators.

Head of Business, Performance and Communication



Business, Performance and Communication - This service group provides specialist business, performance and internal/external communications expertise and support to the whole of KHS.

Finance Services Group



Finance - This service group will provide and manage finance support to the whole of KHS.

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Highway Maintenance Budget for 2008/09

A report by the Director, Kent Highway Services, to the Highways Advisory Board on 4th March 2008

Introduction

1. This report presents the Highways maintenance budget for 2008/09 (Revenue and Capital) following approval of budgets by the Cabinet on 6th February 2008 [and ratification at the County Council meeting on 19th February 2008. Table 1 below shows how the Highway Maintenance Budget has been derived taking the total Revenue and Capital budgets for Kent Highway Services as the starting point. It shows overall that the maintenance works budget has increased by approx £2m compared with 2007/08.

Table 1 – Total KHS Budget for 2008/09

(£000s)	Revenue	Capital	Total	Change from 2007/08
Total KHS Input Budgets [excl. new accommodation & major projects]	64,341	39,608	103,949	+10,874
Countywide Running Costs	14,053	3,322	17,375	+427
Balance available for Ctywide Programmes & Maintenance	50,288	36,286	86,574	+10,447
Countywide Programmes including 2010 Targets	21,875	14,333	36,208	+8,482
Balance available for Highway Maintenance	28,413	21,953	50,366	+1,965

2. The main changes from 2007/08 are as follows. Revenue: +£4m for freedom pass, +£5m for highways maintenance injection, -£1.5m targeted highways works. Capital: +£4m IT schemes [net of Ringway fixed charge share], -£1.6m for phase1 of LED conversion, -£3m capital maintenance supported by Prudential borrowing. There has also been a significant change in the accounting mechanism for the grants for rural buses and safety cameras, the effect of which is to increase the overall budget but remove income previously credited to KHS.

Framework for Budget Allocations

3. The "Highway Maintenance Budget Model" Report to Highways Advisory Board on 10 January 2006 described how the budget model has been developed for distributing the available funds. The report recommended that:
 - Allocations for highway assets are based on a relative assessment of their degree of depreciation, and
 - Allocations to the areas are based upon an assessment of the size and condition of their networks.

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste subsequently approved these recommendations. The budget model has been updated with the most recent condition and network data and has been used to develop the maintenance budget for 2008/09.

Highway Maintenance Budget for 2008/09

The Budget Process

4. The Budget Model follows a process that:

- Sets out the revenue and capital budgets available for highway maintenance,
- Separates out the budget necessary for Operational maintenance (works that include safety repairs by NOMU gangs and routine maintenance such as gully emptying)
- Determines the remaining budget available for Repairs (works that maintain the structural integrity of the network)
- Allocates the Repairs budget between the various highway assets and
- Finally allocates Operations and Repairs budgets to the new Services.

The model also provides a geographical distribution of the available funds by district for each asset group based on quantity and condition of the attributes.

Highway Maintenance Revenue and Capital Budgets

5. The gross highway revenue and capital budgets are set out in table 2 below:

Table 2 – Highway Maintenance Revenue & Capital Works Budgets for 2007/08

(£000)	Revenue	Capital	Total	Change from 2007/08
Maintenance Budget	28,413	21,953	50,366	+1,965

Separating Out Operational Maintenance

6. The next stage in the budget process is to determine and separate out the Community Operations and Technical Services Operational maintenance budgets from the remainder of the budget available for highway maintenance. In calculating these budgets, an allowance for contract inflation has been included to maintain the current minimum level of Operational maintenance. Separating out the budgets for Operational maintenance from the overall maintenance budget determines the balance available for Repairs. This is summarised in table 3 below:

Table 3 – Operations & Repairs Budgets for 2008/09.

(£000s)	Revenue	Capital	Total	Change from 2007/08
Operations for Tech Services & Community Ops	12,000	0	12,000	+1,167
Other Operations work (includes ITS)	11,646	2,275	13,921	+2,249
Total Operations	23,646	2,275	25,921	+3,416
<i>Total Budget for Maintenance (from Table 2)</i>	<i>28,413</i>	<i>21,953</i>	<i>50,366</i>	<i>+1,965</i>
Balance available for Repairs	4,767	19,678	24,445	-1,452

7. Table 3 shows that, compared with 2007/08, the budget for Operations has risen by £3,416k owing to an increase for contract inflation but also an effort to align the budgets to the agreed standards in the Kent Highway Asset Maintenance Plan [Jan 2004]. The Repairs budget has decreased by £1,452k compared with 2007/08. The Operations budget of £12,000k for Technical Services & Community Operations is distributed between the work activities as shown in Table 4:

Highway Maintenance Budget for 2008/09

Table 4 – Operations Budgets

(£000s)	Community. Ops	Tech. Services	Totals
Routine Maintenance [NOMU] Gangs	3,240	0	3,240
Gully Emptying	0	2,700	2,700
Grass Cutting & Weed Spray	0	2,390	2,390
Trees and Hedges	400	350	750
Street Lighting	0	2,160	2,160
Illuminated Signs	0	540	540
Structures	0	220	220
Totals [excludes top-sliced ITS - Intelligent Transport Systems]	3,640	8,360	12,000

Allocating the Repairs Budget to the Highway Asset Groups

8. The £24,445k Repairs budget consists of £4,767k of Revenue and £18,928k of Capital funding. As mentioned previously, the HAB report of 10 January 2006 recommended that the Repairs budget be allocated to the various asset groups depending on the relative need of those assets. The relative need has been determined by evaluating the degree of depreciation of each of the assets and calculating the annual budgets necessary to address that depreciation. The budget model allocates the Repairs budget depending on those relative annual needs. The resultant distribution of the remaining Repairs budget across asset groups, after deducting £750k for the second phase of LED traffic signal conversion and signal refurbishments, is shown in table 5:

Table 5 – Repairs Allocations for all Highway Assets

(£000s)	Percentage	2008/09 Allocation	Change from base budget for 2007/08
Carriageways	51%	12,660	+47
Footways & Cycleways	13%	3,064	-371
Drainage	7%	1,726	-50
Street Lights	9%	2,265	-284
Signs	3%	791	+503
Safety Fences	3%	643	+499
Road Markings & Studs	2%	420	+12
Structures	9%	2,126	-179
C.Ops/Tech Serv.sub-totals	97%	<u>23,695</u>	+177
Intelligent Transport Systems	3%	750	+245
Total	100%	24,445	+422

Highway Maintenance Budget for 2008/09

Allocating Budgets to the new Service Teams and Areas

9. The next step is to allocate money to the new Community Operations and Technical Services teams and areas. The Budget model does this by assessing relative need within each district taking a range of factors into account that represent the size and condition of their highway infrastructure. In previous years a table showed the distribution to the Divisions but as these are now being phased out, although the district boundaries are still used as building blocks in the model, the funds for each asset group are no longer sub-divided in this way.

Summarising the Highway Maintenance Budget

10. A summary of the financial allocation for maintenance is provided in table 6:

Table 6 – Summary of Highway Maintenance Budget for 2008/09

(£000s)	Revenue		Capital		Totals
	Operations	Repairs	Operations	Repairs	
NOMU Gangs [General Maintenance]	3,240	N/A	0	N/A	3,240
Carriageways [patching & resurfacing]	0	2,588	0	10,072	12,660
Footways	0	500	0	2,564	3,064
Drainage [gullies and pipes]	2,700	359	0	1,367	4,426
Vegetation [grass, trees & weeds]	3,140	N/A	0	N/A	3,140
Street Lights [including bulk change]	2,510	440	0	1,825	4,775
Signs, Markings & Safety Fences	540	420	0	1,434	2,394
Structures & Tunnels	640	460	0	1,666	2,766
Traffic Signals & UTC	1,100	0	0	750	1,850
Energy	4,800	0	0	0	4,800
Other top-sliced costs [see note below]	4,976	N/A	2,275	0	7,251
Totals for 2008/09	23,646	4,767	2,275	19,678	50,366
	28,413		21,953		
<i>Totals for 2007/08 [base]</i>	<i>20,204</i>	<i>3,445</i>	<i>2,300</i>	<i>22,452</i>	<i>48,401</i>
	<i>23,649</i>		<i>24,752</i>		

11. The other top-sliced costs for Operations include £400 for temporary traffic management on high speed roads, £500 for inventory data capture, £4,545k of Ringway fixed charges – of which £2,275k will be funded from capital; £800k of this capital expenditure will be recharged to IT schemes. The grand totals for 2008/09 are £25,921k for Operations [51%] and £24,445k for Repairs [49%]. Compared to the current year's base budgets [£22,504 Operations & £25,897 Repairs], there will be an extra £3.4m for Operations but £1.4m less will be available for Repairs. The grand total for revenue funded maintenance of £28.4m in 2008/09 compares to £23.6m in 2007/08, representing an overall increase of £4.8m.

Highway Maintenance Budget for 2008/09

Future Developments

12. The Budget Model will continue to be developed both as a result of improved asset management practice and through monitoring the actual expenditure during the year in response to the actual demands on the highway asset.

