

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

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### HIGHWAYS ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the Highways Advisory Board held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 3 March 2009.

PRESENT: Mr C Hibberd (Chairman), Mr W A Hayton (Vice-Chairman), Mr M J Angell (Substitute for Mr R A Pascoe), Mr T J Birkett, Mr J R Bullock, MBE, Ms S J Carey, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr C G Findlay, Mr R F Manning, Mr J I Muckle, Mr A R Poole, Mrs P A V Stockell, Mr R Tolputt, Mr R Truelove and Mrs E M Tweed

ALSO PRESENT: Mr G A Horne MBE.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs C Bruce (Interim Director Kent Highway Services), Mr D Hall (Head of Transport & Development), Mr N Bateman (Head of Asset Management), Mr S Gasche (Public Transport Team Leader), Mr T Hemmings (Permit Scheme Project Management), Mr T Howe (Highway Resurfacing Manager) and Mr D Joyner (Sustainable Transport Manager), and the Head of Democratic Services (represented by Mrs K Mannering).

#### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

- 1. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.**  
*(Item 2)*

Further to Minute 1 of 6 January 2009, the Chairman referred to the Advice Note circulated to Board Members prior to the meeting. Members were grateful for the guidelines and would participate in future debates with an open mind.

- 2. Minutes - 6 January 2009**  
*(Item 3)*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2009 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

- 3. Kent Highway Services - Director's Update**  
*(Item 4 - Report by Interim Director, Kent Highway Services)*

(1) Members had requested a written update for each meeting of the Board. This report in particular covered the excellent response to a colder than average winter. Other key areas covered included white lining, Parish Portal, Permits and Kent Traffic Officers.

(2) *Permit Scheme for Kent*

This subject was covered in detail in paragraph 7 below. However, excellent progress was reported with the likely introduction of a permit scheme in 2009 (subject to approval by the Secretary of State). This was a national first and

reflected the excellent background undertaken by the Network Management team over a two year period. The progress reflected the County Council's strategic aims to improve traffic flows and reduce congestion across Kent.

(3) *Winter Service*

Kent Highways Services was very pro-active in responding to the snow and ice emergency which gripped Kent and the UK during December, January and February. 50 salting runs were completed between October and January which would normally cover the whole winter period. In comparison, during 2007-08, only 30 runs were necessary. Kent was early to react to the emergency ensuring that adequate stocks of salt were maintained in the face of a national shortage. It was worth noting that some serious flooding issues were managed effectively after the snow emergency in February.

(4) *White Lining*

White lining would be treated as a major priority in the first three months of 09/10 and all towns in Kent would receive a re-refresh of lines up to one km out of the town centre. A re-refresh of lines would also be undertaken where there was a high incidence of crashes. The opportunity would be taken to invite districts to request re-lining in relation to their parking responsibilities.

(5) *Kent Traffic Officers*

Good progress was reported on the establishment of Kent Traffic Officers (KTOs) who would be another key weapon in the fight against traffic congestion. Kent Police approved the County Council's draft accreditation application on 23 December 2008. Publicity on the issue commenced on 15 February. A number of training sessions had been undertaken through Kent Police, particularly relating to the use of Police Powers.

(6) *Parish Portals*

The Parish Portal was a key part of Kent Highway Services' transformation initiative and was designed to offer a full range of highways services online. "**My Kent Highways Online**" will provide the public, parish representatives, District Councils and County Members with a number of 'online services' to make access to highways services more convenient. Workshop-style seminars with parishes and county members took place on 20 and 27 February.

(7) *Staff Morale and Performance*

Positive staff morale was growing and was reflected in improving standards of customer and Member care, evidenced by the comments received from staff on a regular basis and by improved performance.

(8) Kent Highway Services was making positive progress both in its drive to become a more effective operational unit but also in terms of wider policy objectives such as congestion busting.

(9) During a lively discussion, the Chairman intervened and advised Members that he would accept only questions or comments on the Interim Director's report as

circulated. If any Member wished to raise more specific issues, the Chairman stated that he would consider these under any other business. The Chairman advised further that any formal motion should be prepared in writing and submitted to the Democratic Services Officer before any discussion took place.

(10) The Board noted the progress being made.

#### **4. Future Working Relationships with EDF**

*(Item 5 - Report by Head of Asset Management)*

*(Mr G Horne, MBE was present for this item and had requested to speak)*

(1) Members had been aware for some time of the poor performance of EDF with regard to requests for work from KHS Street lighting, both in the repair of faults as well as the provision of new connections.

(2) There had been no lack of effort from KHS staff in pursuing EDF for an improved performance but in the vast majority of cases, the chase had proved fruitless for whatever reason EDF had put forward. In the majority of cases, a lack of 'jointing resources', to make the connection from the EDF Network to the KHS streetlight system, appeared to have been the fundamental underlying problem for EDF. Demands across the south east for skilled jointers had far outweighed the number of qualified jointers available to EDF

(3) The performance indicator used by KHS with regard to EDF was "Average days to respond to streetlight faults" with a target of 30 days. For the year to date (to December '08), EDF had managed 64.7 days, from KHS records. To help Members, the performance of KHS in repairing faults had been on average for the year 4.7 days, when the work had been released to the contracting arm, against a target of 5 days.

