

AGENDA

HIGHWAYS ADVISORY BOARD



Tuesday, 10th July, 2007, 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. Membership - The Board is asked to note that Mr T J Birkett and Mr R Truelove replace Mr R J E Parker and Mr K Sansum
2. Substitutes
3. Minutes - 1 May 2007 (Pages 1 - 16)
4. Declarations of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting.
5. Presentation on Maintenance Funding, Potholes and an Interim Review of the Asset Maintenance Plan (Pages 17 - 18)
6. Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road - Objections to Statutory Orders (Pages 19 - 24)
7. Proposed Safety Camera, Loose Road, Maidstone (Pages 25 - 26)
8. Safety Cameras (Pages 27 - 32)
9. 2006 End of Year Crash and Casualty Numbers and Progress Against National 2010 Casualty Targets (Pages 33 - 40)
10. Priority Vehicle Lanes for HGVs, Buses and other vehicles (Pages 41 - 44)
11. Bus Roadside Publicity and Infrastructure Unit (Pages 45 - 46)
12. Sustainable Travel to School Strategy (Pages 47 - 48)
13. The Draft Local Transport Bill Consultation (Pages 49 - 50)

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)

Peter Sass
Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership

(01622) 694002

Monday, 2 July 2007

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.

1 May 2007

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

HIGHWAYS ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the Highways Advisory Board held on Tuesday, 1 May 2007 at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone.

PRESENT: Mr R F Manning (Chairman), Mr J R Bullock, MBE, Miss S J Carey, Mr D S Daley, Dr M R Eddy (substitute for Mr R J E Parker), Mr C G Findlay, Mr W A Hayton, Mr C J Law, Mr J I Muckle, Mr R A Pascoe, Mr A R Poole, Mr K Sansum, Mrs P A V Stockell and Mr R Tolputt.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Harrison-Mee, Director, Kent Highway Services; Mr D Hall, County Transportation Manager; Ms A Angeletta, School Travel Plan Adviser; Mr I Procter, Road Safety Manager; Mr A Riley, Technical Director; Mr G Tanner, Senior Transport Planner; Mr D Thomas, Procurement Manager; and the Head of Democratic Services (represented by Mrs K Mannering).

Petition

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairman formally received a petition from Mrs D Phillips, on behalf of the Safer Roads for Teston Campaign, calling for the Malling Road gateway to be brought forward ahead of other works and resurfacing on the A26.

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**1. Minutes**
(Item 2)

(1) When the Chairman sought approval of the Minutes of 6 March 2007, Mr Law referred to paragraph 8 and the lack of reference to the following:-

‘A Member suggested that officers would consider peak hour operation times only. Officers were also requested to investigate the use of this particular bus lane by HGVs in the initial period of operation. Links to Towards 2010 should be included.’

(2) At the Chairman’s discretion there followed some debate on the subject and it was acknowledged by a majority of the Members that the issue was considered, although a note was not included in the Minutes.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) subject to the inclusion of the paragraph in (1) above, the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman; and
- (b) a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Board on the wider issues relating to bus lanes.

2. Management of Highway Trees

(Item 3 – Report by Alan Riley, Technical Director, Kent Highway Services)

(Prior to consideration of the report, Members received a presentation from Alan Riley, Technical Director, Jacobs. Following a question and answer session, the Chairman thanked Mr Riley for a very informative presentation).

(1) Kent was recognised nationally as the 'Garden of England' and a safe, healthy and thriving highway tree population contributed significantly to that recognition. Public perception of the need for tree management was variable and could focus on a single issue affecting one individual to the wider issues surrounding the environment, biodiversity, and sustainability. The report outlined the approach to managing highway trees as an asset on a county wide basis by Jacobs' arboricultural team. The approach would ensure the safety of users of the highway and would develop an inventory based tree management system.

(2) Kent Highway Services (KHS) had, for some years, met its duty of care by undertaking regular inspections of highway trees (tree safety audit) and arranging for identified safety works to be carried out. The inspections were undertaken by Jacobs' arboricultural team with the resultant works arranged by KHS staff using local arboricultural contractors. Emergency tree works, routine maintenance and ad-hoc inspections requests were managed by KHS staff at divisional offices. Routine maintenance was sometimes arranged through district council contracts and no co-ordinated replanting policy was in place.

(3) The aim was to develop a consistent tree management regime across the county administered by arboricultural specialists. The management regime would be driven by a tree policy approved by Members and would provide clear objectives against which budgets could be prioritised.

(4) The tree policy would inform customers and other interested parties how Kent County Council (KCC) managed its tree stock and the objectives guiding that management. The tree policy could provide a framework for KCC and the KHS tree management practice should sit within the policy. Approval of the policy across KCC directorates would reduce risk to the Authority by ensuring a consistent approach to tree safety management and ensure environmental objectives, subject to budgetary constraints, were met.

(5) The management process would deliver a 'one stop shop' for all tree matters. It would ensure that tree issues were dealt with by tree specialists, budgets were spent in a consistent manner, and arboricultural contractors were properly assessed and managed. The process would prevent duplication of effort and ensure that tree issues and enquiries go direct to the individual best placed to deal with them.

(6) The management of trees and the associated budgets was based on inaccurate historic data. An inventory of the asset would be developed and managed electronically and would inform future management and budget requirements. The overriding objective would be to ensure the safety of the users of the highway.

(7) The tree safety audit process was carried out in accordance with a practice note that was reviewed at least annually and amended as appropriate. The practice note set out the frequency of inspections, the criteria for assigning priority levels to tree works and an internal audit process. It also detailed how trees on private land adjacent to the highway were assessed and the methodology for dealing with operational matters for both KHS and private trees. The performance against programme was audited annually

(8) All response times were monitored and would be audited against targets. This applied equally to emergency call outs and all calls received via the KHS Contact Centre. Contractor performance would be monitored against call-out times and site performance data collected by Jacobs. Emphasis would be placed on safe working practices and the training of staff and development of processes as tree work was a relatively high risk activity requiring skilled operatives.

(9) The safety of trees, the unnecessary removal of trees and the replacement of trees that had been removed raised concerns that could be alleviated by an effective communications process. The process would inform the public, Parish, Borough and County Council Members and officers of the progress of the tree safety audit and of the intention to carry out works. Where replanting could not be undertaken a reason would be given.

(10) The tree safety audit also identified private trees that might present a danger to users of the highway. Owners of the trees were contacted by letter advising them of the need to have all their trees that might affect the highway inspected by a competent person. The owners were also sent a copy of a leaflet explaining how KHS looked after trees on the highway and their responsibilities as an owner.

(11) The current paper based system used for inspections and reporting was inefficient when compared to computer based systems. The system was open to human error and variation in recording criteria. An electronic system, with the availability of time stamped records included inspection reports and response times would reduce KHS liability in the event of an incident.

(12) To achieve compatibility with existing systems the asset management software of choice was Confirm. Confirm modules, with suitable mobile hardware, would allow a tree database to be built up over time that could be used to manage reporting, consultation and implementation needs. The tree modules were compatible with other Confirm modules.

(13) The use of Confirm would result in savings from the initial inspection process through to completed works. The savings could be measured under three headings:-

- Time – Efficient collation and analysis of data, searchable parameters through user definable fields required significantly less man-hours to schedule proposed works.
- Money – Efficient data collation, improved work output, accurate allocation of budget and targeting of works in accordance with contract priority parameters.
- Environment – Less contractor driven miles as works proactively programmed in areas rather than reactive responses. Less paper usage across whole life of project.

(14) Tree management software would offer improved service delivery, customer satisfaction and a demonstrable improvement in quality of tree stock.

(15) The Board noted the preparation of a tree policy for consideration and inclusion in the Forward Plan.

(Prior to consideration of Items 4 and 5 below, Members received a presentation from Graham Tanner, Senior Transport Planner; and Annette Angeletta, School Travel Plan Advisor. Following a question and answer session, the Chairman thanked the officers for a very informative presentation).

3. Smarter Choices – 2007 Progress Report
(Item 4 – Report by County Transportation Manager)

(1) Smarter Choices was about improving sustainable travel options and encouraging people to use alternatives to the car to help tackle congestion and reduce pollution. Initiatives included travel planning (particularly with schools), improving public transport, marketing, car sharing, car clubs and tele/flexible working.