Conclusion

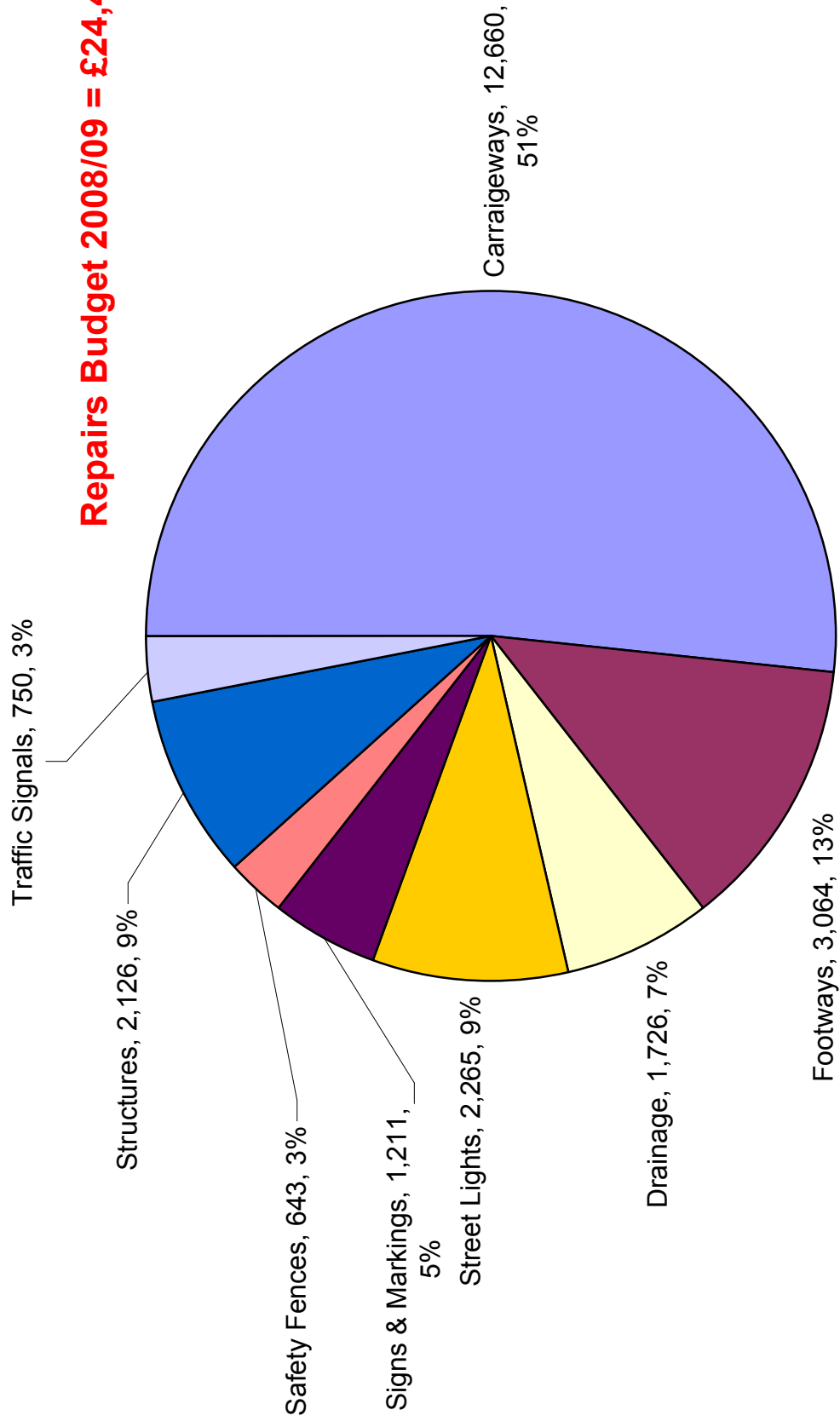
Subject to the views of this Board, it is proposed to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that the Highway Maintenance budget for 2008/09 is approved as set out in the report.

Accountable Officers:

Mike Palmer – 01622 694718, James Whitehorn - 01622 696117 & Barry Gould - 01622 694035

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Repairs Budget 2008/09 = £24,445k



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Dover Priory Station Approach – Detailed Design Concepts

A report by Katherine Putnam, Regeneration & Projects Manager, Regeneration & Economy, Environment & Regeneration Directorate to the Highways Advisory Board on 4 March 2008.

Purpose of Report

1. To advise the Highways Advisory Board on scheme progress to re-configure Dover Priory Station forecourt and the easterly section of Folkestone Road (from the railway bridge to Effingham Street junction), Dover. The report presents the detailed designs including the art interventions, examines traffic and environmental issues, feedback from the consultation process, clarifies funding sources and outlines the delivery programme.
2. The Board is asked to support the detailed designs and subsequent procurement process for reconfiguring Dover Priory Station forecourt and the easterly section of Folkestone Road into a quality urban space that acts as a key 'gateway/arrival space' into Dover town centre, and recommend to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Supporting Independence that the scheme goes out to tender along with all the necessary approvals.

Background

3. The Dover Pride Regeneration Strategy, Dover's town centre Masterplan and the Public Realm Strategy are key drivers in transforming the perception of the town centre. The improvement of the public realm is an integral part of an overall strategy for Dover town centre, which builds on the 9 major projects outlined in the Public Realm Strategy (July 2006) for Dover town centre.
4. Throughout the extensive consultation process to date many stakeholders, interest groups and local residents have recognised that Dover town centre's current transport infrastructure presents physical and psychological barriers that sever the town centre from its environs. The current road network hinders a comprehensive approach to outward and connected expansion that should place a strong emphasis on high quality public transport, a safer walking environment (for both the able bodied and the disabled) and safer cycling routes rather than car use.
5. A comprehensive and innovative approach to implementing high quality design to all new and existing areas of public realm, public open space and traffic/pedestrian management within Dover town centre is acknowledged as a high priority by Dover Pride. The quality of improvements to the public realm will be critical in setting the context and a benchmark for the transformation of the town centre, whilst at the same time avoiding abortive work.
6. More importantly, if not implemented, it is unlikely that businesses, developers and new residents will be attracted to the town in sufficient numbers to achieve this transformation. Development sites would remain empty, external investment will be harder to attract and the town centre will not improve.
7. The Dover Pride Board on 14 July 2006 considered a report on the Public Realm Strategy and its 9 major projects, and agreed to the importance of preparing concepts and detailed designs for Dover Priory Station Approach and the easterly section of Folkestone Road, the first major project emerging from the Public Realm Strategy (July 06).

Dover Priory Station Approach.

8. The first public realm project needs to create a positive identity, and act as a visible sign of Dover Pride's commitment to transforming Dover town centre. This area is currently secluded and isolated from the town centre despite being a key gateway to the town centre. When emerging from the station there is little sense of arrival and routes between the station and the various town centre facilities are not immediately obvious. There is an opportunity through this proposal to create a stronger sense of place and arrival, and change perceptions of this area of the town centre, and set a benchmark for future works elsewhere. The expenditure has been well planned over a number of years and only recently has the contribution from Network Rail been confirmed, thereby allowing the project to proceed to the next stage. This public realm project fits well with the longer-term aims and recommendations of Dover Pride's Regeneration Strategy, the town centre Masterplan and the Public Realm Strategy.

Scheme Concept

9. In overall terms, this project is very much an exemplar and innovation project, which aims to radically change the station's external environment. The scheme has a number of aims and objectives, which can broadly be summarised as below:
- increasing 'connectivity' by creating better links between the railway station (to be linked to the CTRL in 2009 when the rail passenger usage by local people as well as visitors to Dover will increase considerably above existing levels by some 400,000 per annum), the docks, the town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods such as Tower Hamlets (one of the most deprived areas of east Kent);
 - tackling the road network and creating a pedestrian & cyclist friendly environment;
 - ensuring a positive sense of arrival by train and/or bus at key nodes, including the railway station forecourt as an external reception space whilst providing adequate parking for commuters, where a high quality entrance to the town centre is required; and
 - improving public safety and help reduce crime in the locality.

Urban Design

10. This scheme goes beyond the requirements of a traditional highway design by incorporating the facets of good urban design in order to deliver high quality public realm which will compliment the future development aspirations in the town centre. There is considerable overlap and interaction between the public highway space, the station forecourt, existing links to adjacent neighbourhoods, nearby development opportunities, and the mutual benefits are highlighted below:
- **Character** – a place with its own identity.
 - **Continuity** – a place where public & private spaces are distinguished but complimentary.
 - **Quality** – a place with attractive and successful public realm and outdoor areas.
 - **Ease of Movement** – a place that is easy to get to and move through.
 - **Legibility** – a place that has a clear image and is easy to understand.
 - **Adaptability** – a place that easily changes.
 - **Diversity** – a place with variety and choice.
11. The proposals are exciting and traditional highway standards cannot be applied in the normal way. As the detailed designs have developed, a balance has been struck between the purist urban design aspirations and the operational, buildability and maintenance aspects, and all alongside innovative and high quality.

Dover Priory Station Approach.

Scheme Design

12. An Integrated Design Team (IDT) has been set up to deliver the project, with our consultants Jacobs UK Ltd (Maidstone office). This team includes engineers, landscape architects, a Public Art Project Manager (Sarah Wang) and a Lead Artist (Jacqueline Poncelet), both of whom are of international repute. Building on an Art Plan for the project, Public Art is an integral part of the engineering design; it also includes specifically commissioned art works in appropriate spaces created by the scheme design; and an outreach project to engage with the local community. All members of the IDT work closely together with the ultimate goal that the scheme be a well-balanced multi-functional project of the highest standard.
13. The need to de-clutter, make safe, minimise road signage & markings, improve wayfinding, introduce better landscaping, use quality materials and create an enhanced and widened public realm for increased social interaction has been maintained throughout the scheme development.