(4) To move the whole performance effort forward, a Service Level Agreement (SLA) had been developed in joint consultation between EDF Energy Networks and representatives of Local Authority Lighting Customers and incorporated as a minimum standard the Ofgem National SLA recommendations released in October 2007 with regard to unmetered connections. Though not legally binding, the SLA outlined the minimum level of service to which EDF Energy Networks and Local Authorities would aim to work.

(5) Extracts from the SLA were set out in the Appendix to the report and gave Members a feel for the new targets for EDF for both faults and new connections, in the vast majority complying with KHS targets for EDF. Ofgem required EDF to report performance data for street lighting on a quarterly basis. The data had first to be agreed with the customers, the lighting authorities. If agreement could not be reached, Ofgem would be informed of that fact for their assessment.

(6) Performance meetings would be held on a regular basis with EDF, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annually with the quarterly meeting in place to agree the performance data that was submitted to Ofgem. The performance meetings together with project and ad hoc meetings would allow a professional and trusting working relationship to develop.

(7) To ensure that KHS transfers all required information to EDF when requesting fault repairs or new works, the new business management system being

put in place within KHS would automatically complete all necessary details to be sent to EDF thus removing any possible delays at the Kent end.

(8) The Head of Asset Management was optimistic that the SLA represented a positive and constructive way forward in improving the performance of EDF in its working relationship with KHS. At the present time, it was believed that 15 highway authorities in the EDF region had signed up with the SLA thus allowing for continuous improvement across the whole of the south east area.

(9) KHS Street lighting was now part of a South East Group of lighting authorities which included the counties of East and West Sussex and Surrey, Brighton Unitary and London Boroughs. Performance would be monitored across all authorities.

(10) As the new relationship evolved between KHS and EDF, Members would be kept up to date with all developments and performance levels. A report would also be submitted to Members on the future developments of the Street lighting service, with very progressive proposals for a developing unit.

(11) The Board noted the report which would be passed to the Cabinet Member.

**5. Capital Road Maintenance Programme 2009/10**  
*(Item 6 - Report by Head of Countywide Improvements)*

(1) The assessment of the condition of the highway network was essentially divided into two Categories: Classified (A, B and C Class) roads and Unclassified (the remainder) of the network.

*Classified Roads*

(2) The assessment of the condition of these roads was carried out using a vehicle mounted measurement system known as 'Traffic – Speed Condition Survey' (TRACS). This records cracking, deformation, riding quality and surface texture. The process was also linked to identified skid deficient sites which had been determined from a combination of crash details in wet weather conditions and the actual measurement of skid deficiency. Additional testing was used to determine whether the road would fail from heavy vehicle loading. The combination of the results was verified by site inspections and engineering judgement was used to determine the most appropriate treatment necessary to prolong the life of the road being considered, e.g. reconditioning, strengthening, resurfacing, surface dressing, etc.

*Unclassified Roads*

(3) The assessment of the condition was undertaken by driven visual inspection. Additional sites could be added from other sources such as highway inspectors, Members, the public and Parish Councils. Whereas the major road network was likely to fail from vehicle loading, the minor network was much more likely to fail from ageing. Subsequent site inspections were therefore undertaken to verify the condition and determine the most appropriate treatment.

## *Surfacing Needs*

(4) Previous priorities had been based on treatment of 'worst first' rating from the database of the condition of the network. A new process had been devised that based the treatment of the network on economic rating and prioritised roads that had been rated on a cost effective treatment basis. That was to say; if a road was in the 'worst list' this year it might deteriorate very little in the next couple of years and the treatment would be the same at the end of the period, however another road might be lower down on the 'worst list' this year but over the next couple of years it could deteriorate rapidly and if left untreated would require major works. Therefore it was more cost effective to treat these sooner than those which appeared to be in a worse condition.

(5) The current maintenance emphasis was on the reduction of reactive maintenance works, in particular on the minor network. The aim for the surfacing programme this year was to treat the roads that were more liable to need reactive treatment. It had been decided therefore, that the 2009/10 works programme would contain approximately 70% of sites that were in the Minor & Locally Important hierarchy.

(6) Significant additional funding (subject to approval) had thus been made available in 2009/10 to redress the balance. The budget for Carriageway and Footway Resurfacing for next year was likely to be set at around £20m compared with less than £10m in this year.

(7) From the sites initially prioritised, only 24 were shown as requiring Surface Dressing (in 08/09 there were over three times as many in the Surface Dressing programme). It was therefore proposed not to have a Surface Dressing programme for 09/10 but to prepare for a larger programme in 2010/11 to benefit from economy of scale and achieve better value for money.

(8) Graphs set out in the report showed the split of the programme; and a list of schemes proposed for 2009/10 was set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

(9) The Board noted the programme and recommended that work began in April.