(2) Research had shown Smarter Choices contributed cost effectively to national and local priorities improving accessibility and social inclusion, encouraging regeneration, reducing pollution and carbon emissions and increasing levels of physical activity. For Kent this initiative was a key part of delivering statutory duties and policies in Travelling to School; Choosing Health, Every Child Matters, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The report provided an update on the initiatives reported to the Board on 2 May 2006 and sought continued member support for their implementation.

(3) 2006/07 had been another very successful year for improving travel to school, with a further 90 schools developing travel plans. This brought the total to 326, and equated to approximately 50% of all Kent schools. The Travel Plan team was on target to meet 100% by 2010. School Travel Plans had now secured in excess of £2 million of additional capital grants for Kent schools to spend on infrastructure within the school grounds to support their action plans.

(4) Kent's School Travel Plan initiative was funded by Government through to March 2008. It was hoped that continued funding for local authorities through to 2010 would be secured as part of the Government's spending review in 2007.

(5) The team were putting together a strategy for working with schools in 2007/08. It was now proving difficult to provide the necessary support to existing Travel Plan schools, helping them to deliver their action plans and ultimately to reduce congestion, whilst continuing to bring on new schools to keep pace with the target. As such, it was proposed to consolidate existing school travel plans in 2007/08 and review resource requirements once there was a certainty of continued funding for the initiative.

(6) For the first time this year, all Kent schools had been asked to complete information relating to mode-share on the journey to school as part of an annual census return. This would enable us to establish a clear picture of changes in travel patterns on the school-run. Data from 2006/07 would form a baseline for the LTP, against which we would set and measure targets for mode-shift.

(7) As part of funding secured to support statutory duties in the Education and Inspections Act, a Bike IT officer had been appointed in a match funding arrangement with the sustainable engineering charity Sustrans. Bike IT officers worked with schools to encourage cycling through training, teaching basic cycle maintenance skills and projects to enthuse children about cycling. Kent's new Bike IT officer would begin work with schools in the Ashford area in the summer term. Subject to the success of the scheme, which was funded initially for one year, there might be opportunities to expand into other areas.

(8) KCC's partnership with the Kent and Medway Walking Bus Group (including Medway Council) goes from strength to strength. Kent had the most walking buses of any local authority in the UK. A new robust risk assessment procedure and the appointment of a part-time walking bus co-ordinator had helped to ensure that the buses, which relied on parent volunteers, continued to be properly managed and monitored.

(9) Kent had worked with the partnership to deliver two new Walk to School initiatives including the KM Green Footsteps Challenge (often known as the 'walking bug' in recognition of the cuddly green mascot) and Walk on Wednesday (WOW), which had been championed in Thanet schools. The results of the initiatives had been impressive, leading to an average 10% shift from cars to walking at participating schools. Evidence had also suggested that behavioural changes were sustained beyond the extent of the initiative. Following the successful pilot of cluster-wide initiatives with Thanet schools, we would be working from September 2007 to raise the profile of walking to school in entire communities.

(10) In 2006 Government announced a £15 million fund to provide grants of £1,000 to state funded infant/primary schools wishing to establish or expand a walking bus scheme. Smaller £500 grants were also made available to schools wishing to take part in walk to school initiatives such as Green Footsteps and WOW. Grants were available for 3 years, subject to an annual review of progress. As a result over 131 schools were supported with successful applications, leveraging in a further £95,500 for Kent schools to spend on walk to school activities supporting them and the Kent and Medway partnership.

(11) Alongside the development of School Travel Plans, the team had continued to promote travel planning initiatives to businesses and developers. The work in this area could be reactive e.g. providing advice to a planning authority on the content of a travel plan or proactive e.g. promoting the Kentcarshare initiative to businesses across the county.

(12) A priority for 2007/08 was to establish a baseline of Travel Plans across the county, enabling us to understand the number and type of businesses currently covered by a travel plan. This would enable the provision of more effective advice and assistance, supporting and enforcing sustainable development.

(13) Establishing and delivering workplace travel plans across the county was a substantial task and was not currently resourced and funded as school travel plans. The key to delivery was partnership, both with the business community, Jacobs as part of the KHS Alliance and also other directorates/affiliates including the Kent Sustainable Business Partnership and Business Link.

(14) In January 2007 the Maidstone Car Club was launched in partnership with Streetcar, the largest operator of car clubs in the UK. The scheme currently operated with two VW Golfs in designated bays outside Sessions House and utilised web-based and Smartcard technology to book and use the cars. The key objective was to provide County Hall employees, requiring adhoc use of cars during the working day, with an alternative to driving to work at congested peak times, thus helping to alleviate congestion and parking pressures at and around County Hall. The cars were also being made available to nearby residents and businesses to help relieve parking pressures.

(15) To date about 40 employees had registered with the scheme. KHS were working hard with Streetcar, Maidstone Borough Council and the Town Centre Management Group to promote the scheme and to encourage use by local residents and businesses which would help offset the cost to KCC. Additional locations were also being sought in Maidstone and further afield to increase brand recognition and also to achieve a higher 'critical mass' which had been the key to success in other areas.

(16) Feedback from Streetcar users had been very positive, particularly in terms of the ease and efficiency of registration and booking and also the cleanliness and maintenance of the vehicles. The scheme remained a pilot initiative however, and would be kept under regular review.

(17) Kentcarshare was KCC's web-based journey matching facility, developed in partnership with Liftshare. It continued to be a flag-ship initiative for sustainable transport in Kent and had expanded well since its launch in September 2005. The scheme had over 2000 members across the county and had achieved excellent brand recognition with many people coming to appreciate that adapting their travel patterns by car-sharing on just one day a week could not only make a big difference to congestion but also saved them money.

(18) Notable recent successes included the launch of Kentcarshare by Kent Police, one of the largest employers in the county. The scheme had been developed in support of Travel Plans at their HQ and college sites on Sutton Road in Maidstone and had been personally endorsed by Chief Constable Michael Fuller in a letter to all staff. Kentcarshare was also being launched and promoted locally by Sevenoaks District Council and Gravesham Borough Council with Swale due to follow in due course. To support the developments, promotional signage in Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells had been relocated to sites in Gravesend, Sittingbourne and Ashford.

(19) KCC, in line with most other Local Authorities, had in recent years sought to capitalise on nationally recognised 'green travel' events which included National Green Transport Week. This year National Green Transport Week ran from 16-24 June. A range of initiatives were being developed including a themed week called 'Try something new' with events planned for County Hall and other KCC offices. These would address sustainable travel issues, including reducing the need to travel and opportunities for flexible working. The headline initiative for County Hall would be the 'one tonne carbon challenge' where we would be attempting to save one tonne of carbon emitted by KCC officers and Members through small adjustments to travel patterns during the week.

(20) In tandem with this Kent Businesses and local authority partners would be targeted encouraging them to emulate activities at County Hall and take part in a competition to win prizes including folding bicycles, Arriva/Stagecoach bus tickets, free environmental audits and a tree dedication as part of the Woodland Trust's Victory Wood project in Maidstone.

(21) KHS recognised the increased support for initiatives which sought to tackle carbon emissions and climate change issues in Kent and were keen to play our part, wherever possible, to contribute to the recommendations of the recent Select Committee Report and other corporate KCC targets.

(22) The success of Smarter Choices relied on developing partnerships with people and organisations across Kent. A fundamental principal of Smarter Choices was to develop and deliver highway schemes and services, which were aligned with people's travel needs. This could be achieved by continuing to engage with the public and other stakeholders to raise awareness and ownership, leading to the development of effective schemes that delivered real behavioural change.

(23) Smarter Choices gave Kent an opportunity to make good progress towards improving access, tackling congestion and delivering sustainable development as defined in the LTP2. The plan built on good practice and was achievable and cost effective.

(24) The Board noted the good progress being made and continued to support the delivery of the programme.

4. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 and Implications for Kent County Council

(Item 5 – Report by County Transportation Manager)

(1) The Education and Inspections Act 2006 contained within it a number of new requirements and statutory duties for Local Education and Transport Authorities. Some of

these related to arrangements for transporting children to and from school/college and the promotion of sustainable transport options to pupils and parents.

(2) The Act introduced four new elements for local authorities:-

- (a) duty to promote sustainable travel modes for travel associated with education,
- (b) an expansion of travel support to low income families,
- (c) the making of suitable travel arrangements for 'eligible children' in a LA's area, and
- (d) opportunities for School Travel Pathfinders.