Design Principles

14. Over a period of months, an outline design scheme/masterplan has evolved in close consultation with the Client Group and wider stakeholders. Elements intrinsic to this concept design include:
 - the concept of a “arrival space” onto the main station forecourt where there is better balance between the pedestrians, buses, taxis and motorist;
 - improved access, facilities and service penetration for buses and taxis within the station environs and beyond, to strengthen the overall transport hub;
 - an improved pedestrian and cyclist environment enhancing existing routes and facilities between the station and the town centre, and adjacent communities such as Tower Hamlets (including improvements and realignment of the southerly section of the Priory Steps footpath (a Public Right of Way) as phase 1), and landmarks such as Western Heights;
 - opening up views into and out of the station environs, to enhance visual links and sightlines in all directions, in order to aid navigation, improve actual and perceived safety and security within the area, through the regrading of the embankment;
 - improvements to signage and wayfinding, street furniture and features that help to define routes and links to nearby landmarks;
 - improvements to lighting generally (both strategically and detail), tree planting and pavement improvements along Folkestone Road;
 - removing any unnecessary clutter and general clearance (including large advert boards and self-seeded trees for example); and the
 - removal of outdated traffic and pedestrian management schemes including a reconfigured entrance/junction arrangement with Folkestone Road.

Detailed Designs

15. This concept design/masterplan has evolved further, and the detailed designs are being finalised in preparation for procurement at the end of March 2008.

Dover Priory Station Approach

Delivery Programme

16. Advanced vegetative site clearance works have been carried out during January and February 2008 to satisfy ecological restrictions regarding nesting birds. Advanced works are also being carried out to the Priory Steps to improve the footway surfacing and lighting to this vital pedestrian link to the Tower Hamlets area.
17. The main works delivery programme aims to go out to tender at the end of March 2008 and award a contract by early June. On-site construction is estimated to take approximately nine months, from July 2008 to the end of March 2009. This programme takes into account all the approvals required through Network Rail, Dover District Council and Kent County Council.

Traffic & Road Safety

18. A new drop off/pick up facility has been incorporated close to the main station entrance and the car park layout has been improved. The taxi rank has been moved closer to the station entrance adjacent to the improved Port Bus stop area. On Folkestone Road, the signal controlled crossing has been moved to allow for better direct access, and an additional bus stop has been introduced

Environmental Issues

19. The proposal will help reduce reliance on the private car and promote other more environmentally friendly and sustainable forms of transport such as walking, cycling, and use of passenger transport including rail & port. Reduction of traffic speeds into and from the forecourt, will create a more pedestrian friendly environment.
20. The existing landscape structure will also be radically altered, and the proposed introduction of new landscaping, a new and more formalised public open space and the use of quality materials will provide notable benefits to the overall street scene environment. The scheme itself also provides an opportunity to stimulate appropriate development opportunities (in the long term) and will therefore provide benefits for social, cultural, physical and visual connection.

Community Safety

21. The scheme will change the whole perception of the station forecourt and surrounding links by creating a quality public open space, with improved accessibility, lighting, landscaping, and close-circuit television. Increased usage will result in better natural surveillance for both pedestrians and cyclists.
22. Community severance has been a problem for many years and the lower section of the Priory Steps is known as a crime hot-spot for burglaries, drug use and serious sexual assault (during the period of 2002 - 2005 there were 150 reported crimes and 2000 calls to Kent Police related to crime and disorder incidents). The creation of a new pedestrian access between the Priory Steps and the station forecourt, combined with the removal of vegetation and upgraded lighting will improve public safety and help to reduce crime in the locality, and is supported by Kent Police, Dover District Council and the local community. These improvements will reinstate and reconnect this key space and access route with surrounding neighbourhoods. In overall terms, it is anticipated that the scheme will enhance community safety and usage, and deter anti-social behaviour along with its undesirable consequences.

Dover Priory Station Approach.

Finance

23. The total cost of the project is estimated at £2,800,000. As the table below shows, most of the capital funding has been secured from a range of partners/sources, some of which will be committed by the end of 2007/8 financial year on advanced clearance works on the embankment and the Priory Steps. Through the Basic Asset Protection Agreement between Kent County Council and Network Rail, Kent County Council will be the accountable body for the all the funding and delivery of the project. The financial breakdown is shown below.

Source	Year 07/08	Year 08/09
East Kent Partnership	75,000.00	Nil
KCC (Footways Initiative, Regeneration Fund & LTP)	Nil	525,344.00
Interreg IIIB	Nil	85,000.00
Interreg 4B - to be confirmed to cover gap of £134,656.00.	Nil	tbc
Dover District Council	Nil	50,000.00
Nuclear Decommissioning Agency	5,000.00	Nil
Network Rail	Nil	£1.6 million
CTRL (<i>Integrated Kent Franchise</i>)	Nil	£50,000.00
Local Transport Plan (KHS)	Nil	175,000.00
Priory steps only (EKP)	100,000.00	Nil
TOTAL:	180,000.00	2,485,344.00
Total Value of Project: £2.8million.		

24. As well as the build costs, there are financial implications for future scheme maintenance for areas within Kent County Council's ownership, and the public art installations (as Network Rail under the Basic Asset Protection Agreement between the two parties have no responsibility for these features). A working group of officers has been set-up to assess maintenance costs and it is likely that the available budget will be top-sliced to ensure that adequate funding is available for scheme maintenance over the first 3-5 years. After that, it is hoped that a suitable developer tariff system will be considered and adopted by the County Council which will be imposed on town centre development to cover the ongoing maintenance costs of the scheme. The detailed cost implications will be reported at a future meeting of the Board.

Dover Priory Station Approach.

Consultation

25. An extensive consultation process has been conducted including a stakeholder workshop in June 2007 with organisations such as the Guide Dogs for the Blind, the Kent Association for the Blind and other local disability and access organisations. The scheme was well received at this event, as well as at the Public Exhibition held at the Dover Discovery Centre between 1 and 4 September 2007 and the numerous one-to-one liaison meetings; the scheme has also been modified to take on board queries/concerns from the stakeholders who attended, and the Client team. Outstanding issues to be resolved include:

- moving the signal controlled crossing on Folkestone Road, which could have an impact on 4 guest houses; and
- agreeing a maintenance package (including protocols such as registering this project as a special surface and revenue funding) for a defined period for the enhanced materials, landscaping and art installations on the land owned by Kent County Council.

Conclusion

26. The Public Realm Strategy for Dover town centre set the vision, policy context and design principles for a rolling programme of phased works and demonstration projects throughout Dover town centre. The quality of these projects will be critical to providing a benchmark for the transformation of Dover's town centre public spaces. In particular, they are intended to instil confidence and attract business, developers and visitors to Dover, and to reinvigorate a local community and town centre that has been in slow decline.

27. Dover Priory Station Approach will be the first of these major projects to be implemented in the short term, and as a result is very important in leading and altering the way pedestrians and cars use urban space in Dover town centre. The detailed design scheme developed is an innovative and far-reaching public realm proposal that is not only functional but also aesthetically pleasing. It will also challenge conventional ways of building highway and environmental improvement schemes, whilst championing quality urban design and public realm, to the benefit, uplift and regeneration of Dover town centre.

Joint Transportation Board

28. Reports have been submitted to Dover's Joint Transportation Board (JTB) meetings on 26 March 2007 and 8 November 2007, and Dover District Council's (DDC) Executive seeking support for the concept scheme and progression to detailed scheme design. The recommendation from both JTB's and subsequently DDC's Executive was supportive of the scheme concept and progression to detailed design.

Portfolio Holder's Views

29. As both the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Supporting Independence and Chairman of Dover Pride, Roger Gough is strongly supportive of these proposals. The County Council and its partners have already given significant support to the enhancement of the station, and this is an important development for both the station and Dover town centre.

Dover Priory Station Approach.

Recommendation

30. Subject to the views of this Board it is proposed to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Supporting Independence that the detailed designs are progressed through the procurement process and the scheme delivered on site within the proposed programme, whilst the future maintenance implications (funding and protocols) of the section of the scheme within Kent County Council's ownership and the public art elements are considered with a further report submitted to the Board.

Contact Officer: Katherine Putnam, Regeneration & Projects Manager, 01622 69695.

Background Documents: *to be added.*

Attachments: *to be added.*

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Progress Report on Major Capital Projects

A report by the Capital Programme Manager to the Highways Advisory Board on 4 March 2008.

Introduction

1. It is an appropriate time to update the Board on progress of the major transport and highway schemes following the last Report in September 2007. It is understood that the Board welcomes these reports and the intention is to continue to provide them half yearly and when there are important issues to bring to Members' notice.
2. The last six months continue to be dominated by the considerable efforts in progressing the growth area schemes in Kent Thameside and Ashford within the funding and time constraints and general resource pressures on the Team.
3. A claim against the County Council for some £500,000 was successfully defended in the High Court.
4. Schemes have achieved successful internal and external financial audits and a Gateway review.
5. Fastrack continues to be recognised for awards and in particular was a key factor in the County Council receiving the prestigious Transport Authority of the Year award in November.