## **6. The Transportation and Safety Package Programme 2009/10** *(Item 7 - Report by Head of Transport & Development Planning)*

(1) Kent County Council's (KCC) local transport funding for 2009/10 was determined by the Department for Transport (DfT) in November 2007 as part of its assessment and settlement announcement regarding Kent's transport strategy, the Local Transport Plan (LTP). This funding had been provided to support local transport schemes that delivered the LTP, which itself set out the County Council's approach to achieving a number of key transport objectives, including:-

- Improve access to key services by sustainable modes of transport;
- Tackle the occurrence of peak hour congestion, particularly in larger urban areas;
- Improve road safety by reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on Kent's roads;

- Improve local air quality, particularly in designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

(2) Kent's LTP funding for 2009/10 included a capital allocation of £14.752M, which consisted of borrowing approvals and grant and was specifically for the implementation of Integrated Transport (IT) schemes. Of the £14.752M, £2.600M would be used to fund detailed design and supervision of construction of 2009/10 schemes as well as forward design of 2010/11 schemes, and £2.200M was required to complete the 2008/09 programme. These included schemes which had been deferred in order to provide additional funding for maintenance in 2008/09. This resulted in a budget of £9.952M for implementation of new schemes. The allocation for new schemes in 2008/09 was £9.65M.

(3) The report provided details of the 69 schemes that made up the proposed Transportation and Safety Package Programme for 2009/10 together with a brief summary of key elements of the programme. The schemes proposed for 2009/10 were set out in the Appendix 1 to the report.

(4) The proposed Transportation and Safety Package Programme for 2009/10 had been devised using Kent's Scheme Prioritisation Methodology, PIPKIN. A report outlining the principles and a proposal to implement PIPKIN was presented to the Board in July 2006, and was approved by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste on the strength of the recommendations of this Board.

(5) All scheme proposals had been subjected to a formal assessment and prioritised in accordance with their likely impact and wider contribution towards Kent's strategic and local transport objectives. The relative merit of each scheme had been determined in comparison to others submitted in the same year. Revisions to the viability of some schemes, such as their public acceptability and their deliverability, and the inclusion of previously approved carryovers from the 2008/09 programme had resulted in a final list of 69 new schemes to be funded from the 2009/10 budget. Schemes which had not achieved sufficient priority could be resubmitted as part of the 2010/11 programme.

(6) The 2010/11 programme would be assessed using a revised scheme prioritisation system. The system was currently being developed through an informal member group and would be the subject of a future report to the Board.

(7) The proposed Transportation and Safety Package Programme for 2009/10 included:-

- (a) Funding for the development of Kent's successful Traffic Management Centre (UTMC) to new areas of Kent and targeted funding to support the evolution of UTMC in Tunbridge Wells, Gravesend, Maidstone and Canterbury (£1.025M) as well as extension and upgrading of the Kent bus tracking and real time passenger information system (£350K).
- (b) A new and innovative Kickstart Public Transport initiative (£1.627M). Bus companies were invited to submit proposals for capital funding to deliver a step change in local bus services and frequencies to support regeneration and help tackle congestion. Investment would fund new buses in Ashford including Stagecoach (10 vehicles) allowing *Line A*

to be increased in frequency from 15 to 10 minutes and low floor vehicles and frequency improvements to be cascaded to routes 3 and 5. Enhancements were also planned for route 13 from Singleton to the town centre (1 vehicle) and for Ashford E Line linking Eureka Park – Town Centre – Orbital Park (2 vehicles). The enhancements would lay the groundwork for Ashford's Smartlink network. The Eastonways 38/38A, serving the Ramsgate and Birchington areas, was to be enhanced with 2 new vehicles. 2 new vehicles were also to be provided on the 326/327 Sittingbourne to Gillingham, operated under contract to Chalkwell.

- (c) Investment in bus infrastructure to support Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) initiatives in Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Maidstone and Thanet (£0.8M). This was match funding which had levered in significant investment from bus operators in new vehicles and higher frequency services.
- (d) Investment in road safety initiatives through a targeted programme of Casualty Reduction Measures (CRMs). There were 17 schemes (£1.3M) in total with casualty reduction as their primary objective.
- (e) A smart card bus ticketing system was under development for Kent. The precursor to this was to ensure all Kent buses were equipped with Smart Card Compliant Ticket Machines. There were over 800 public buses operating in the county. This £1.0M contribution would help fund a package of new and upgraded ticket machines for operators and help bring forward the ticket machine investment programmes planned by Stagecoach and Arriva. It was proposed that the machines would also link with Kent's GPS and Real Time Passenger Information System. A pilot was planned in partnership with Stagecoach for Kent Freedom Pass holders in Thanet; it was hoped that a launch would be possible in September 2009.
- (f) A £250K investment was proposed to upgrade bus stop poles and information to passengers as part of Kent's Public Transport Information Strategy. This would complete a programme to upgrade all of the 560 most important (level 1) bus stops in Kent, it was also key to supporting a re-tendering of the Kent Roadside Infrastructure Unit.
- (g) The programme included a range of measures on the highway to support Safer Routes to School (£375K) as well as infrastructure within the school grounds including new bike shelters to support Platinum School Travel Plans (£100K). Schools received platinum status for travel plans which had been in place for more than one year and where measures in the plan were actively being implemented. The schemes were part of Kent's successful travel to school initiative which had achieved a 5% switch at primary schools from car to walking to school.
- (h) £100K was to be spent on upgrading pedestrian crossings to DDA compliancy. A further £50K was to be top sliced from the programme to introduce dropped kerbs requested through the year by the public.