(3) These could be grouped into two broad areas: one related to eligibility criteria for free school transport and the second to developing, publicising and promoting sustainable travel options. The report outlined the new duties and the steps being taken to address them within KCC.

(4) The Act included provisions which extend school transport rights for children from low-income groups — those who were eligible for Free School Meals or whose parents were in receipt of Maximum Working Tax Credit.

(5) From September 2007, extended rights for pupils from low-income groups aged 8-11 came into force. The Act placed a duty on local authorities (LAs) to provide free transport to their nearest suitable school more than 2 miles from their home (the current cut-off was 3 miles). DfES would be providing up to £5 million per year, nationally, to authorities to fund the additional provision.

(6) From September 2008, LAs would be under a duty to provide pupils from low-income groups with transport to any one of 3 nearest schools between 2 and 6 miles from their home, and to the nearest suitable school preferred on grounds of religion or belief up to a distance of 15 miles from their home. Government funding would build to more than £45 million per year to LAs to fund the additional provision. Responsibility for delivery against the elements of the Act fell to the CFE Head of Admissions and Transport.

(7) The Act also placed a duty on LAs to promote sustainable travel and transport. The duty applied to all school children and young people of 6th form age, including those resident and receiving education or training in the authority's area and those not resident but who travel within the authority's area to receive education or training.

(8) The duty related to journeys to and from institutions (including attendance at pre- and after-school activities) and journeys between institutions during the day. Journeys might be to, from or between schools (including independent schools), further education institutions, and other institutions where education or training might be delivered. There were four parts to KCC's responsibility to promote sustainable travel modes; these, together with proposed actions to deliver against them, were explained in more detail in the report.

(9) The County Council was already very well positioned to deliver against this objective as a great deal of work was already being done with schools and colleges to promote sustainable transport. Additional funding would assist KCC in expanding work in future years. Initiatives included:-

- Kent Freedom Pass pilot for 11-16 year olds
- Walking buses – continued support for the Kent and Medway Walking Bus Group

1 May 2007

- Walk to School Initiatives – development and expansion of the Green Footsteps Challenge and WOW
- Cycle to school initiatives – Bike IT officers
- Kentschoolrun – the sister initiative of Kentcarshare
- Junior Travel coordinator schemes – pupil travel representatives

(10) Government was making an additional £4 million pa available to local authorities to support the new requirements, of which Kent could expect to receive circa. £112,000 pa. The funding was likely to be fully allocated against the delivery of the above initiatives in 2007/08 and to support additional staff resources in future years.

(11) KCC's Travel to School Steering Group had been expanded to reflect the new duties contained within the Education and Inspections Act, together with increasing interaction and cross-over between policies and initiatives impacting on the delivery of transport and education services. This included the Kent Freedom Pass, staggered school hours, the new 14-19 agenda and Extended Schools. The new Steering Group drew in stakeholders from CFE, KHS and Transport Integration to ensure that all initiatives were delivered as part of a joined up strategy. The Steering Group would be jointly accountable to the Cabinet Members for Environment, Highways & Waste; and Education and School Improvement.

(12) The final element of the Act related to opportunities for Pathfinder schemes. In response to criticisms of the policy, conflicts around the walking distance criteria for free school transport and the lack of account of parental preference, DfES was offering opportunities for local authorities to apply for Pathfinder status, to consider the needs of all pupils in their area. Pathfinder authorities would test innovative solutions in their area to promote sustainable travel and encourage less use of the car.

(13) Whilst Pathfinder authorities would have to continue to make arrangements for 'eligible children' (those currently receiving free travel and children from low income families), other measures would be expected to go well beyond the minimum.

(14) Up to 20 Pathfinders were likely to be selected, these could be individual or joint with other LA's and arrangements would have to be introduced in 2009 for a period of 4 years. Each authority could receive up to £200k pump priming money. Also, Government would make up to £12 million pa available across the pilot schemes to help fund the initiatives. To be a Pathfinder authority, charges must be made (except for children on low incomes or those in receipt of free travel at the start of the scheme). A charge of £1.00 per day might be considered in any scheme and the income must be hypothecated to reinvest in transport services.

(15) Kent had confirmed interest in being considered as a Pathfinder authority, potentially in support of the Kent Freedom Pass project. However the timings for this were not ideal given that a full bid needed to now be developed in time for substantial consultation with stakeholders and other interested parties before a final bid was submitted by 30 November 2007. The schemes were to start in September 2009 when the Kent Freedom Pass was planned to go countywide, subject to the success of the current pilot.

(16) The Board noted the contents of the report, and endorsed the proposed way forward to deliver against key requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

5. Local Public Service Agreement 2 (Road Safety)
(Item 6 – Report by County Transportation Manager)

(1) Following the highly successful PSA1 project that ended in December 2003, Kent County Council launched the PSA2 project in October 2004. The aim of the PSA2 project was to achieve the major element of the 2010 national road casualty reduction targets which was a 40% reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured by 31 December 2007. This challenging target was being addressed by a partnership of key players drawing on the contribution of their particular skills and resources. The purpose of the report was to provide an update on progress to date, an overview of activities undertaken so far and plans for the remainder of the project, and beyond.

(2) Monitoring of crash and casualty data was an on-going process, however, the long term view enabling comparisons of annual trends and patterns provided the most valuable insight of overall progress toward the target, what worked and importantly what did not.

(3) Fully validated crash and casualty data would be reported to the Board separately. However, the available data indicated that there was a good chance of reaching the PSA2 target by December 2007. The Road Safety team and their partners would be intensifying their activities throughout 2007 to ensure that the target was not missed. Plans for the remainder of the project were set out in the report, and were based on KHS research findings that identified which of the measures previously deployed were most effective.

(4) The approach to the project had been to integrate the known benefits of education, enforcement, engineering and evaluation. The main thrust of the Road Safety team's work had been in public education through a programme of countywide publicity campaigns, proactive press and public relations and public engagement projects involving Road Safety Officers in the field. These activities were in addition to planned public education work. A co-ordinated approach between public education and planned programmes of engineering work ensured that added value was gained during localised projects. We also liaised with Kent Police to identify shared priorities and plans wherever possible, and worked together in joint initiatives whenever it was appropriate to do so.

(5) The findings of recently commissioned research gave an indication of the publicity campaigns, messages and methods that had been best received by the public. Perhaps more importantly the research told what had had least effect. Combined with the crash and casualty data studies, we were better able to determine:-

- What were the main areas of concern?
Main areas of concern were dangerous and illegal speed, road user impairment, and lack of awareness.
- What was the most appropriate form of intervention?
To continue delivering a strategy of public education, in addition to existing programmes of work.
- Which sector of the community did we need to engage with?
Drivers, employers, motorcyclists.
- What should the key messages be?
Messages that addressed the main concerns, dangerous and illegal speed, road user impairment and lack of awareness.
- How did we best deliver them?

Through a programme of public education including publicity campaigns and public engagement activities.

Appendix A of the report showed the planned publicity campaigns and public engagement projects to March 2008.

(6) It was recognised that we were capable of achieving the PSA2 project target but this was not a foregone conclusion. However, the plan set out in Appendix A was well conceived based on thorough research, adequately funded and would be energetically delivered.

(7) Achievement of the PSA2 target on 31 December 2007 did not remove the requirement to meet the national casualty reduction targets for 2010 set out by HM Government in 2000 (Tomorrow's Roads - Safer Roads for Everyone, the Government's road safety strategy and casualty reduction targets for 2010, Dept. of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2000). The targets were, by 2010, and based on the average figures for 1994 to 1998, to at least achieve:-

- A 40 % reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road crashes.
- A 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured.
- A 10% reduction in the slight casualty rate, expressed as the number of people slightly injured per 100 million vehicle kilometres driven.

(8) There was a risk that we would not be able to sustain the casualty reduction achieved between 2000 and 2007. It was important that the Road Safety team was able to maintain an adequately funded programme of public education beyond the PSA2 project, thereby reinforcing previous work and increasing the potential to meet the 2010 national casualty reduction targets. Work was underway to produce a plan to direct priorities and strategies up to 2010 and to identify appropriate funding sources.

(9) During debate Mr Bullock acknowledged the role and support of the Fire Service.

(10) The Board noted the information contained within the report and its appendix.