Progress

6. A progress or status report on Fastrack Thames Way, Fastrack Everards Link Phase 2, Ashford Ring Road, Newtown Road Bridge, Ashford, Rushenden Relief Road, Eurokent Phases 4 & 5, Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road, East Kent Access Phase 2, other schemes and Land matters is given in the Appendix to this Report. For brevity, only some of the background provided in previous reports is provided with the focus given to activity in the last half year
7. Since my last Report to the Board in September there has been substantial progress and the key milestone achievements have been:
 - Fastrack Thamesway. Completed. – March 2008
 - Ashford Ring Road. Award of contracts for the final stages and complex public realm stages of the Ring Road and Bank Street. – October 2007
 - Newtown Road Bridge, Ashford. Network Rail instructed to award contract– January 2008
 - Eurokent Phases 4 & 5. Funding and land Agreement completed. Contract award and start of construction – January 2008
 - Fort Hill De-dualling. Ringway instructed – February 2008
 - Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road. Planning permission for amended scheme and publication of new statutory Orders – January 2008
 - Rushenden Relief Road. Planning consent – October 2007
 - West Malling Station Link. Completion of the Deed of Easement with Network Rail that will allow the private car park implementation – December 2007
 - Everards Claim. The claim for about £500,000 successfully defended and a vindication of actions taken in 1994, in the High Court with award of costs.– October 2007

Progress Report on Major Capital Projects

- Union Railways/London & Continental Railways claim. Preliminary Issues Hearing before the President of the Lands Tribunal – December 2007.
 - ZED Homes Planning Inquiry Ashford – January 2008
 - East Kent Access Phase 2– Successful Gateway 1 Review by 4ps – November 2007.
 - Corporate Finance Audit of A228 Leybourne & West Malling Bypass and East Kent Access Phase 1C noted good project management and no recommendations.
 - EU Commission and DCLG audit of expenditure of European funding on Fastrack Thames Way. Successful audit with no adverse comments – December 2007
8. The key problems in this period have been:
- Ashford Ring Road remains a challenging project to deliver with its innovative public realm design, many interfaces, funding uncertainties and working within a difficult urban environment.
 - Rushenden Relief Road contract award remains on hold as SEEDA continue to assemble all the land and satisfy the planning conditions.
 - East Kent Access Phase 2. Delay by Secretary of State confirming statutory Orders.

Conclusion

9. Some of the issues referred to are live and matters may have progressed since the time of writing this Report. Where appropriate a verbal report will be given to the Board Meeting.
-

Accountable Officer: John Farmer (01622) 696881

Scheme Contacts:

Kent Thameside Fastrack Thames Way – John Turner
Kent Thameside Fastrack, Everards Link – John Turner
Ashford Ring Road – Jamie Watson
Newtown Road Bridge, Ashford – Jamie Watson
Eurokent, Thanet – John Farmer
Rushenden Relief Road – Richard Shelton
Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road – John Farmer
East Kent Access Phase 2 – Geoff Cripps

Kent Thameside

Fastrack

Thames Way

The scheme will provide dedicated bus-only lanes adjacent to existing carriageway with priority through the junctions between A226 Overcliffe towards Ebbsfleet Station. The approved CIF funding is £8m.

SEEDA is in receipt of funding in connection with the HST4i initiative aimed at improving access to the European high speed train network. The County Council is a partner with SEEDA and has been allocated €3,000,000 of European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) which will provide further funding support towards the Fastrack public transport access improvements.

The scheme was sufficiently advanced to allow Fastrack services to run in time for the Ebbsfleet International Station opening November 2007.

The scheme has progressed well but has been delayed by a Network Rail electricity power cable where Network Rail has been unable to maintain dates agreed for power shut downs.

By the time of this Board meeting the construction works will have been substantially completed.

Everards Link Phase 2

Phase 2 will provide a link from the bus interchange at Greenhithe Station through to Ingress Park and Swanscombe Peninsula and will become part of the Fastrack riverside route. The scheme interfaces with S106 obligations by Crest Nicholson as developers of the Ingress Park site. The approved CIF funding is £5.24m.

The works are progressing well but there have been issues relating to the interface with Crest Nicholson who have a planning obligation to extend the scheme into Ingress Park but these are now resolved. The two key elements of the large embankment between Phase 1 and the Avenue and the box structure under The Avenue are progressing well – the box is approaching roof slab construction and the embankment is close to road formation level.

There have been some concerns about vibration, associated with the compaction plant used in the construction of the embankment, from a few residents. The concerns are understandable but the works have been proceeding within specified limits and although the concerns are understandable there is no structural damage. As the embankment has proceeded and gets higher and with more mass the effects of vibration become minimal.

The scheme is planned to be completed in June and DCLG has been very supportive in accepting revised spend profiles.

Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road

The Relief Road provides a link across Milton Creek between Ridham Avenue and Castle Road connecting with existing developer funded sections. It is a complex and expensive scheme because in addition to the Creek crossing, the scheme also crosses the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway and a redundant landfill site.

The funding approval in principle is based on an estimated cost of £43.5m and funded by £29m LTP, £10.4m DCLG and £4.1 S106 developer funding. While the basic estimated cost is still considered robust the delay to the scheme and the effects of construction inflation being significantly above RPI will require additional support of about £3-4m and something that is being discussed with DfT and SEERA.

Following objection to the statutory Orders in early 2007 the scheme was modified to achieve a compromise layout that was a balance between the needs of residents living nearby and private businesses whose land was required. The revised scheme achieved

planning consent in January 2008 and the new statutory Orders were published immediately afterwards.

While it is hoped that the route and landtake is accepted there will be objections from the boating community to the S106 Scheme promoting the fixed bridge across the Creek. This has been reported to Members before and it remains difficult to reconcile the increased and unfunded cost of £4-5m for an opening bridge against very limited existing use and aspirational future use.

A Public Inquiry is inevitable and the Government Office is being encouraged to agree a date in late June/early July.

Rushenden Relief Road

The County Council is progressing this scheme on behalf of and at the request of SEEDA who are the Lead body for funding, assembling the land and satisfying the planning conditions.

SEEDA has had considerable difficulty in finalising the land negotiations and responding to the planning conditions to the satisfaction of English Nature.

The County Council has completed the design and invited construction tenders in summer 2007 at the request of SEEDA in anticipation of a start in autumn 2007.

SEEDA are making progress but at the time of writing the land has still not been secured and the planning conditions not satisfied.

This delay has a number of implications including the revised funding and spend profiles that SEEDA need to agree with DCLG, changes to rail possessions (the Relief Road bridges over the Sheerness line) and whether it might be necessary to invite new construction tenders.

A formal Agreement is also required with SEEDA covering funding and risk before the County Council would be willing to commit to a construction contract.

All major infrastructure projects are difficult and the County Council and SEEDA continue to work in partnership to deliver this important regeneration infrastructure scheme for Sheppey.

Ashford

Ashford Ring Road 2 Way Transformation

The scheme is for the transformation of the Ring Road to 2 way and enhanced public realm and shared space concepts to the south and west sectors between Station Road and New Street. The scheme also includes enhanced public realm to Bank Street between Tufton Street and Elwick Road.

The total cost of the scheme is some £14.5m and is mainly funded from DCLG GAF(2) and GAF(3) but with other public, private and European funding.

Any major changes to a town centre road would be difficult and controversial but this is compounded by the introduction of innovative shared space concepts and complex public realm designs, art and materials.

While much of this is new and at the forefront, Ashford is not a 'one-off' and these ideas are increasingly being promoted and advocated nationally as a solution to balance the needs of all users in town centres across the UK.

Anything new does tend to polarise opinion and the reality is that we will not know how successful it will be for several years until after it has been completed. The difficulty is perhaps more one of timing rather than concept. From a wider regeneration and strategic overview perspective, there was an understandable need to remove the 1970's 'collar'

around the town centre and make a bold statement to accelerate change and attract inward investment. From a narrower highway perspective, it would have been better to have waited until County Square was completed and to have had Victoria Way Phase 1 available to offer some alternative relief for traffic particularly as construction of shared space public realm requires long duration occupation of the highway under traffic management. The long-term durability of shared space public realm under traffic use remains a concern but only time will tell.

Having said that substantial progress is being made. The Phase 1 transformation of the Ring Road to 2-way operation was successfully completed in July 2007 ahead of the Tour de France. In October, contracts have been awarded for the Bank Street works and the Ring Road shared space works. In December, the announcements of GAF(3) funding and GAF(2) underspend availability has removed the uncertainty that existed over what could or could not be done at the present time. The full scheme from Station Road to New Street can now be progressed and avoided the need for abortive works or temporary solutions.

Some land aspects have caused problems but these are now resolved. Working at the interface with County Square has also been difficult but we recognise the imperative of this new flagship development successfully opening in March.

The Bank Street works are planned to complete in the summer and the objective is to complete the Ring Road works by end of October so that Ashford can have a clear trading period in the run-up to Christmas 2008 unfettered by any inconvenience from roadworks.

DCLG and Ashford's Future has been very supportive in understanding the complexity of the schemes and accepting revised spend profiles.

Newtown Road Bridge, Ashford

The scheme is to replace the deck carrying the railway and gain width so that increased headroom is available for a future high quality Smartlink bus service and to provide a better and less oppressive route for pedestrians and cyclists. The scheme has £4m Growth Area funding.

Considerable progress is being made with Network Rail who are leading on the bridge design and whose consultant's are expert on the innovative thin deck construction that is required.

In September, authority was given to Network Rail to award the contract for the steel and fabrication of the bridge deck. In December, authority was given to Network Rail to award the main contract for the bridgeworks and construction will commence in March.

Tenders for the main bridgeworks were significantly above Network Rail's estimates and DCLG has been very supportive in accepting both increased funding and revised spend profiles.

Ashford Southern Sector

The Transport Strategy identifies proposals for:

- Victoria Way Phase 1 to create a link between Victoria Road and Leacon Road. Although ostensibly to create a town centre street to reflect the growth of the town centre it will also offer a degree of traffic relief to the town centre.
- A28 Chart Road dualling between Matalan roundabout and the Tank roundabout.
- Victoria Way Phase 2 to create a more direct link in the longer term between Victoria Way and the Tank roundabout and support the redevelopment of Cobbs Wood industrial estate..

Work is being done in conjunction with Ashford's Future to develop and clarify the need and how and when these schemes should be taken forward. While work is being done on the conceptual street scene aspects of Victoria Way the absence of basic need and engineering

feasibility was exposed in the recent planning inquiry into ZED Homes proposals which are affected by both phases of Victoria Way

Drovers Roundabout to M20 Junction 9

Outline design work is just being finalised and will involve improvements and signalisation of Drovers roundabout, signalisation of Junction 9 and a new footbridge over the M20. The scheme is related to development proposals at Templar Barracks and Eureka Park including the proposed Park and Ride.