(8) Many of the schemes within the programme had been developed in consultation with local stakeholders and Members. Subject to approval of the programme by the Cabinet Member, the schemes would now be reported through the Joint Transportation Boards as part of the ongoing design and consultation process.

(9) The proposed Transportation and Safety Package Programme for 2009/10 of 69 schemes detailed in the report would make an important contribution to delivering targets in Kent's Local Transport Plan: tackling congestion, improving road safety, enhancing access to local services by bus, for cyclists and pedestrians and contributing to improvements in local air quality.

(10) The Board:-

- (a) supported the proposal for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that the proposed Transportation and Safety Package Programme for 2009/10 be approved;
- (b) noted the development and application of Kent's new Scheme Prioritisation System; and
- (c) agreed that the Joint Transportation Boards receive updates on the approved schemes in their areas.

## **7. Kent Permit Scheme Update**

*(Item 8 - Report by Network Performance Manager)*

(1) The purpose of the report was to inform the Highways Advisory Board of the progress with the development and introduction of a Permit Scheme into Kent. No recommendations were required at this stage and the purpose of the report was to provide information only.

(2) Through the introduction of a Permit Scheme, Kent County Council intended to increase its powers of coordination and management of activities by works promoters competing for space or time in the street. The Traffic Management Act (TMA), under which a Permit Scheme could be applied and introduced, broadened the coordination and co-operation duties under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA). Therefore the Kent Permit Scheme was intended to make coordination and management more effective and delivered the following specific objectives:

- to improve safety – for those using, living or working on the street, including those engaged in activities controlled by the Scheme;
- to minimise the inconvenience and disruption caused by roadworks activities on people using the streets;
- to protect the structure of the street and the integrity of apparatus in it.

(3) In a wider policy context, the County Council was committed to fighting the effects of traffic congestion and this was a priority in its Towards 2010 programme.



A successful permit scheme would contribute significantly to aiding the “expeditious” movement of traffic on the highway which was a requirement under the TMA.

(4) Further to guidance from Department for Transport, the Kent Permit Scheme underwent further design and development during the last three months of 2008. The key areas of change included the production of a cost-benefit assessment, specifically for operational permitting aligned to the stated objectives. In addition, the proposed method of operation had to be adapted to meet with the national interface for electronic transfer of information between works promoters and the highways authority.

(5) As a result of the Scheme development a decision was made to enter into a third mini-consultation with the public stakeholders, including the works promoters. The consultation concluded on 12 December 2008 with an overall positive and supportive response from the stakeholders.

(6) On 14 January 2009, Kent County Council submitted an application to operate a Permit Scheme within Kent to the Secretary of State for Transport. A copy of the Kent Permit Scheme and application was also sent to the Department for Transport (DfT). The DfT undertake a review and assessment of the Scheme and make the ultimate recommendation to the Secretary of State.

(7) The application letter requested an early meeting with the DfT to discuss the Scheme and the development of the full cost-benefit assessment. This request was met with a positive response and a meeting was held on 12 February 2009 with the Head of the Traffic Management Division. Early feedback from the DfT in relation to the Kent Permit Scheme content was very positive. The project team would continue working closely with the DfT to support their review and subsequent recommendation for the legal order.

(8) A copy of the provisional Kent Permit Scheme had been published to a public facing website ([kent.gov.uk](http://kent.gov.uk)) and a generic email address had been created to receive comments and requests for information ([kent.permitscheme@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kent.permitscheme@kent.gov.uk)). The application document and associated appendix items had not been published; however members of the public, including works promoters could request the documents in writing to Kent Country Council (KCC). Any documents issued would be covered by a legal disclaimer developed through KCC Legal Services.

(9) The project to implement the Kent Permit Scheme had now moved from a design phase and was in the build and test phases.

(10) The DfT had indicated that the review process for a Permit Scheme should be four months, however to date no other Permit Scheme had been submitted and approved, so the timescale was subject to change as a result of any associated delay through clarification or development.

(11) In consideration to the above timescale, the current planned date to introduce a Permit Scheme into Kent was July 2009. Once Kent County Council had received the legal commencement order from the Secretary of State they would have to provide the works promoters with at least 4 weeks notice before introducing the Scheme. The project would complete readiness checks with the

works promoters in preparation for this to ensure the implementation of the Scheme was successful.

(12) The relationship between KHS and the works promoters within Kent remained very positive and although works promoters would be affected by the introduction of a permit scheme, they remained supportive of KCC's approach and openness with the development and introduction.

(13) The National Joint Utilities Group (*NJUG*) would remain an active member of the Kent Permit Scheme Project Board and from March 2009 Kent Highway Services would conduct monthly sessions focused on the Permit Scheme with a Stakeholder Group from the Kent HAUC (*Highway Authority and Utilities Committee*) to maintain the positive working relationships.