6. Temporary Street Furniture

(Item 7 – Report by Director, Kent Highway Services)

(1) The Traffic Management Act, which received Royal Assent in July 2004, required Highway Authorities to enable the expeditious movement of all traffic on the road network. In November 2004, the Government issued the Network Management Duty Guidance, which described how an Authority should meet the requirements of the Traffic Management Act 2004. As part of the Network Management Duty the local Highway Authority was tasked with ensuring that temporary street furniture did not create congestion or a disturbance on the public highway and that the needs of all traffic including pedestrians, paying particular attention to the visually and mobility impaired, was taken into account.

(2) In the County of Kent, the obligation rested with the Kent County Council (KCC), as Highway Authority, and the owners of any features or structures on the highway. Private sector traders had no powers to place temporary street furniture on the highway but under the Highways Act 1980, both KCC and local district/borough authorities had powers to grant licences to others to legitimise the placing of private sector features such as tables and chairs. The powers also existed to remove furniture under the same Act and the Town Police Clauses Act 1847.

(3) KCC wished to encourage the provision of amenities on the highway where they were consistent with the protection of the public and where they would not be disruptive. The KCC was very keen to stimulate a 'café culture' to improve the town centre areas in a general move towards a vibrant 21st century environment where external 'pavement' dining using furniture placed on highway and public land could be a vital part of the life and character of the area.

(4) In order to meet the requirements of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the associated Network Management Duties it was necessary to put a Policy into place to ensure both the effective management of temporary street furniture on the public highway and a consistent approach across the County. The Policy would be adhered to by both KCC and any local district/borough authority who, with the agreement of KCC, wished to issue licences for temporary street furniture within their administrative boundaries.

(5) The Policy would set out the processes to be considered when applying for a licence to place temporary street furniture on the public highway. It would also outline the criteria that must be considered by an applicant, the good practice that should be followed and the conditions to be adhered to by the applicant. The Policy would illustrate all pre-application considerations and lay down the necessary procedures to be followed when applying for a licence for temporary street furniture.

(6) The Board:-

- (a) supported the proposal for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that approval be given to the publication of the Policy for the Location and Licensing of Temporary Street Furniture on the Public Highway; and
- (b) requested clarification of the formal decision-making process (Report back after going to JTBs).

7. Results from the Tracker Survey 2006

(Item 8 – Report by Director, Kent Highway Services)

(1) Residents satisfaction surveys, to gauge public perception with the highway service had been carried out since 1987. At the Board in September 2006 approval was given to undertake an annual tracker survey that also included seeking the views of County Members and Parish/Town Councils. The results of the first of these annual surveys was presented in the report. The information would be used to help improve service delivery.

(2) A total of 1268 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. The sample size gave a +/- 2.75% accuracy for results at a County level and +/- 10% accuracy at a District level.

(3) In addition to residents views the same survey questions were asked of all County Members and Parish/Town Councils. A total of 21 County Members returned completed questionnaires (a response rate of 25%) whilst for Parish/Town Councils a total of 162 returned completed questionnaires (a response rate of 54%). This was the first time the same survey had been used for all three groups.

(4) 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.

(5) The key headline from the survey was the significant improvement in the public's perception of roads, pavements and streetlights. For the first time since 1987 more residents were satisfied with the condition of roads, pavements and streetlights than dissatisfied. Whilst there remained around 40% of residents dissatisfied with the condition of roads and pavements there were 45% who were satisfied, leading to the small difference, but significant improvement, from all previous surveys. The last survey undertaken in 2005 indicated over 50% dissatisfied residents with only 30% satisfied. The public view of streetlights whilst again having more people satisfied than dissatisfied had dropped back slightly from previous years with 59% satisfied compared to 27% dissatisfied in the 2006 survey.

(6) The other key headline was the significant difference in perception between residents and County Members and Parish/Town Councils. Over half of County Members were dissatisfied with the condition of roads and pavements compared to around a quarter who were satisfied. For streetlighting however almost a half were satisfied compared to nearly a third who were dissatisfied. Similarly over a half of Parish/Town Councils were dissatisfied with the condition of roads and pavements compared to around a quarter who were satisfied. The pattern was again similar for streetlights where nearly half of Parish/Town Councils were happy with streetlights compared to a quarter who were dissatisfied.

(7) There was clearly a big difference between the perceptions of residents and County Members and Parish/Town Councils and this would be an issue to explore in the coming months and review again following the next survey in November 2007.

(8) Other issues emerging from the survey were:-

- Overall 64% of residents were aware of Kent Highway Services prior to the interview. Whilst almost a quarter were aware of the single 08458 247 800 number to call about a highway problem only one in ten had needed to contact KHS to report a problem.
- Residents rated road and pavement repairs as the top two most important KHS services whilst Members felt it was road repairs and congestion, with Parish/Town Councils stating road repairs and clearing drains as the top two priorities.
- In terms of congestion 63% of residents felt they were affected by peak time congestion on a weekly basis compared to 90% of County Members and 71% of Parish/Town Councils. Interestingly 76% of residents, 52% of County Members and 74% of Parish/Town Councils stated that using a car or van was their main method of travelling to and from work.
- In the wider transport role of KHS 53% of the public felt they could access a GP surgery within 30 minutes by using public transport compared to 38% of County Members and 20% of Parish/Town Councils.

(9) The annual tracker survey provided a wide range of information to help shape and improve highway service delivery.

(10) The Board :-

- (a) noted the good progress being made in public perception of the highways service;

(b) agreed to work closely with officers to understand the concerns of County Members and Parish/Town Councils demonstrated through the survey; and

(c) agreed to encourage Members to respond to the next survey when it was sent out in November.

8. Local Transport Plan for Kent – Budget Allocation Model and Scheme Prioritisation Methodology

(Item 9 – Report by County Transportation Manager)

(1) A detailed report on a new scheme prioritisation methodology for Transport and Safety Packages, PIPKIN, was presented to the Board in July 2006. Members accepted that a more robust methodology was required in order to ensure that future funding priorities met the County Council's key strategic objectives.

(2) A further report to the March 2007 meeting of the Board set funding priorities for the expenditure of the £7,239,000 Transport and Safety Package Programme for 2007/08. The report described the funding allocation using the Design Guide Model (DGM) as an interim measure before PIPKIN came into full effect for 2008/09.

(3) The Transport and Safety Package Programme would be formulated by May 2007. Every scheme would be given a priority ranking through PIPKIN and the information would be reported to Joint Transportation Boards during the summer of 2007.

(4) The County Council regularly received requests from members of the public for schemes which, in their view, improved the management of traffic flows, improved access to key services or improved air quality in their area. This often resulted in a scheme being designed, some of which were never built because there was insufficient funding.

(5) Local input into traffic management was encouraged and desirable. However, in order to ensure the best value for money from scarce financial resources, the County Council had devised a prioritisation model (PIPKIN) based upon the scheme's contribution to safety, congestion reduction and public transport use. The model had been formally agreed by Members.

(6) In order to ensure that all staff were able to provide a consistent message to scheme promoters, it was recommended that the following procedure should be adopted:-

If a promoter identified a scheme for inclusion in the Integrated Transport Programme (ITP), the following process could/should be followed:-

- The support of the local community should be encouraged to establish whether the scheme was widely supported as a local need.
- If an appropriate level of support was provided by the local community, the applicant should submit his scheme proposals to the Divisional Office, and if County Officers had no immediate/initial professional concerns related to the feasibility/delivery/construction of the scheme, it would be included in a Contenders List and presented to the relevant JTB for their consideration/advice/debate.
- The JTB would assist KCC in the identification of schemes, using the Contenders List. From this list, a draft ITP would be established and would be put forward for formal PIPKIN assessment.
- PIPKIN assessment was undertaken for all schemes (for all 12 Districts) and a Countywide list of schemes would be produced in priority (PIPKIN) order. The decision whether to include the applicant's scheme in the Draft County Programme would depend on

its relative importance/position based on the countywide PIPKIN assessment and its position relative to the level of funding available for that year. PIPKIN would flag up those schemes that promoters and/or officers identified as having a deliverability risk.

- Schemes that were prioritised above the cut-off line would be identified and would form the Final Draft County Programme and would be presented to HAB for their recommendation to the Cabinet Member to approve and reported to JTB for their information.
- Once approved, the high priority schemes would be designed in detail, ready to commence construction from 1 April and other priority schemes would be designed and implemented in due course, but designed within that financial year.
- Those schemes that fell below the cut off line, and that were deemed to be either locally or politically important, could be resubmitted for assessment in the following year.