Funding will be from a variety of sources including GAF(3) and developer funding.

The scheme will now be taken forward into the surveys and detailed design stage achieving procedural approvals and securing small strips of land required by negotiation.

The challenge is to achieve the final scheme and avoid a sequence of phased improvements and abortive works arising from the fulfilment of S106 planning obligations.

East Kent

Eurokent Phases 4 & 5, Thanet

In partnership with Thanet District Council (TDC), SEEDA, and Rosefarm Estates, the County Council is constructing the access road at Eurokent. The County Council is forward funding the bulk of the Phase 5 construction costs on the back of the uplifted land values. The scheme will facilitate the development of the site and provide local bypass to a particularly poor section of Haine Road. Consultation on the Master Planning of the site is just about to commence.

The overall cost is some £6.5m and SEEDA and Rosefarm are contributing £1.1m.

The 4-way land and funding Agreement was completed in December and this allowed the award of the construction contract.

Work started in mid January and initial works have involved topsoil strip and archaeological investigation. The scheme is on programme to complete in October 2008.

East Kent Access Phase 2

Government indicated its intent in principle to fund the £64m cost when Programme Entry status was approved in July 2006.

The statutory Orders were published in October 2006 and a Public Inquiry was held in April 2007. Statutory objections were successfully negotiated away and the Inquiry was short but the County Council is still awaiting confirmation of the Orders by the Secretary of State.

When the Orders are confirmed the next stage is a formal application to the DfT for Conditional Approval of funding. This is an onerous task and requires a detailed submission that updates the Programme entry bid and confirms the business case, scheme cost estimates, governance and delivery aspects but the work is close to completion.

An important part of the submission is the outcome of an independent Gateway review carried out by 4ps – one of a sequence at various milestone stages of the project. This was held over three days in September and involved interviews with the Cabinet Member, the Director and a wide range of internal and external stakeholders such as Network Rail, GOSE and the East Kent Partnership. The Review identified a number of recommendations a few of which were given a 'Red' status requiring immediate attention that in turn gave the overall project a Red status. This was not a surprise and the recommendations were in the main issues that we were already aware of and addressing. Overall I judge the Review to have been a success and very beneficial for taking the scheme forward.

4ps are funded by Government and the Reviews are free. However, there is a presumption and encouragement by 4ps for Local Authorities to make suitably experienced staff available

for training and to participate in Reviews. I have recently taken part in a Review of a major transport project in the East of England and the experience and wider exposure can only benefit our own major projects.

Subject to the confirmation of Orders and Government giving Conditional Approval to the funding, the next stage would be the invitation of construction tenders. Provided tender returns are consistent with the estimates and Conditional Acceptance then a final submission is made to DfT for Full Acceptance of funding. If successful this will allow full commitment to be given to the scheme and the construction contract awarded.

DfT has indicated that it will take at least 3 months to consider a Conditional Acceptance submission and 1 month for a Full Acceptance submission.

A key issue is the estimated cost. DfT approve funding in cash terms and not on the basis of an estimated cost at a base date. Slippage in the programme such as the delay in confirmation of Orders, some increase in estimated cost arising from development of the design (£2m) and particularly the effects of construction inflation (£5m) has increased the cost estimate to the order of £73m.

Construction inflation appears from published sources to be currently running at about 6% in the southeast compared to RPI of about 3%. It is unfair for Government to put the onus on Promoters to make judgements about inflation that it has no control over but that is the reality we are faced with. However, informal discussions with DfT and SEERA suggest that this increased cash cost should be manageable provided the County Council bears 25% of the increase in accordance with recently issued guidance. This should not be a burden because our costs to date and in 2008/09 in developing the scheme can be taken into account and equate to the 25%.

On the assumption of confirmation of Orders in March and no significant issues with the submissions to DfT, an award of contract might be achievable in December 2008 with the bulk of early activity in 2009 being archaeological investigation, environmental mitigation measures and developing the design and build elements for the critical railway box underpass of Foads Hill and overbridge of Cottington Road.

I would envisage completion of the scheme and open to traffic in summer/autumn 2011.

Fort Hill De-dualling, Margate

As part of the regeneration of Margate the decision was taken Corporately to de-dual Fort Hill to reduce severance and integrate the Turner Contemporary and Rendezvous sites more with the town and particularly the old town.

The scheme will include public realm and accessibility improvements to The Parade and King Street being promoted by Thanet District Council.

The overall funding available is £550,000 Corporately from the County Council, £200,000 from the Integrated Transport allocation for footway enhancements and about £160,000 from Interreg funding secured by Thanet District Council.

Ringway are programmed to commence the works on 7 April and to complete in October in accordance with a commitment given by the Director of Highway Services.

Margate Regeneration is currently holding an exhibition of the proposals for The Parade and King Street and a letter to local residents and businesses about the Fort Hill de-dualling scheme was distributed on 23 February.

Mid Kent

Borough Green & Platt Bypass

A Borough Green Bypass is a long-standing proposal. The scheme has now come to include traffic management on the A25 through Platt. The Bypass was thought to have an

extant planning consent on the basis that the works had been started by virtue of an improved bridge that would accommodate the bypass, built by Network Rail many years ago as part of facilitating works for CTRL.

Celcon submitted a planning application to the County Council for an extension to their block making plant including the construction of the Bypass. A subsequent planning inquiry broke down when a Certificate of Lawful Development for the Bypass issued by the County Council was found to be invalid.

The Leader has given a public commitment to 'fastrack' the promotion of the Bypass and seek planning consent from the County Council to get back to the position that was believed to exist at the time of the Celcon application. There is also a commitment to exploring opportunities for funding.

Work is in hand to carry out environmental surveys and develop a scheme and Environmental Impact Assessment to support a planning application. The development costs of about £200,000 are coming from top slicing KHS revenue allocation.

On the basis of a straightforward development of the scheme, lack of controversy and third parties acting reasonably, the programme is to submit a planning application in March 2009.

A2 Slips Canterbury

For some time, the County Council has been working with Canterbury City Council and assessing the traffic aspects and feasibility of providing the 'missing' slip roads on A2 Canterbury Bypass at Harbledown, A28 Wincheap and Bridge.

The headline benefits are that better provision of slip roads would improve accessibility and reduce unnecessary journeys within the City Centre.

The easiest, cheapest and most deliverable slip road would be the provision of the on-slip at Wincheap.

In a major step forward, Tom Harris MP, the Minister for State for Transport has agreed that the on-slip at Wincheap can proceed and on the basis that associated measures are progressed in parallel to ensure the benefits to the City Centre are captured.

The on-slip is estimated to cost about £1m and will be funded from the Integrated Transport allocations.

The County Council will promote and deliver the scheme. The programme is being developed but planning permission and Orders will be required and a start before 2010 is unlikely and this would be influenced by whether a public inquiry was necessary.

The County Council is also actively engaged with the City Council and its development partner for the redevelopment of Wincheap business estate. These proposals would involve the provision of the off-slip and the local bypass of the A28 through the redeveloped area to take away from the historic Wincheap area. The proposals are at an early stage but for practical and procedural reasons the County Council will ultimately lead on any future promotion of the off-slip.

All Saints Bypass, Maidstone

Maidstone Borough Council has had long-standing aspirations for an All Saints Bypass that would run between Bishops Way and Wrens Cross. The objective is to remove the severance caused by the existing traffic on Palace Avenue and College Road and integrate the redevelopment of this area with the town as well as allowing the Carriage Museum to become clustered with the Church and Bishops Palace.

Maidstone has recently achieved Growth Point status and this had given added impetus to their aspirations for the Bypass.

The scheme is essentially to achieve environmental and regeneration benefits and generally neutral in traffic terms. The County Council has been asked to progress the Bypass on behalf of the Borough Council and with costs reimbursed.

The immediate objective is to develop an outline design in sufficient detail so that meaningful consultations can be had with statutory consultees to secure acceptance to a preferred scheme that could then be taken forward to planning consent.

Other Schemes

Greenhithe Station

Network Rail has recently improved the Station by the installation of a new modular booking hall. They have recently secured DfT funding to carry out the further improvements for the provision of a bridge to connect the platforms replace the unsatisfactory and inhibiting underpass and other station enhancements. DfT require the County Council to be the Lead body for the funding this is a straightforward arrangement whereby the County Council would have a 'mirror' Agreement with Network Rail reflecting all the DfT terms and conditions. It would be a mechanism for the County Council to act in a no risk intermediate administrative capacity.

Dover Priory Station

This is the subject of a separate Report to the Board.

Land Matters

Property and Land Held for Highway Purposes

The only significant portfolio of properties that continue to be held are for the London Road – Hadlow Road Link, Tonbridge and they have a face asset value of some £5m. It is an important scheme in Tonbridge & Malling's Local Development Framework aspirations for Tonbridge but it is expensive and has failed to secure developer funding in the many years that it has been an approved scheme. Discussions continue with Tonbridge & Malling as to the realistic viability of securing funding for the scheme in the short to medium term and if not whether abandonment of the scheme and realisation of the assets needs to be reconsidered.

Many ad-hoc parcels of land continue to be identified by Corporate Property as in County Council ownership and held for highway purposes. The need to retain this land continues to be robustly reassessed in support of the Corporate initiative to realise capital receipts from tied up assets so that they can be better directed at services and more immediate and deliverable projects in support of T2010 objectives.

Land Compensation Act Part 1 Claims (LCAPart1)

After a quiet period during 2007, activity is building up as claims start to be received for A228 Leybourne & West Malling Bypass.