(14) The introduction of a Permit Scheme to Kent Highway Services was not constrained by the legal commencement order from the Secretary of State. No fees or fixed penalty notice payments would be made between the Alliance partners and Kent County Council so operational permits were viewed as an internal business process. The monitoring of permit applications, variances and any fixed penalty notices would still be reviewed and assessed. KHS intended to implement an operational Permit Scheme into the Alliance at the earliest opportunity and based on the current project timescale this should come into affect by May 2009.

(15) The project was now delivering the building and testing of IT systems, focusing upon recruitment of the new organisation and production of training and support material. The majority of business processes had been developed and accepted.

(16) The primary risk to the introduction of the Kent Permit Scheme was the DfT review and recommendation to the Secretary of State. The project team would mitigate the risk by maintaining a close working relationship with the DfT and works promoters to ensure the introduction of a Permit Scheme into Kent was managed and successful.

(17) Following the DfT's advice, the final approval would be granted by the Secretary of State.

(18) The Board noted the report.

## **8. Public Transport Developments, Funding and Initiatives** (*Item 9 - Report by Head of Transport & Development*)

(1) Public Transport was experiencing growth in Kent. The County Council had been at the forefront of developing and implementing new partnership initiatives in recent years through Kickstart funding, and had continued to work closely through its Quality Bus Partnerships (QBPs) with operators and district councils to improve local bus services. Passenger numbers had increased by some 20% over the past 5 years. In 2005/06 some 45.7 million trips were recorded, in 2006/07 48.6m trips were recorded and in 2007/08 51.7m trips. During 2008/09 a number of key initiatives had been delivered and further initiatives were planned for 2009/10. The report updated Members on progress.

(2) *Quality Bus Partnerships*

The Transport Act 2000 and the Local Transport Act 2008 provided for the establishment of Voluntary Partnership Agreements between bus operators, district councils and county councils. These were generally known as Quality Bus Partnerships (QBPs) and by the end of 2008 there were four in existence in Kent – Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells, Canterbury and Thanet. On 9 February 2009 an Ashford QBP was signed, a four-party agreement which also included the Ashford's Future Partnership Board. It was also intended to reach agreement for the signing of a Dover QBP by the end of April 2009. QBPs established close working relationships between the parties to each agreement, and aimed to improve the quality and reliability of bus services through the attainment of targets for punctuality, reliability, bus stop access and other improvements. Kent had been particularly successful at establishing QBPs and encouraging investment in Kent which had brought significant improvements in local bus services.

(3) *Bus Stop Improvements*

Kent Highway Services, in partnership with Arriva Southern Counties and Stagecoach East Kent, was implementing a programme of improvements to bus stops throughout the county. This would eventually result in every urban bus stop being provided with a 24/7 bus stop clearway (to prevent unlawful parking), a raised kerb (wherever possible) to assist the mobility impaired, a clearly branded bus stop flag, and clear tailored timetable information for the routes serving the stop. It was planned to launch a new roadside infrastructure unit contract to upgrade and maintain timetable information during 2009.

(4) *Kent Freedom Pass*

The Kent Freedom Pass scheme enabling free travel for £50 annual pass for young people living in Kent and schooled in Kent in academic years 7-11 had been expanded, with Swale and Thanet districts being added in January 2009. The final four districts – Dartford, Gravesham, Sevenoaks and Ashford – would complete the scheme in June 2009. This innovative approach had seen a significant increase in bus passenger journeys by young people. There were currently over 12,000 passes on issue and on average some 250,000 trips were made per school term month.

(5) *KCC Kickstart*

The principle of pump-priming existing bus services to improve the quality of service had been adopted by KCC, with over £1 million of capital funding for the provision of new vehicles. The main funding was awarded to Stagecoach in East Kent for their 'A-line' route in Ashford, which was launched together with other improvements and the signing of their QBP on 9 February 2009. The Ashford A line provided a 10 minute frequency service linking Stanhope and Singlewell with Ashford Station and the Town Centre. Other areas of the County were also to benefit from the initiative, which was funding new low floor easy access vehicles with other bus operators in Swale, Thanet and Sevenoaks.

(6) *DfT Kickstart*

- (a) The Department for Transport (DfT) had recently announced that it was ready to receive bids for its new Kickstart funding scheme. The

DfT was looking to pump-prime bus services which would contribute to its overall objectives of increasing bus patronage, and in particular developing bus services as an alternative to car use, bringing with it a reduction in congestion and benefits to the environment. The DfT would give consideration to bids which demonstrated improved accessibility and social inclusion, and especially schemes which made use of the new bus powers in the Local Transport Act 2008.

- (b) Bus operators in Kent had been approached by KCC with a view to submitting bids which met the DfT criteria. The two principal operators, as well as the smaller operators, had been invited to participate in the bidding process, which must be completed by 3 July 2009. It was intended to demonstrate good partnership working by submitting proposals for complimentary capital expenditure through the Transportation and Safety Package programme on roadside infrastructure improvements and, in some cases, match-funding for vehicle procurement.