(7) The Board supported the proposal for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that the policy statement set out in paragraph (6) above be approved.

9. The Future of Interactive Speed Limit Signs *(Item 10 – Report by County Transportation Manager)*

(1) Interactive speed signs were first introduced in Kent in 2000 when five signs were installed. In 2001, a further 15 signs were installed and following this the County Council developed a forward programme which ranked prospective signs in priority order based on reported injury crashes and recorded speeds. A criteria was developed and reported to Members in November 2005. Over 100 interactive speed signs had now been installed across the County. The forward programme, which was funded through the Transportation and Safety Package budget (ten signs per year), had been supplemented by additional funds from Parish Councils, Members, and developers so that over the last three years more than 20 sites per annum had been installed.

(2) The signs seemed to attract universal praise, however, with over 100 signs now operational in the county it was time to evaluate their role in reducing speed and crash levels and that more importantly the speed reduction had been maintained. Consultants (Jacobs) were therefore commissioned to carry out a study into the first 20 signs, updating a previous study which had only considered speed.

(3) The study showed that all 20 signs had reduced speed with only minor increases shown between the speed checks taken immediately after implementation and those taken some 6 years later. Moreover the average crash levels at the sites fell by over 30%. More detailed information was shown in Appendix 1 of the report. The conclusion was that the signs had proved very successful in their objective to reduce speed and injury crashes. The report indicated that the success arose from the careful site selection process undertaken at the time and used to produce the site location criteria/priority assessment process used in the production of the forward programme.

(4) With over 100 sites now implemented it was important to ensure that those that followed were as effective as the early sites and that care was taken not to undermine that success by introducing signs with little or no justification. The site location criterion remained robust and must be retained. Where it was felt that a site which clearly did not meet that specification might be justified, then a case for its implementation must be made to the Board giving a clear rationale for significantly departing from the agreed criteria.

There was evidence to show that where signs had been erected at sites which did not meet the criteria, little or no improvement had been achieved. This could also undermine the value of the signs more generally.

(5) Interactive signs had had a very good maintenance record. However the first signs were approaching their seventh year and at some stage in the future either individual signs or all signs implemented in one year would need to be replaced. In addition advances in technology meant that the signs could do more than just flash a warning sign at passing motorists so more advanced applications could be considered. In future TSUK would undertake the procurement of the signs and associated maintenance.

(6) The current formula for the priority assessment of interactive signs considered both the number of crashes, their severity with high scores for KSI's and the rate per km past the proposed location of the sign. To this was added the difference between the recorded 85th percentile and the posted speed limit of the road. In future, where potential sites achieved a score of less than 15, or where the 85th percentile was already within 3 mph of the posted speed limit they should not be considered appropriate unless there were additional reasons such as the site being close to a school or an old people's home. In such cases a clear statement as to the objectives behind the introduction of a sign needed to be set out.

(7) Over the last few years signs had been suggested at locations where the distance between the start of the limit and sign was too short and the site location criteria could not be met. In such cases it had been suggested that the speed limit terminal signs were merely moved further away into the countryside. The extended limit would not be acceptable to Kent Police as it would not comply with the rules set out in "Circular Roads 1/2006". It would add to sign proliferation in rural areas and it would lead to drivers ignoring what they would see as inappropriate speed limits. This was not best practice and should be avoided.

(8) The introduction of interactive speed signs in the county had been shown to produce significant reductions in speed and crash levels. However it was important that further signs were installed in such a way that the benefits continued and that the work so far carried out was not undermined by the implementation of signs with no identifiable benefits. A further report giving details of a demonstration project using speed indicting devices (SID's) would be placed before members in July.

(9) The Board supported the proposals for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that:-

- (a) the success of interactive speed signs as identified in the recent Jacobs report be noted; and
- (b) the requirement to consult the Board where it was felt that an interactive speed sign should be implemented despite not being in line with KCC policies, be agreed.

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Presentation on Maintenance Funding, Potholes and an Interim Review of the Asset Maintenance Plan

A report by the Divisional Manager, East Kent to the Highways Advisory Board on 10th July 2007.

1. The HAB presentation will explain to the Board Members some of the pertinent changes that have been implemented this year to improve KHSs approach to cyclic maintenance.
 2. The main points of discussion will be a change of approach to street lighting faults, which has already seen a dramatic decrease in outstanding faults; targeting of specific maintenance activities to achieve an approach to maintenance which allows the optimum balance between the efficiencies of planning work and the need to be responsive to our customers. This is primarily in the field of potholes, patching, signs & lines, safety fencing and gully emptying.
 3. There will also be an explanation of the need to target 'safety critical maintenance' as a priority, enabling KHS to provide evidence of a risk based approach to maintenance.
 4. A presentation about the need to review the HAB approved policy of highway maintenance will explain the gap between policy statements, available budget and vision of how maintenance should be undertaken. The presentation will be a forerunner to a paper at the next HAB which will seek authority for an interim policy on the asset maintenance plan.
 5. Finally, the presentation will explain the issues surrounding potholes and the way in which they occur and the complexities of repairing. The presentation will discuss the issues of materials, traffic management, cost and volume; there will also be a look at the possible future of pothole repairs.
-

Accountable Officer: Matthew Sims (01227) 825359

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Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road Objections to Statutory Orders

A report by the Capital Programme Manager to the Highways Advisory Board meeting on 10th July 2007.

Introduction

1. In December 2005, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Supporting Independence took the decision, following public consultation, to progress the scheme known as Alternative Route B. The Officer recommendation was for Alternative Route A and Members of the Highways Advisory Board were split equally in their views between the two options. The adopted route was strongly opposed by M-Real New Thames Ltd and M-Real Sittingbourne Ltd, who own Kemsley Mill, and the adjacent and associated private sector interests of Fletcher Challenge Industries, Rexam Property Developments and Kemsley Fields Ltd who were now all directly affected (all referred to for ease in this Report as 'the Mill'). They saw no basis for departing from the established proposals and affecting their existing and future interests to the benefit of residents of new housing development in the Recreation Way area. See Figure 1.
2. The adopted scheme has been progressed and it achieved planning consent in September 2006. The Mill retained their strong opposition to the scheme. The Compulsory Purchase Order, Side Roads Order and the S106 Scheme for the Milton Creek Crossing were published in February 2007. The Mill again retained their objections to the Compulsory Purchase Order and Side Roads Order and submitted formal statutory objections. There were 27 objections to the S106 Scheme.

Compulsory Purchase and Side Roads Order

3. The normal process would now be for the Secretary of State to instruct a Public Inquiry following the advice of the County Council on a suggested venue and dates. At the Inquiry the County Council would present evidence to convince the Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State, of the merits of the scheme. This can be done and a robust case can be presented. However, there are a number of aspects that need to be considered in view of the continued and sustained objections of the Mill. These can be summarised as follows:
 - The Mill is a long standing, major employer and contributor to the economy of the town.
 - A key purpose of the scheme is to support existing businesses and future regeneration.
 - The scheme reduces the length of storage available for in-bound HGV's on the approach to the Mill and the weighbridge.
 - The scheme takes land from that designated in the Local Plan for a possible future paper making mill – while the land take is relatively small, paper mills are long linear production lines and any loss of land is considered significant by the Mill.
 - The Scheme encroaches onto land that the Mill is seeking to have designated in the Local Plan for commercial development.
 - The route of the Relief Road is long established and pre dates residential development in the immediate area and particularly Recreation Way.
 - Owners of the houses would have acquired the properties in the knowledge of the proposals for the Relief Road.
 - The Officer recommendation was for Alternative Route A.

Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road Objections to Statutory Orders

Discussion

4. Officers have maintained contact with the Mill to better understand the operation of the mill, their objections and to challenge their validity. While their initial reaction to the chosen route was understandable, the objections have not lessened with time. Many of the objections can be tested by simple inspection and others are related to the history of the Relief Road and local development. The issue of the impact on a future paper making mill is harder to judge without a concept design however it cannot be denied that the site is constrained by a pylon to the north and Ridham Avenue to the south and any loss of land however small could be a concern.
5. The availability of compulsory powers of acquisition is a powerful facility available to local authorities. Compulsory Purchase Orders are not confirmed lightly and there is stringent scrutiny where there are statutory objections. As part of this process at Inquiry, an Inspector might reasonably ask if there was a compromise solution. In view of the sustained objections from the Mill and in anticipation of the public inquiry, investigations have been carried out.
6. The fundamental objectives were to see if an amended junction arrangement was possible at Ridham Avenue that would:
 - Avoid landtake from the site identified for a future paper making mill.
 - Maximise the length of road available for the storage of HGV's entering the Mill.
 - Keep the basic alignment of the Relief Road route on the east side of the overhead electric power line to try and maintain distance from the houses in Recreation Way that was a key reason for the Cabinet Member's decision to adopt Alternative Route B.
 - Reduce the landtake where the Mill has commercial development aspirations.
7. Three options have been considered.