Claims continue to be handled in respect of S278 schemes where developers indemnify the County Council for any liability.

S278 schemes remain difficult because for developers it remains an uncertain financial burden for several years and in theory for 7 years after they have completed their new road or improved road obligations. Developers also often challenge the basis for the assessment of compensation.

At the moment, Legal Services are taking Counsel's Opinion in respect of one challenge to the method of assessment by a Developer who has himself taken Counsel' advice. This relates to the extent that the implications of future use of a road should be taken into account in determining compensation. This is particularly relevant where a Developer builds a section of road that forms part of a future strategic improvement such as Hawkinge Bypass or Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road.

On Hawkinge Bypass, there is also an issue that has been referred to the Ombudsman. Phase 1 of Hawkinge Bypass was built as a S278 scheme several years ago. Legal Services and the Area Offices structure S278 Agreements so that adoption and hence maintenance responsibility is held back until the Developer has fulfilled all his obligations such as completing remedial works and in particular transferring the land occupied by the road.

The Land Compensation Act Part 1 denies claims being made if the road has not been adopted within 3 years. It transpired that the Area Office had not formally adopted the Hawkinge Bypass within 3 years of opening because the land transfer had not been completed. This was exposed when the Developer took Counsel's opinion as part of his efforts to resist the liability. As a consequence all claims were rejected but a householder encouraged by his agent made a complaint to the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman has accepted that there was no intent by the County Council or collusion with the Developer to delay adoption to avoid valid claims being made but has asked what remedy the County Council proposes. This is being considered but if the remedy was to accept claims then the liability would probably fall to the County Council as the Developer would no longer be liable to reimburse and certainly would not offer to reimburse.

Land Acquisition

In previous reports I have referred to the major claim by London & Continental Railways/Union Railways against the County Council in connection with South Thames-side Development Route Stage 4. The claimant has elected to make reference to the Lands Tribunal where previously they had pursued it as an insurance claim and the effect is that it reverts to the County Council to defend the claim rather than the insurers and this has significant resource implications.

A Directions Hearing was held in January and September 2007 for the Tribunal to give Directions for the conduct of the Hearing. The outcome is that a Preliminary Issues hearing was held before the President of the Lands Tribunal on 19 & 20 December. The Hearing was to consider in effect a Preliminary Preliminary Issue as to our stance that the Lands Tribunal did not have jurisdiction to hear the case. The ruling of the President is awaited but likely soon.

If the President was to decide that the Lands Tribunal did have jurisdiction then the next step would probably be to consider a wider range of Preliminary Issues and this relates to whether the claimants had an interest in the land and if so the nature of that interest and if that interest was a compensatable interest and the extent of that compensatable interest. The County Council continues to robustly defend this claim.

Other

A claim had been made by a Developer that an obligation on the County Council to commence a junction improvement by 31 December 1994 was not fulfilled and that a contribution of £150,000 that with interest and costs would now amount to over £500,000 should be returned. The claim was heard in the High Court on 2-4 October and the judgement was totally in the County Council's favour and with the award of our costs as well. This is a complete vindication of actions that were taken in 1994.

Highway Tree Inspections – Customer Care

A report by Alan Riley, KHS Landscape Manager, to the Highways Advisory Board on 4th March 2008.

Introduction and Purpose

1. At Highways Advisory Board (HAB) on 1 May 2007, a paper on highway tree management was presented and the following adopted by Members;
 - Tree management procedure.
 - Preparation and adoption of a tree policy.
 - Purchase of the Confirm tree modules system.
 - Use of preferred arboricultural contractors by all KHS partners
2. At HAB on 18 September 2007, a paper on a highway tree policy was presented and adopted by Members.
3. The purpose of this paper is to propose the adoption of a change in procedure when dealing with customer enquiries and complaints in respect of highway trees which will result in improved service delivery across a number of areas.

Tree Management

4. The adoption of a Highway Tree Policy has provided clarity in a number of areas of highway tree management and has provided a consistent approach to making decisions ensuring that priority is always given to safety issues.

Customer Care

5. From 1 April 2007 the arboricultural team took over the responsibility for all aspects of tree management including routine safety inspections and customer enquiries. Work is ongoing with the KHS Contact Centre to ensure that customer calls are directed to the right place and are properly dealt with within the appropriate timescales.
6. 437 Priority 1 (P1) calls have been received from the KHS Contact Centre and dealt with. P1 calls involve trees that have failed or are in imminent danger of failing and average response time has been well under two hours.
7. Approximately 2500 Priority 2 (P2) calls have been received. P2 calls relate to general, rather than legal nuisance issues. Safety issues are always dealt with as P1. Approximately 25% of the P2 calls have resulted in some form of remedial works on site. General nuisance issues include leaf and seed fall, sap deposition, blocking of light and interference with television reception.
8. The total volume of calls for 07/08 is anticipated to be in the region of 4000.

The Process

9. A number of calls are filtered out by the Contact Centre but generally all tree related calls come through to the arboricultural team for attention. A number are dealt with immediately by letter or by telephone with an explanation that the type of problem indicated is not one that a responsible tree owner is required to deal with or that the works do not fall under the remit of KHS e.g. clearance of overhead services. The remainder of calls require an inspection. These are grouped into geographical areas to

Highway Tree Inspections – Customer Care

ensure best use of time and travel resources. An analysis of figures from April 2007 shows that in 75% of cases the inspection results in a decision not to carry out any works. The main reasons are that the complaint or enquiry has been overstated or is a general nuisance issue, as outlined above, that KHS is not required to deal with. The 25% requiring works is generally related to trees in decline, vehicular damage, vandalism and other non predictable events.

10. This process of managing calls is a drain on the resources available to manage and enhance the highway tree stock. Due to the volume of P2 enquiries and the need to prioritise P1 visits and works there can be a delay before a response is given to the enquirer. The delay often leads to an expectation that works will be undertaken. Customer feedback in the event that no works are undertaken is often critical of the delay rather than the decision.
11. KHS meets its duty of care by undertaking regular safety inspections of all highway trees based on the classification of the road. Current inspection frequencies are two years and five years. The asset database is an ongoing project and as it is developed it is likely that inspection frequencies will be refined to align with an identified risk.
12. Current information recorded relates only to trees requiring works but all trees are inspected and the inspection date recorded.
13. The asset database will include information on tree characteristics and dimensions and actions will include an assessment by an inspector that, under normal circumstances, will take the tree through to the next inspection cycle.

The Proposal

14. The current and future inspection processes are robust and defensible and take into account the period until the next inspection.
15. There should be no need, under normal circumstances, to undertake tree works between inspection cycles except for emergency and programmed cyclical maintenance works. On the same basis there should be no need to carry out additional tree inspections between inspection cycles. Customers should be given details of the inspection frequency and the date of the last inspection along with a copy of the 'Understanding leaflet – How we look after trees on the highway'.
16. Where an enquiry relates to a changed circumstance, such as disease or physical damage to a tree, then an interim inspection will be undertaken and the records updated.
17. It is likely that some customers will, despite the justification of the process, complain about the lack of an inspection linked directly to their enquiry. Some customers will exaggerate the safety aspects of an enquiry to ensure that an inspection is undertaken. Both these issues exist within the current system of enquiries and should have no significant impact on the revised process. Overall the level of customer satisfaction is expected to increase with a quicker decision making process that still takes into account safety of the highway.

Highway Tree Inspections – Customer Care

18. Based on a typical year the revised process will reduce the reactive calls requiring a visit or action from 4000 to 1000. The 3000 calls will receive a prompt response and call closure. The savings in resources will be diverted to the safety audit process, programmed maintenance and replanting programme and in particular the requirements of the New Roads and Street Works Act from 1 April 2008.

Decision

19. This Board is asked to approve the adoption of the revised process for dealing with customer enquiries and to approve the use of savings from the revised approach for other elements of the tree management and enhancement programme.

Accountable Officer: Alan Riley (01622) 666000

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Speed Management in Kent

A report by the Head of Transportation and Development to the Highways Advisory Board on 4th March 2008

Introduction

1. A report was submitted to the Highways Advisory Board on outlining the need to gain community ownership on the many requests for action on speed related issues that the County Council receives.

Prioritisation

2. The County Council receives approximately 30 requests per month per division, often from individual members of the public, requesting some form of traffic speed control. In trying to be helpful, the County Council commits a significant resource to researching the reasons behind most of those requests. In the vast majority of cases, perception is not reality. Equally, there are a number of examples of speed control measures, such as traffic calming, which are both inappropriate in scale and unpopular with some members of the local community. There is no doubt that work on dealing with individual requests diverts transportation teams from undertaking more strategic work which is important in the context of the challenges which face Kent.
3. It is important that the County Council uses its resources to the best effect. The recent introduction of PIPKIN demonstrates that the County Council wishes to base criteria for expenditure on highway and transport improvements scientifically and not according to the greatest pressure. Equally, the work being undertaken on Government Circular 1/2006 previously reported to this Board will audit speed limits on all A and B class roads in Kent by 2012.

Speed Management

4. Kent County Council held a PIPKIN Seminar for Parish Councils in January 2008. At this Conference, Parishes received a copy of the 'Understanding Speed Management in Kent'. A copy will be sent to all of those Parishes which were unable to send a representative to the seminar.
5. In essence we are asking Kent residents to gain reasonable community support for any proposal relating to speed management. Once received, we use a data led approach to determining the outcome as detailed in the Understanding Leaflet.

Recommendation

6. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.
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Accountable Officer: David Hall (01622) 221081

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Free travel for 11-16 Year Olds

A report by the Head of Transportation and Development to the Highways Advisory Board on 4th March 2008

1. This report sets out the progress to date in the introduction of free travel for 11 – 16 year olds and describes a programme of implementation for additional pilot schemes in 2008 leading to a full Kent wide roll out in 2009.