#### (7) *Smartcards*

KCC was working in partnership with the Kent bus operators to roll out new Electronic Ticket Machines (ETMs) with Smartcard readers and GPS/GPRS transmitters on all service vehicles. This project would generate significant benefits to passengers and bus operators, including reduced bus stop dwell times, more effective delivery and administration of concessionary travel schemes including those for senior citizens and Freedom pass holders, and enhanced information on patronage, network performance and the identification of incidents and congestion. It was hoped that a pilot scheme would be launched in partnership with Stagecoach in Thanet from September 2009 for Freedom pass holders attending Thanet schools.

#### (8) *High Speed Rail Services*

KCC's Select Committee on Future Passenger Rail Services in Kent reported in October 2008 on the likely impact of the introduction of High Speed Rail, and other rail service changes, due in December 2009. The select committee made a number of recommendations, including the need for improved access at the stations to be served by the High Speed service. Since then, members of the KHS Transport & Development teams have met with Southeastern, the rail operator, and plans were in place for modest improvements to walking, cycling and bus access and information at these stations. A Station Travel Plan had been developed for Ashford and was due to be launched this summer. It was hoped that this would be a model for promoting sustainable travel to other stations in Kent.

#### (9) *The Kent & Medway Concessionary Travel Scheme*

KCC had provided additional funding to sustain the Kent & Medway Concessionary Travel scheme for over 60 year olds and disabled people. This had enabled pass holders to travel from 9.00 am instead of from 9.30am.

(10) *Tendered Network*

- (a) KCC had a clearly established member approved policy to determine the provision of financial support for socially necessary public transport services. This stated that the cost of any such service should not exceed £3 per passenger journey, and that the journey should provide access to one of the following services which could not otherwise be attained: education, employment, health care, or essential food shopping.
- (b) About 20% of the scheduled bus routes in the county were provided with revenue support. Tenders for the services were awarded in accordance with Best Value principles. The revenue funding for these was provided by a combination of KCC funding (£5.6 million) and by the DfT's Rural Bus Subsidy Grant (£2.3 million). Services had been sustained during 2008/09. Passenger numbers on the services were currently running at 4,149,576 trips, slightly up on last year. The County Council also now supported 9 Kent Karrier services. These services provided a combination of dial a ride and fixed routes for disabled people and for people living in rural areas away from the main bus routes.

(11) The total revenue budget allocated for supporting bus services in 2009/10 had been set at £8.381 million. £9.3 million had been allocated to fund the Kent Freedom Pass and a £0.650 million contribution was to be made to the Kent & Medway Concessionary Travel Scheme. The Kent Kickstart initiative, smartcards and bus stop improvements were covered by capital funding through the Transportation and Safety Package Programme in the Local Transport Plan.

(12) KCC continued to make significant investment, through both funding and personnel, in the creation of good quality public transport services throughout the county. The Council was committed to attaining modal shift from car to public transport, by enhancing the provision of bus services and by improving access for all. Recent initiatives such as Kickstart funding and the Freedom Pass, and new ones such as Smartcard, would continue to encourage sustainable transport options throughout Kent, thus improving the quality of life and ensuring a first-class public transport service for the residents of, and visitors to, the county of Kent.

(13) The Board noted the report and expressed support for progress.

**9. Results from the Highway Tracker Survey 2008**

*(Item 10 - Report by Interim Director, Kent Highway Services)*

(1) Satisfaction surveys, to gauge perception of the highway service had been carried out since 1987. The 2008 survey was carried out in November and December and included seeking views from residents, County Members, Parish/Town Councils and for the first time, District Members.

(2) The survey was conducted by an independent market research company called BMG and a summary of the results were presented in the report. The information would be used to help improve service delivery.

(3) A total of 1,237 face to face interviews were carried out on a representative sample of Kent residents with approximately 100 interviews, reflecting the age,

gender and economic status, in each of the twelve Districts. This sample size gave a +/- 2.78% accuracy for results at a County level and +/- 10% accuracy at a District level.

(4) In addition to residents views the same survey questions were asked of all County and District Members and Parish/Town Councils. A total of 63 County Members responded (a response rate of 75%), 193 District Members replied (a response rate of 33%) whilst for Parish/Town Councils a total of 154 completed the survey (a response rate of 50%).

(5) The questionnaire comprised over 40 questions, ranging from satisfaction with the condition of roads, pavements, streetlights and local bus and train service, the most important and most in need of improvement of the services KHS provided, through to views on congestion, accessibility to local services and vulnerability when using the highway.

(6) Results were reported by 'Net-Satisfaction'. This was a figure calculated by taking the % of people who were dis-satisfied with the service from the % who were satisfied. This gave a true reflection of the service and a balance between those happy, those un-happy and those who were not sure.

(7) The key headline from the survey was the continuing improvement in the public's perception of roads, pavements and streetlights. For the third successive year there were more residents satisfied than dissatisfied and the last two years results were shown in the Table below. More detail was set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

(8) The other key headline was the significant difference in perception between residents and County Members, District Members and Parish/Town Councils. This continued the trend over the last three years where there were significantly more members dissatisfied than satisfied with roads, pavements and streetlights, although there had been an improvement this year from the 2007 results. The results were set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

	% of residents who are . . .							
	Satisfied		Neither satisfied or dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Net satisfaction	
	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008	2007	2008
Condition of roads	51%	54%	16%	21%	32%	25%	+19%	+29%
Condition of pavements	48%	51%	17%	21%	32%	28%	+16%	+23%
Streetlights	64%	63%	15%	19%	20%	18%	+44%	+45%

(9) Overall 73% of residents were aware of Kent Highway Services prior to the interview. Whilst 28% were aware of the single 08458 247 800 number to call KHS only 14% have contacted KHS to report a problem or seek information. Of those who had contacted KHS 62% were satisfied with the response with 28% dissatisfied. This was a considerable improvement from the 2007 survey.