Option A – Relocating the roundabout and centred on the pylon. – Drawing no. 4568/WD/86RevA and Fig. 2.

This avoids critical land take and increases HGV storage. It is a conventional roundabout layout.

Option B – Extending the existing roundabout into a lozenge shape enclosing the pylon - Drawing no. 4568/WD/87RevBO and Fig 3.

This avoids critical land take and maximises HGV storage. It lengthens the junction which would probably be a concern to residents. Its unconventional layout is a slight concern with the risk of faster traffic on the straight sections.

Option C – Extending the existing roundabout along Ridham Avenue into a lozenge shape – Drawing no. 4588/WD/88RevO and Fig. 4.

This option involves the least change from the current scheme but is not favoured. It still requires land from the future mill site and is physically constrained by the power line pylon making it difficult to achieve the Relief Road and Mill entrance link connections in the space available.

Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road Objections to Statutory Orders

8. If an amended scheme is to be proposed then it is a choice between Option A and Option B. Option A is to be preferred because it is a conventional layout and has least increased impact on residents of Recreation Way. There will be a slight increase in noise levels although a noise bund topped by a noise fence will help to mitigate the effects. In noise assessment terms 3 properties are predicted to have a noise increase of just over 3dB(A) but still well below the 68dB(A) threshold whereby noise insulation would be offered.
9. If an amended scheme is promoted then the residents of Recreation Way in the immediate area of the relocated roundabout can be expected to be concerned. If such a scheme is pursued then they may object to the revised planning application that will be required and in due course may become non-statutory objectors to subsequent statutory Orders.
10. The Mill support the concept of the Relief Road and are frustrated that they feel obliged to object to the current scheme in order to protect their operational, financial and commercial interests. In 'without prejudice' discussions they have indicated that while they continue to believe that Alternative Route A should have been adopted and would argue this at Inquiry, they would be willing to support Option A because it goes a significant way to addressing their concerns. Support for Option A is however conditional because they are very concerned about the potential Land Compensation Act Part 1 liability in respect of the Kemsley Fields element of the Relief Road that requires to takes account of the future use of the full Relief Road. This is a difficult issue to resolve and for now I can only give a commitment to discuss this concern with them to see if there is any equitable solution that can be considered. Despite this issue, it is not directly related to the fundamental operational and land use objections and I consider that there would be more confidence in defending the compromise layout offered by Option A at any future Public Inquiry.
11. In regard to other issues, if the land south of the Mill is accepted by the Local Plan Inspector for commercial development then under any scheme scenario it is unlikely that access would be acceptable off Ridham Avenue. In that eventuality it is accepted that access will be required from a 'T' junction directly off the Relief Road. In the event that the retained land between the Relief Road and Recreation Way has development potential then under any scheme scenario it would be possible for access to be provided from the roundabout as a fourth arm.
12. Swale Borough Council is keen for the Relief Road to proceed to support the immediate need and on-going regeneration of the town. It has informally indicated that it would support a compromise scheme and preferably Option A.

S106 Scheme

13. The S106 Scheme provides for a fixed link bridge and an air clearance of 4.2m above Mean High Water Spring tide levels. The proposal has been the subject of public consultation and was reported to this Board in January 2006. Of the 27 objections, 17 are from individuals with boating interests and 7 are from representatives of boating organisations. The objections are generally that an opening bridge should be provided because the fixed link will deny access to yachts, limit the regeneration and tourism opportunities and fail to acknowledge the key role that Milton Creek played in the history of Sittingbourne.

Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road Objections to Statutory Orders

14. The reality is that the Creek is little used and an opening bridge has a high extra-over capital cost and in particular an annual ongoing operation and maintenance revenue cost. Up until now, these have been subjective statements based on experience and objectors have expressed concern that these have not been substantiated. It was acknowledged that further research would be required in any event to present as evidence at an Inquiry and that this would be shared with objectors. Our consultant, Jacobs, has produced a draft Report that indicates that an opening bridge would have an increased capital cost of between £3.5 – 4.0m and a revenue cost of between £30,000 - £90,000, depending on the number of openings per annum, that would equate to an equivalent extra-over commuted sum provision of £0.8m to £2.3m. The maintenance costs of a fixed link are relatively negligible in this context.
15. The concerns of the objectors are well known and understood but existing use is minimal and any recent increased use has probably been generated by the threat of the proposal. Future potential use is not really supported by local policy framework or emerging development proposals. The Relief Road is an expensive scheme and cannot support the increased median cost of about £5.0m.
16. The conclusion has to be that the proposed S106 Scheme for the fixed link should continue to be promoted. In any event, it would be desirable to republish the S106 Scheme because of a technical error in the Order drafting.

Proposed Way Forward – Compulsory Purchase Order and Side Roads Order

- (a) The Board support the concept of a compromise junction arrangement at Ridham Avenue with a preference for Option A.
- (b) The Mill and the other private sector interests are consulted with the expectation that they will give conditional support to Option A.
- (c) The residents of the Recreation Way area are informed about the reasons for the change to the proposals and invited to make comments.
- (d) The Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste is then invited to take a formal decision.
- (e) On the presumption that the decision is for a compromise junction arrangement an amended or new planning application will be submitted.
- (f) Subject to achieving planning consent, revised Orders will then be published.

Proposed Way Forward – S106 Scheme

- (a) The Board notes the draft Bridge Report and the view that the proposed scheme for a fixed link should continue to be promoted.
- (b) The objectors to the Scheme are invited to a briefing on the draft Bridge Report and given the opportunity to make further comments.
- (c) The Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste is invited to take a formal decision on the form of the bridge crossing prior to the republication of the s106 Scheme.

Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road Objections to Statutory Orders

Local County Member

16. The local County Members have been consulted on the Report and particularly the compromise option aspects at Ridham Avenue and any views will be reported at the Board meeting. They will also have the opportunity to comment before the Cabinet Member takes the decision.

Programme

17. The Relief Road is an important scheme for Sittingbourne and it is important that progress is made quickly and any further slippage avoided.

18. It would be the objective for the consultation on the compromise layout at Ridham Avenue to be conducted by letter with a response time of two weeks so that the Cabinet Member is in a position to take a decision at the end of July.

Finance

19. There are no immediate financial implications. The works costs of a compromise junction are comparable to the proposed scheme. The land costs can be expected to be less with a compromise scheme that has the support of the private sector although this will be offset in part by likely increased Land Compensation Act Part 1 liability to residents of the Recreation Way area.

20. Clearly if any decision was taken to promote an open bridge crossing of Milton Creek then this would have significant cost and funding implications.

Recommendation

21. Subject to the view of this Board it is proposed to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste that the proposals outlined above under 'The Way Forward' are approved.

Contact Officer: John Farmer (01622) 69 6881 john.farmer@kent.gov.uk

Background Documents:

Ridham Avenue Compromise Options – on display.

Option A – Drawing No. 4568/WD/86RevA.

Option B – Drawing No. 4568/WD/87RevA.

Option C – Drawing no. 4568/WD/88RevO.

Milton Creek

Moving Bridge Investigation – Jacobs Draft Report April 2007

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Proposed Safety Camera, Loose Road, Maidstone

A report by the Director of Kent Highway Services to the Highways Advisory Board on 10th July 2007.

Introduction

1. This report is for Members' information and refers to the proposed introduction of a new safety camera housing on the A229 Loose Road in Maidstone. A previous proposal for narrowing of the carriageway and construction of a pelican crossing was withdrawn and we have subsequently been investigating other means of addressing local concern about the creation of a safe crossing point.