Background

2. In September 2006, Kent County Council published “Towards 2010” (T2010) with an aspiration to introduce free travel for school children in secondary education aged 11 – 16.
3. In June 2007 two free travel pilot schemes called Kent Freedom were introduced in Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells and Canterbury. Excellent press coverage was gained from the launch events.
4. The key policy aspirations of free travel for 11 – 16 year olds are:
 - A reduction in peak hour congestion.
 - Improved social inclusion through improved mobility of young people outside school hours.
 - Encouraging longer term use of public transport by young people.

Pilot Schemes

5. Two free travel trials were introduced on 4 June 2007 in Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells/Tonbridge. Over 5000 passes have been issued which is above expectation.
6. Additional bus capacity has been provided by bus operators in the pilot areas to cope with extra demand given that most existing service buses are full in the morning peak. Eight additional vehicles in each pilot area from 4 June ensured a seamless introduction of free travel providing sufficient capacity for the extra demand. This has been increased to 10 from the start of the September term. We have taken the approach of asking the incumbent operators to provide additional capacity, used on a flexible basis. This is the most efficient way of providing additional seats as trying to set up “competing” additional KCC funded services on commercially provided routes would undermine local bus networks and would be outside the free market spirit of the Transport Act 1985. We have received excellent support from the South Eastern Traffic Commissioner for this approach.
7. Detailed work has been undertaken on the usage of passes in the two pilots and the cost to the County Council in 2007-08 is estimated at £1.4m with a full year cost of £1.9m. In other words, the additional take-up has not directly translated to additional costs. The operators are reimbursed on the gap in their income as a result of the scheme on an open book accounting basis. This is largely income from students who previously paid a fare plus the cost of providing additional capacity.

Free travel for 11-16 Year Olds

8. The Kent Freedom Scheme is very popular in Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells/Tonbridge. Initial results indicate a modal shift from private car movements to bus of 25% which is most encouraging. Impact studies on congestion are being measured and will be reported when meaningful results are available. There is evidence that students are using Freedom passes for travel at weekends and evenings which was a key aspiration of the Kent Youth Forum. Students also have the travel flexibility to use after school clubs which has been greatly appreciated by a number of correspondents.

The Future

9. At the meeting of Cabinet Scrutiny on 12 December 2007, the Committee asked that 'the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste be requested to announce as quickly as possible the areas to be covered by the extension to the existing Freedom Pass Pilot Schemes in June 2008'. An early decision was also necessary to enable bus operators to prepare for additional resource required.
10. Cabinet has now approved the phase two roll-out for June 2008. Freedom will be extended to all secondary schools in the remainder of Tonbridge and Malling District plus the District areas of Maidstone, Shepway and Dover. The District areas of Swale and Thanet will be added in January 2009 with the remainder in June 2009.
11. This roll-out programme reflects discussions with bus operators and the fact that it is not possible to introduce a countywide scheme at the same time. Acquisition of buses and drivers is a key driver in this respect.
12. Concern has been expressed by some Members about the fee of £50. Evidence suggests, however, that there has been no adverse reaction to this charge with many recipients praising its excellent value for money. This charge will be retained in 2008/09.

Financial Implications

13. In 2008/09, the County Council has allocated £5.5 million for the Freedom scheme which will enable us to introduce the additional schemes that have been identified in paragraph 3.1.
14. There has been considerable discussion about the inclusion of rail in the countywide roll-out of the Freedom scheme. There are sound arguments not to include rail and the operator South Eastern remains unenthusiastic about participating. If rail is not included, this will reduce the potential revenue burden by an estimated £1 million per annum.
15. Once free travel has been introduced on a countywide basis, it is recommended that the home to school transport mainstream and Freedom budget are administered from one source to ensure that financial and procurement efficiencies can be met.

Free travel for 11-16 Year Olds

Smart Cards

16. Greater accuracy of the usage of Freedom passes could be achieved through the introduction of smart cards. Such cards could also be used for a range of other purposes such as libraries and school meals. A barrier to this in the past has been the price of on-bus readers which cost around £1000 each. With 800 buses operating in Kent, the capital cost of implementation would be high. Stagecoach and Arriva have indicated that their groups are investing in a new design of ticket machine which included a smart card reader. There may be a willingness to allocate these machines to Kent but some capital pump-priming would be required. Discussions are being held with operators to explore the feasibility of new ticket machines with smart card readers, the timing of the change and the potential costs of implementation.

Conclusions

17. The introduction of the Kent Freedom scheme has been successful and well received. A decision to extend Freedom in June 2008 to include the remainder of Tonbridge and Malling, Maidstone, Shepway and Dover has been taken and arrangements are being made for this to happen. The introduction of smart cards would be highly beneficial in operational and monitoring terms.

Recommendations

18. Members note the success of the Freedom scheme and the arrangements for a further roll-out in 2008 and 2009.

Accountable Officer: David Hall (01622 221081)

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A26 Yew Tree Road / Speldhurst Road Junction Improvement, Southborough.

A report by the Mid-Kent Programme Delivery Manager to the Highway Advisory Board on 4th of March 2008

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Board of the issues relating to this scheme to allow the Board to review the recommendations of the Tunbridge Wells Joint Transportation Board made at its meeting on 21st January 2008.

Background

2. At its meeting on 29th May 2006 the Tunbridge Wells Joint Transportation Board considered the report submitted by the Mid Kent Divisional Manager (070529/TB006) which identified several options for reducing congestion at the junction of the A26, Yew Tree Road and Speldhurst Road, Southborough. The Joint Transportation Board recommended that Kent Highways Services proceed on the basis of Option 2a 'Provision of new left turn lane into Yew Tree Road' and Option 3 'Alternative Staging'. If it was found that Option 2a was either not achievable or too expensive then Option 2b should be progressed. An extract from the above report identifying the proposed options is contained at the end of this report.
3. The report submitted to the Joint Transportation Board anticipated that Option 2a would typically allow 3 vehicles per cycle to benefit from the left turn lane whilst Option 2b would typically allow 1 vehicle per cycle to benefit. Both of these options would have an impact on vehicles turning right into Yew Tree Road.
4. Based on initial costs estimates an allocation for the delivery of this scheme had been set at £141,400 within the 2007/08 Capital Maintenance Programme.
5. Subsequent to the Joint Transportation Boards recommendation an outline design was prepared and a cost estimate produced for Option 2a 'Provision of new left turn lane into Yew Tree Road'. This option would include:
 - (a) Construction of a new 50m long left turn lane into Yew Tree Road and associated footway.
 - (b) Realignment of the Yew Tree Road junction.
 - (c) Relocating the Yew Tree Road stop line further back to accommodate the swept path of left turning large vehicles and subsequent relocation of the existing controlled crossing point.
 - (d) Construction of an offside traffic island for the positioning of the primary traffic signal.
 - (e) Full replacement of the existing pelican crossing north of the junction, resultant from a combination of the widening on the east side and the age of the current installation.

The estimated outline cost for delivering this scheme has been given as £207,100. This incorporates works, fee's, utilities and signal costs but does not include potential costs for vertical realignment, accommodation and any unsocial working hours uplift. The cost for delivering Option 2a would therefore be £65,700 above the schemes current allocation.

A26 Yew Tree Road / Speldhurst Road Junction Improvement, Southborough

6. Because the estimated cost for Option 2a significantly exceeded the budget allocation and in accordance with the Boards recommendation Option 2b was considered. This option would vary from Option 2a in having a 25m left turn lane as opposed to the 50m left turn lane in Option 2a and the removal of the need to replace the existing Pelican Crossing on the A26. The cost estimate provided for the outline design of Option 2b is £178,100 which is £29,600 above the schemes current allocation. A significant cost component of both schemes relates to the alteration to public utility apparatus. It had been anticipated that these costs would be significantly lower in the case of Option 2b due to the shorter left turn lane. However most costs are incurred in the immediate area of the Yew Tree Road junction which is affected equally by each proposal and therefore costs are similar for both options.
7. A further report was submitted to the Joint Transportation Board at its meeting on the 21st of January 2008 detailing the issues identified above and including the following Officers Proposals and Recommendation:

'Proposals

- (a) *The view of officers is that the anticipated improvement in traffic movements for either Option 2a or 2b are insufficient to justify the level of expenditure indicated by the cost estimates, and the disruption that would result from the delivery of either option. Therefore officers propose that neither option be progressed further.*
- (b) *The report submitted to the Board on the 29th of May 2006 recommended the implementation of Option 2c 'Extend 2 lane approach on Speldhurst Road' and Option 3 'Alternative Staging' In addition it recommended that the causes of the congestion prevalent in Southborough be investigated. This should take the form of a route study to look at the wider local network that would fully establish and understand the traffic movements and demand along this section of the A26 corridor and also facilitate a micro simulation modelling exercise.*

Recommendation

- (a) *Having regard of the cost for the delivery of either Option 2a or 2b the Board reconsider the original recommendations contained within the Mid Kent Divisional Managers report submitted to the Boards meeting on the 29th of May 2006.'*
8. After considering the report the Joint Transportation Board recommended that KHS proceed with Option 2a. Because of programme pressures it is not possible for this scheme to be delivered during the current financial year. In addition because the allocation for the scheme within this year's Capital Programme is £141,400 there is a deficit of £64,700.
9. As this scheme has not been identified as part of the Capital Programme for 2008/09 previously approved by the Board it would be necessary to make provision within this programme for it to be delivered.
10. Because of the cost benefit aspects of this scheme and the potential impact on the Capital Programme for 2008/09 already approved by the Board, officers consider it appropriate for the Board to review the recommendation made by the Joint Transportation Board at its meeting on the 21st of January 2008.