(10) Residents rated road repairs and cleaning drains/stopping flooding as the top most important KHS services whilst County Members rated cleaning road drains/stopping flooding, pavement repairs and road repairs as the most important with Parish/Town Councils rating road repairs and cleaning road drains/stopping flooding. District Members stated road repairs, cleaning drains and preventing flooding and pavement repairs

(11) Residents stated that the KHS services that most need improving were repairing roads and pavements and cleaning drains whilst County Members felt it was repairing roads, pavements and cleaning drains with Parish/Town Councils stating road repairs and cleaning road drains. District Members also identified road repairs and cleaning road drains. So there was strong consensus as to where improvement should be directed.

(12) In terms of congestion 33% of residents felt they were affected by peak time congestion on a daily basis which was lower than the 2007 survey. Interesting to note was that in Maidstone, where the Traffic Management Centre was now in operation, there had been a reduction from 44% to 31% of residents who felt their journey was affected by congestion on a daily basis.

(13) Responses to ways of alleviating congestion, as in previous surveys, centred around greater restrictions on roadworks and staggering school opening times.

(14) In all 60% of residents used a car to travel to work with 49% using one on a daily basis. It was recognised by 49% of respondents that KHS encouraged residents and businesses to adopt green forms of travel. Car share schemes and discounts for train/bus tickets and cheaper fares were the three strategies most likely to change people's use of the car to travel to work.

(15) In all, 54% of the public had used local bus services in the past with 71% of users satisfied with the service overall. Cost, cleanliness and comfort were reasons for dissatisfaction.

(16) There were 50% of residents who had used the train with 64% satisfied with the overall service provided. Cost, cleanliness, punctuality and frequency were the main reasons for dissatisfaction.

(17) The annual tracker survey provided a wide range of information to help shape and improve highway service delivery The tracker survey report was very large and contained much more detailed information along with an executive summary at the beginning. A full copy of the report would be available on the KCC website.

(18) The Board:-

- (a) noted the good progress being made in public perception of the highway service; and
- (b) agreed to work closely with officers to understand the concerns of Members and Parish/Town Councils demonstrated through the survey.

## 10. Progress Report on Major Capital Projects

*(Item 11 - Report by Countywide Improvements Major Projects Manager)*

(1) It was an appropriate time to update the Board on progress of the major transport and highway schemes following the last report in September 2008. It was the intention to continue to provide reports half yearly and when there were important issues to bring to Members notice.

(2) The last six months continued to be dominated by the considerable efforts of the Team in progressing the growth area schemes in Kent Thameside and Ashford within the funding and time constraints; and progressing other schemes, mainly in East Kent. There had been some considerable successes and substantive progress in this period against a backdrop of continuing change within KHS and E&R and new operating systems.

(3) **Eurokent Phases 4 & 5** was opened on time in November. The scheme had been forward funded by the County Council to facilitate future mixed use development with pay-back from the raised land values.

(4) **Fort Hill De-dualling** was completed on time in October. A Stopping Up Order for the redundant highway was successfully achieved on 6 November. Both of these aspects were crucial to allowing the Turner Contemporary construction contract to start on time. The scheme included public realm improvements to The Parade, King Street and Duke Street on behalf of Margate Renewal Partnership and these were substantially completed in February. Public Realm works to Harbour View at the entrance to Turner Contemporary and the Pier were about to start.

(5) The **Shared Space** elements of Ashford Ring Road opened in November, consistent with its revised budget and programme, so that Ashford town centre was clear of traffic management in the critical pre-Christmas trading period. The scheme had had mixed reviews but as an innovative scheme its operation and safety would be closely monitored. Newtown Road Bridge was completed in December giving a less oppressive wider span and in particular increased headroom to accommodate future Smartlink buses.

(6) The statutory orders for **Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road** were confirmed by the Secretary of State for Transport on 23 December 2008. This followed the Public Inquiry in July and had endorsed, in particular, the proposal for a low level fixed link bridge crossing of Milton Creek. All efforts were now being directed at the next stage of funding approval to enable a substantive start to be made before September 2009, within the validity period of the planning consent.

(7) The statutory orders for **East Kent Access Phase 2** were expected to be confirmed by the Secretary of State for Transport in March 2009. This followed a frustrating period over nearly 2 years, since the Public Inquiry, to secure a piece of land by voluntary negotiation for a replacement EDF sub-station that in turn allowed the orders to be confirmed. All efforts were now being directed at the next stage of funding approval to enable a substantive start to be made before September 2009, within the validity period of the planning consent. Construction tenders were invited in anticipation of the Orders decision and these were to be returned in March.