Background

2. This is a very busy section of the A229 Primary Route, and there has been considerable discussion at the Maidstone Joint Board about highway problems in the area. The concern is based on the desire to protect pedestrians crossing the wide, four lane carriageway, and to prevent vehicles from approaching the sharp bend into Sheals Crescent at high speeds, the road is subject to a 30mph speed limit.
3. Pedestrian crossing movements are dominated by students heading for the Maidstone Boys Grammar School in Barton Road in the morning, and parents/children heading to and from Southborough Primary School. Although there is a pedestrian bridge near the Primary School, it has long approach ramps and steps at the top, so many pedestrians choose to cross at ground level.
4. The speeding issue also causes concern to residents of Sheals Crescent, who have seen the crash barrier at the bend struck and damaged.
5. Other means of speed management were investigated. The A229 being a primary route and four lanes wide, does not allow traffic calming measures to be implemented. The possibility of an interactive bend warning sign was considered, but the alignment of the road would make it difficult to locate a sign to give drivers adequate warning of the bend, without placing it so far away that vehicles would have time to build up speed again before the turning into Sheals Crescent.
6. An additional speed camera housing was therefore considered, as this stretch of road lies between two other existing sites. It would therefore be seen as an additional measure on a road already subject to camera enforcement where crashes continue to be reported.

Discussion

7. A site meeting was held to look at the potential location for a safety camera on Loose Road just south of Sheals Crescent. The most suitable location for a camera to reduce speeds approaching the sharp bend was in the entrance of the former vehicle access to Southborough School. This would encourage drivers to approach the bend at a lower speed than currently occurs reducing the risk of crashes. There would be some requirement for ancillary works in association with the camera, including kerb protection for the camera post, setting back of the guardrails within the school access, removal of one road sign, and some new carriageway surfacing in which to bed the detector loops. It was also felt that this lay-by area offered a suitable and safe location from which to carry out camera maintenance.

Proposed Safety Camera, Loose Road, Maidstone

8. The crash record supports the use of an additional camera bid. In the last five years there have been four serious and three slight crashes between the footbridge and Sheals Crescent junction and also one serious and three slight crashes prior to the footbridge. Three crashes involved pedestrians of which two were children. Three other crashes involved loss of control due to speed, two of which hit the Armco barrier on the bend.
9. In September/October 2005 a week long speed survey was carried out at a location just prior to the new camera position opposite Heather Drive. An average figure was taken for the whole week with an 85% speed of 37.6mph and a mean speed of 32.8mph with slightly higher figures at the weekend. Throughout the week 28% of vehicles were exceeding 35mph, this was on average 3435 vehicles per day.
10. Local consultation has been carried out by Councillor Mrs Wilson, the local Borough Council Member. The general response has been favourable to the proposed location. We would therefore wish to proceed on the basis that this is the final option available and pursue the installation of a camera housing at this location in the current financial year.

Costing and Funding

11. The cost of these works will be some £33,000 and this money could be available from within the budget allocation for safety cameras.
12. The addition of this site to the schedule of sites administered by the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership would not trigger the need for a bid for a new camera itself.

Summary

13. After considering all options available including narrowing of the carriageway, a pelican crossing and an interactive bend sign all of which were deemed not feasible, therefore a safety camera is seen as the most suitable and effective mechanism to reduce speed and injury crashes on this stretch of road.

Recommendation

14. Members are asked to note the introduction of an additional safety camera.

Accountable Officer: Peter Rosevear 01622 798471

Safety Cameras

A report by the County Transportation Manager to the Highways Advisory Board on 10th July 2007

Summary

1. The Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership (K&MSCP) was launched in 2002. The partnership operates across the Kent Police area covering both Kent and Medway and its sole purpose is to reduce road crash casualties.
2. The K&MSCP produces an annual report which is produced for each Partner organisation setting out progress to date and challenges for the future. Each year this report is presented to the Highways Advisory Board (Appendix 1).
3. The K&MSCP report considers six issues associated with safety cameras in the county and the Kent Police area as a whole:
 - An overview of the partnership and its structure
 - Funding
 - Operations during 2006/07
 - Casualty reduction
 - Communications
 - Future activity and funding arrangements

The value of Safety Cameras

4. In recent years road crash casualties in Kent have reduced overall. This success is due to a variety of factors involving many areas of work undertaken and supported by our various partners and stakeholders. However, the contribution of the work of the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership should not be underestimated. The partnership has been in existence for five years, during this time its work has reduced casualties at camera sites, consistently performing at above the national average. To fulfil KCC's commitment to reducing all seriously injured (KSI) casualties by 40%, by December 2007, we need 478 fewer KSIs, 69 have already been achieved by safety cameras alone.

Recommendation

5. Members are asked to acknowledge the annual report of the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership.
-

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**The Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership
Annual Report from the Project Manager:
Progress of the Partnership during 2006/07**

Introduction

1. Roadside cameras which detect speeding vehicles, or those who contravene red lights at traffic signalled junctions, are generically called 'Safety cameras'. These play a vital, but limited, role in the wider road safety strategies of the three traffic authorities in Kent (Kent County Council, Medway Council and the Highways Agency). Speed cameras in particular contribute to raising awareness of the dangers of inappropriate or excessive speed on the roads, and are installed only where significant numbers of injuries have been caused by traffic travelling in excess of the posted limit.
2. Whilst the cameras are installed and maintained by the three traffic authorities, their operation also requires the co-operation of the Police (as law enforcers) and Her Majesty's Courts Service (involved in endorsing licences and processing fixed penalties). These five organisations formed the Safety Camera Partnership in Kent in 2001 and gained approval to join the national 'cost recovery' programme from July 2002.
3. July 2007 therefore represents the Partnership's fifth anniversary. In previous years I have reported on the past progress of the Partnership and herein I wish to provide information on the fifth year of operation.

Funding

4. Funding for safety cameras including all administration, staff salaries and all running costs associated with the cameras and processing of offences, has been provided entirely from Central Government under the DfT's 'Cost Recovery' programme. This money was then reimbursed by the Partnership from Fixed Penalties received from offences detected by the cameras. Thus the operation and installation of the cameras has not been a burden on the respective budgets of the Partner organisations, nor on the public purse.
5. All camera sites installed in the county of Kent since 2002 comply with strict casualty and speed criteria set out by the Department for Transport (DfT). In order to receive the reimbursement of costs from DfT the Partnership needed to strictly adhere to these criteria.
6. The identification of camera sites and the installation of the associated street furniture remains the responsibility of the traffic authorities; whilst the processing of offences and collection of fines remain the roles of Kent Police and Her Majesty's Courts' Service.

Operation in 2006/07

7. The agreed programme of works in 2006/07 included the installation of two more fixed speed cameras (one in KCC area and one in Medway), and the operation of mobile speed cameras at six new locations where the level and nature of recorded crashes suggested that high speeds were contributing to serious injuries.
8. The Partnership continued to operate the current fixed and mobile sites to ensure a continuing reduction in speed and casualties. One fixed camera in the KCC area was relocated and upgraded to more modern technology, whilst another was removed completely from Canterbury where the need for it had been superseded by changes in the road layout and the introduction of new roundabouts and pedestrian crossings. This latter site will continue to be monitored to ensure that traffic speeds remain low in the absence of the device.

9. The use and position of traffic signs indicating the presence of cameras, and reminding drivers of the speed limit at that point, have been reviewed and enhanced across the county. Whilst there is no legal requirement for any of these signs the Partnership is keen to ensure that all drivers are aware of the speed limit and the need, at camera sites in particular, to observe it.
10. The Partnership's Operational Case for 2006/07, accepted by DfT following an in-year adjustment, estimated expenditure of £3,333,577 during that financial year. In the event, the Partnership collectively incurred costs in the region of £3,310,390 which falls marginally below the original agreed budget. The monetary difference between the agreed budget and actual expenditure is retained by the Government.
11. The cost of maintaining the Partnership's operations, including new camera sites, was funded entirely by the Department for Transport provided that we comply with their guidance (a full copy of the Handbook of Rules and Guidance was made available in the Members' Suite last July; and can be seen on the Partnership's website and via the DfT website).
12. The value of Fixed Penalty Notices paid to Her Majesty's Courts Service during the same financial year (2006/07) was £3,672,360 (figures subject to audit).
13. Thus, after the DfT have paid our costs, the Treasury retains the total balance of £361,970. Such funds are not available for use by the Partnership nor its individual members. (These amounts are yet to be audited.)