A26 Yew Tree Road / Speldhurst Road Junction Improvement, Southborough

11. However, forthcoming development proposals may present the opportunity to reconsider Option 2 in the light of associated traffic generation and traffic movement patterns, for example, the Southborough hub.

Proposals

12. That the Board review the recommendation of the Tunbridge Wells Joint Transportation Board in respect of this scheme and consider the potential benefits and costs associated with the delivery of this scheme.
13. If the Board supports the Joint Transportation Boards recommendation to proceed with Option 2a Officers review the Capital Works Programme for 2008/09 to facilitate this schemes delivery and report to the Board on the reprioritisation of schemes.

Recommendation

14. The Board reviews this scheme and recommends that officers:
 - (a) proceed with the delivery of Option 2a in accordance with the recommendation of the Joint Transportation Board of 21st January 2008 and review and reprioritise the Capital programme for 2008/09
 - (b) proceed in accordance with the officer recommendations for options 2c and 3 with the associated route study contained within the report submitted to the Joint Transportation Board of 21st January 2008
 - (c) defer the implementation of Option 2a and review in the light of forthcoming development proposals, for example, the Southborough hub.
-

Accountable Officer: Alun Jones (01622 798306)

Extract of report submitted by the Mid Kent Divisional Manager to the JTB meeting on the 29th of May 2006 (070529/TB006) containing the options referred to in the above report

Option 1 Provision of on-crossing detectors and kerbside detectors.

1) *Comments*

- i) Improved pedestrian responsive junction especially for pedestrians with limited mobility.*
- ii) Kerbside detectors will cancel any unwanted demands for the pedestrian stage and therefore provide a potential increase in capacity. However demands may still exist at other crossings and the all-red stage will still appear.*
- iii) Also on-crossing detectors will allow the pedestrian stage to run for a longer period possibly negating any benefit from cancelled demands.*
- iv) Although the elimination of false calls should improve the capacity of the junction, the possible extension of genuine calls and exit blocking could easily negate any improvements and may result in a lower capacity.*
- v) This option can be combined with any of the following options*

2) *Costs – approximately £50,000 excluding fees and TM*

Option 2a. Provision of a new left turn lane into Yew Tree Road

3) *Comments*

- i) Provides extra capacity for left turning vehicles into Yew Tree Road.*
- ii) 25% of southbound vehicles turn left, i.e. 1 in every 4.*
- iii) Given the feasible length of a left turn lane of 50m, typically 3 vehicles will benefit from the lane each cycle resulting in an increase in capacity of 64 vehicles per hour (assuming a 170 second cycle time at peak)*
- iv) The turning lane would be provided entirely on newly constructed carriageway.*
- v) With left turners having a dedicated lane, traffic wishing to turn right into Yew Tree Road (across two oncoming lanes) which could previously have taken advantage of any gaps will now be held on a red signal until their own phase is called and the southbound approach will have to be stopped. This could lead to a longer queue of right turning traffic (into Yew Tree Road) and will result in an increase in cycle time and a reduction in capacity.*
- vi) This does not remove the all-red stage*
- vii) As this option potentially increases the capacity of the southbound A26 and may reduce congestion, a costing has been prepared.*

4) *Costs - £50,000 + £98,000 stats diversions excluding fees, traffic management and land costs.*

Option 2b Remarking of the southbound approach to the signals to create a left turn lane into Yew Tree Road with limited road widening

5) *Comments*

- i) Provides extra capacity for left turning vehicles into Yew Tree Road.*
- ii) 25% of southbound vehicles turn left, i.e. 1 in every 4.*
- iii) Given the feasible length of a left turn lane of 25m, typically 1 vehicle will benefit from the lane each cycle resulting in an increase in capacity of 22 vehicles per hour (assuming a 170 second cycle time at peak).*
- iv) The turning lane would be provided existing carriageway starting at the existing Pelican crossing and some works will be required to facilitate the left turn...*

- v) *As with option 2a With left turners having a dedicated lane, traffic wishing to turn right into Yew Tree Road (across two oncoming lanes) which could previously have taken advantage of any gaps will now be held on a red signal until their own phase is called and the southbound approach will have to be stopped. This could lead to a longer queue of right turning traffic (into Yew Tree Road) and will result in an increase in cycle time and a reduction in capacity.*
 - vi) *This design will result in the through traffic being aligned with the island outside the library, this could result in some vehicle conflicts especially if the left turning lane is abused, and likelihood of vehicles driving into the island will be quite high.*
 - vii) *This does not remove the all-red stage*
- 6) *As this option potentially increases the southbound capacity of the A26, possibly only marginally, a costing has been prepared. Though this scheme will identify significant issues at Safety audit.*
- 7) *Costs - Estimate based on other costs provided - £20,000 + £50,000 stats diversions excluding fees, traffic management and land costs.*

Option 2c Extend 2 lane approach on Speldhurst Road

8) *Comments*

- i) *Provides extra capacity for left turning vehicles into A26 London Road.*
 - ii) *30% of vehicles turn left, i.e. 1 in every 3.*
 - iii) *The current flared approach is 36m long, enough to hold on average 6 vehicles, but they are narrow lanes. Extending the lane could be achieved by banning parking on the approach (opposite Reynolds Lane).*
 - iv) *On site observations suggest there would be limited benefit in extending this lane. The right turning traffic flows freely at green provided there is no exit blocking on the A26 St John's Road into Tunbridge Wells. The storage capacity between the signals on the A26 is sufficient for the left turning traffic exiting Speldhurst Road but at times not all the left turners can make their turn before the lights change.*
 - v) *Any measures which improve the capacity of Speldhurst Road may increase traffic levels on Speldhurst Road and on other roads in Southborough.*
 - vi) *This does not remove the all-red stage*
 - vii) *This option involves the removal of the parking on Speldhurst Road opposite Reynolds Lane. The capacity increase would be slight and would be limited to Speldhurst Road*
- 9) *Costs - The estimated cost is £1,000*

10) Comments

- i) *The removal of the bus lane would allow the segregation of northbound traffic into either
 - right turners into Yew Tree Road (right lane) and all other traffic (left lane) (the pre bus lane layout) or
 - left turners into Speldhurst Road (left lane) and all other traffic (right lane)At the St John's Road stop line. At the Yew Tree Road stop line, the lane arrangement would remain unchanged.*
- ii) *The removal of the bus lane would require extensive construction works including the resurfacing of the bus lane and the removal/resiting of the existing signals*
- iii) *Currently 17% of vehicles turn left into Speldhurst Road and 4% of vehicles turn right into Yew Tree Road. The remaining 79% proceed straight ahead.*
- iv) *A dedicated right turn lane at the Speldhurst Road signals (for Yew Tree Road ahead) would only be used by 4% of traffic. This would have little effect on traffic in the other lane or on junction capacity. Any lack of lane discipline (commonplace in the pre bus lane days) will lead to conflicts for the ahead movement through the junction as drivers attempt to beat the queue which will increase the probability of injury crashes.*
- v) *A dedicated left turn lane will remove that traffic from the ahead stream but this will only allow the ahead traffic to reach the Yew Tree Road junction a little quicker.*
- vi) *The longer the left turn lane, the greater the effect but there is a limit to the length. In addition, although the bus lane might be removed, the cycle lane would be retained and this may be the limiting factor in determining the maximum length of a left turn lane. There is also the issue of traffic wishing to access St John's Park both in terms of vehicles in the left turn lane unexpectedly turning left early to get to St John's Park and the use of the access road to beat the queue at the traffic signals*
- vii) *A dedicated left turn lane will shorten the queue on the A26 approach to the signals and may have a beneficial effect on air quality.*
- viii) *During the AM peak there will be a 10% improvement in saturation on the northbound approach if the bus lane is removed, reducing the queue that is 300metres long to 252metres long. The results are similar in the PM peak.*
- ix) *A dedicated left turn lane will not resolve the issue of exit blocking on the A26 London Road nor will it increase the capacity of the junction but will make Speldhurst Road a more attractive route to drivers. The possibility of poor lane discipline together with the need for ahead traffic to move from the outside lane at the first set of signals to the inside lane at the second set of signals will increase the probability of injury crashes.*
- x) *Research shows that there are 7 scheduled bus services per hour using the bus lane. The Kent County Council threshold for the introduction of a bus lane is 6 per hour and therefore the removal of the bus lane appears to be contrary to Kent County Council practice.*
- xi) *Bus journey's do benefit from the provision of the bus lane as it allows them to pass a 200metre length queue and ensure they proceed through the junction at the next green, were the bus at the end of the queue there is no guarantee they would make it though the junction on green with the exit blocking that occurs, and would then have to wait up to 75 seconds until the next green.*
- xii) *Although this option does not increase the capacity of the junction, it should reduce the length of the approach queue from Tunbridge Wells.*
- xiii) *The current bus lane is also the cycle lane along the A26 Northbound and any reconfiguration of the junction will cause problems. A dedicated left turn lane at the stop line would mean that the on-carriageway cycle lane could not remain on the nearside due to conflicting movements. If it were to come along the centre of the two vehicle lane approaches it would need to start at the beginning of the two lane approach, this would lead to the cyclists being in a very vulnerable position for up to*

200 metres. To maintain the cycle lane on the nearside the two lanes would need to be segregated for left and ahead in the nearside and right turners into Yew Tree in the right, however there is no benefit with this as described in paragraph iv) above.

11) Costs. - The estimated cost is £60,000 excluding fees and traffic management. There should be no land costs or stats costs.