(8) **Rushenden Relief Road** had made considerable progress. SEEDA had secured replacement and compensatory ecological habitat which was a key planning condition. SEEDA had also let a contract for enabling works for its own development that included advance works for the Relief Road. The County Council had invited tenders for the Relief Road and these were returned in February and were currently being assessed. Substantial progress now needed to be made on the funding and delivery agreement with SEEDA and it was hoped that this would be concluded soon so that the County Council was able to award the construction contract in late March/early April 2009.

(9) The Board would recall the substantial claim by Union Railways/London & Continental Railways against the County Council in connection with the **South Thameside Development Route Stage 4**. The County Council was given leave to appeal against the decision, in favour of the claimants, by the President of the Lands Tribunal into Preliminary Issues. The appeal was to be heard in the Court of Appeal in the week beginning 23 March 2009.

(10) Fastrack had received further awards as follows:-

- Highways Magazine Excellence Awards 2008- Shortlisted.
- ITS UK Award for Excellence 2008 – for Fastrack’s “pioneering approach to local urban regeneration using innovative technology to completely overturn passenger perception and experience of bus transport.
- ACE Engineering Excellence Award 2008 – Transport Category.
- PTRC Bus Priority conference - Outstanding success in bus priority.

(11) **On Eurokent**, the agent for the contractor, Jackson Civil Engineering, won a Considerate Contractor award for ‘Performance beyond Compliance’.

(12) The recent and rapid down turn in the economy had made it difficult to judge the effects on construction costs and construction inflation. However, the analysis of the tenders for East Kent Access Phase 2 and Rushenden Relief Road would be of considerable assistance. A robust understanding of costs and inflation was critical because DfT funding was on a cash basis and the County Council was obliged to make judgements about inflation over the development and construction period of the project.

(13) A progress or status report on East Kent Access Phase 2, Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road, Rushenden Relief Road, A2 Slips, Canterbury, Borough Green & Platt Bypass, Operation Stack Lorry Park, other schemes and land matters was set out in the Appendix to the report. For brevity, only some of the background provided in previous reports was provided with the focus given to activity in the last half year and in the coming months.

(14) During debate questions were asked by various Members relating to East Kent Access Phase 2; Ashford Ring Road; A2 Harbledown Slip Roads; and Maidstone Bridge Gyratory Scheme. Officers undertook to provide answers to all Members after the meeting. *(A copy is appended to these Minutes).*

(15) The Board noted the report.

(16) Several Members asked if it would be possible to visit a working site. The Board agreed that a site visit to the Ashford Ring Road be arranged.

*(Note: The visit had been arranged to follow the next meeting of the Board on Tuesday, 5 May 2009)*

The Chairman agreed to take the following two additional items which were not published on the Agenda.

**11. Environment and Regeneration Directorate**

(1) Mr R F Manning moved, Mrs P A V Stockell seconded the following motion:-

“The Board records its concern that 5 months have elapsed without the re-appointment of a suitably qualified permanent Director and the effect that this could be having on staff moral and indeed the Interim Director herself. Members request that, at the next Highways Advisory Board meeting, the Board is fully apprised of the current position and how and when a permanent appointment will be made.”

*Carried 6 for, 5 against*

(2) The Chairman assured the Board that the motion would be passed to the Cabinet Member.

**12. Future Meetings of the Board**

It was agreed that future meetings of the Board would commence at 10.00am.

Responses to Questions to Major Schemes Update Report – Item 11

1. Why has East Kent Access Phase 2 (EKA2) increased in cost to £71m.

EKA2 was accepted for Programme Entry by the Department of Transport in 2006 following an earlier bid submission at an estimated cost of £64m.

The current estimated cost of £71m has been indicated in previous update reports to the Board. Some of the increase is the result of detailed design but the bulk of the increased cost is the result of delay in the programme because the statutory Orders have not yet been confirmed and construction inflation which in recent years has significantly exceeded retail prices inflation.

2. Request for a closing out Report on Ashford Ring Road

A Report will be presented to the next meeting of the Board on 5 May 2009.

3. What is the status of A2 Harbledown Slip Roads.

The Department of Transport and Highways Agency are satisfied with the principle of slip roads on the A2 at Canterbury except at Harbledown. This is because the junction spacing between the proposed slips at Wincheap and Harbledown is too short. For now, the intention is to do further traffic modelling to test the assumptions and forecasts related to the overall concept of slip roads at Wincheap, Bridge & Harbledown.

4. What is the status of Maidstone Bridge Gyratory Scheme.

Feasibility investigation has shown that the scheme to widen the Fairmeadow arm to make it 2-way would cost about £3.5m - £4m. This is mainly because of the need to rebuild the electricity sub-station as well as divert other utilities.

Achieving funding for such a scheme would be very difficult but as the gyratory is a key part of the Maidstone town centre road strategy it has been decided to do some further traffic modelling to fully understand the current situation and benefits that such an improvement might deliver before finally making a decision about the future of the scheme.

5. Request for a site visit to Ashford Ring Road for Board Members

The Committee Clerk has written to Board Members suggesting a visit on the afternoon of 5 May after the next Board meeting.