Casualty Reduction

14. Previously I have reported that the savings in death and injury on Kent and Medway's roads, brought about by Safety Cameras, has exceeded the national average (my report of March 2006 refers). In 2005 the DfT published a report showing that across the UK cameras had reduced the number of people Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) by 42% at camera sites; but in Kent and Medway our KSI reductions were 53%.
15. On assessing crash data up to the end of 2006 the cameras across Kent and Medway I can now report that cameras have reduced the number of KSI by 58.3% which is a significant improvement on the already impressive figures of 2005. The total number of people who are killed or seriously injured at our camera sites has reduced by 116 per year. The total reduction in all casualties is 394 (which represents 35.5% reduction). Every day at least one person in Kent and Medway escapes injury due to the presence of safety cameras.
16. Casualty reduction targets were set by the Government with a view to reducing the number of people Killed or Seriously injured by 40% by the year 2010. That target represents a reduction of 478 of which 69 have already been reduced by the use of cameras alone; in Medway the target represents a reduction of 88 and cameras have provided a saving of 47KSI.

Communications

17. As part of the Partnership's operation it must undertake its own publicity and education activities to support the role of the safety cameras. The Partnership produced a Communications Strategy, accepted by the DfT, aimed at increasing awareness, understanding and acceptance of safety cameras; and intended to promote the benefits of reducing both speeding and red-light running, and the role safety cameras play in preventing crashes and casualties. The strategy focused particular attention on vulnerable road user groups, which are frequently involved in speed-related crashes and also people who drive for a living who are predominant in road crashes.
18. Education initiatives for this year include: a young driver campaign aimed at 17 to 24 year olds and a generic speed limits awareness campaign. "Driving Business – Safely!"

– aimed at those who drive for a living - will also run again this year. It has proved hugely popular with over 7,000 literature packs requested from Kent businesses.

19. The Partnership's website (www.kmscp.org) is updated weekly and details all Partnership information including an interactive map of all fixed, mobile and red light safety cameras. It also provides a contact point for the public and has had over 115,124 hits since it originally launched in January 2003.
20. Literature and display material is regularly produced which highlight the dangers of excessive speed. Partnership staff also attended numerous shows and events for the public with material explaining the operation of cameras which provided further opportunities for the public to see how the cameras work, meet the staff and ask questions. Numerous events will also be attended during 2007 including the Kent County Show; the Kent County Fair at Paddock Wood; Lydd Airshow; various Kent Fire and Rescue Community Safety Days; and Police Station Open Days.
21. The Partnership has also enjoyed a vast amount of coverage in both the local and national media. In the past year 48% of the local media coverage of safety camera issues and campaigns has been positive, 37% neutral coverage and 15% negative coverage. The Partnership's Project Manager, Communications Manager and Communications Officer have appeared on local television, given radio interviews and given presentations to various clubs, societies and organisations.
22. The Partnership also undertakes a routine survey of public perception amongst residents and drivers in Kent. Of those interviewed in June/July 2006 18.7% had heard of the camera Partnership, and 83.6% of Kent residents agree that cameras should be supported as a method of reducing casualties.
23. This Partnership is working closely with its road safety colleagues to deliver consistent campaigns across the county. For example, it has teamed up with KHS, Medway Council, the Ambulance Service, Kent Fire & Rescue, Kent Police and the Probation Service to form a road safety village at the county show called "Fit for the Road?". Kent Fire & Rescue have also supported the Partnership not only with staff resource but also by contributing £10,000 of funding towards educational campaigns.

Future Activity

24. From April 2007 the mechanism for providing funding for safety cameras has changed. Monies are now provided via the existing LTP2 allocations and is an additional supplementary grant on top of the usual LTP allocations. These monies are entirely grant (in effect a cash allocation) and are not therefore part of any 'borrowing'. Between KCC and Medway Council the total grant allocation for 2007/08 is £3,488,336 and exceeds current costs. From April 2007 all grant monies not used on the Safety Camera Partnership can be retained by the local authorities for use on other road safety initiatives.
25. The new additional road safety funding has also brought a relaxation in the rules and governance of the project, allowing more flexibility (if it is needed) in the deployment of law enforcement techniques to target road safety issues. To this end the three Transport Authorities in the county have agreed a procedure for assessing the justification of safety cameras at new sites based on casualty reduction and based on professional judgement that any road safety problem at a site cannot be better addressed by other methods in preference to a camera.
26. The services provided by the Police and Her Majesty's Courts Service must be funded from this new LTP supplementary funding in order that they can continue to support the administration of any offences detected. However there is no longer a requirement to refund the Government through the value of fines collected from April 2007.

27. The Partnership will continue to investigate improvements to efficiencies in the processing of offences in order to minimise operating costs; and to ensure that our openness and clarity with the public exceeds the expectations of the Freedom of Information Act.

Conclusion

28. Members are asked to note the continuing success of the Partnership in reducing road deaths and serious injuries in its fifth year of operation, and the major contribution that this project makes towards achieving the national targets for casualty reduction.

Chris Rogers (01622 656391)
Project Manager
Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership

Background papers:

- Project Manager's Reports of:
November 2002; July 2003; May 2004, July 2004, July 2005, March 2006, July 2006

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2006 End Of Year Crash And Casualty Numbers And Progress Against National 2010 Casualty Targets

A report by the County Transportation Manager to the Highways Advisory Board on 10 July 2007

2006 Crashes and Casualties Figures

1. The crash records for 2006 for Kent were finalised in May. These totals are used in establishing best value performance indicators, government targets and establishing trends.
2. In 2006 89 people were killed on roads in Kent (excluding Medway), 658 received serious injuries and 5748 were slightly injured. There were 4752 crashes. Appendix 1 shows crashes and casualties by severity for 2006.

2010 Government Target

3. To help focus on achieving continuous improvement in road safety the Government has set a national target for reducing casualties by 2010. Compared with the 1994-98 average the target is:
 - A 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents (KSI) – KCC as part of PSA2 intend to achieve this target by the end of 2007
 - A 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured.
 - A 10% reduction in the slight casualty rate expressed as the number of people slightly injured per 100million vehicle kilometres (MVKm). Kent does not have a traffic model appropriate for KCC roads. Therefore a simple 10% reduction in slight casualties has been used to set targets in Kent.

Current Progress against National Targets

4. Appendix 2 shows that compared with the 2010 target KSI, casualties on Kent roads including motorways and trunk roads are 3% above the 2010 target. Child KSI casualties are just below the 2010 target. Slight casualties show a reduction of 3%. Appendix 3 shows that on the roads for which KCC is responsible, the 2010 targets have been achieved. Casualties on roads for which the Highway Agency is responsible have increased in 2006 compared with the previous year. However individual year on year figures are volatile and the overall trend provides a better indication than individual years. The overall year on year trends are shown in Appendices 4, 5 and 6.
5. Appendix 2 also shows that on Kent roads child KSI casualties increased from 47 in 2005 to 74 casualties in 2006, however the 2006 figure compared with the 2004 figure of 87, show a decrease of 15%, indicating 2005 was abnormally low. The variable nature of year on year totals are shown on the trend graph from 1990 for child KSI casualties. (see Appendix 5)
6. The 2006 total KSI casualties on Kent roads showed a 1.3% reduction compared with 2005, which may indicate a flattening out of the overall downward trend (see Appendix 2).

2006 End Of Year Crash And Casualty Numbers And Progress Against National 2010 Casualty Targets

7. 2006 slight casualties on Kent roads showed a 1.5 % reduction compared with 2005 (see Appendix 2).

Conclusion

8. Overall KCC's performance is good and we are well placed to meet and maintain the 2010 KSI targets. The trend in casualties continues the well established downward pattern albeit that it does appear to be flattening out. It is vital that we continue to deliver programmes of work aimed at both improving the road infrastructure and road user behaviour. Focused and stronger casualty reduction links with the Highway Agency, Police, Fire and Rescue and the other partners are being progressed to sustain the downward trend countywide. This year is crucial, as the target of reducing KSI casualties, including those on motorways and trunk roads, by 40% compared with the 1994-1998 average, needs to be met and sustained by the end of 2007 to achieve PSA2. Based on the long term influence on casualty reduction to date by the County Council and its partners, I am confident that the target can be achieved.

Recommendation

9. Members are asked to note the contents of the report.
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Contact Officer: Jo Horton (01622) 696850

Background Documents: None

APPENDIX 1

2006 CRASHES & CASUALTIES BY SEVERITY	HIGHWAY AUTHORITY		KENT
	KCC	HA	TOTAL
All Crashes			
Fatal	53	26	79
Serious	424	117	541
Slight	3245	887	4132
Total	3722	1030	4752
All Casualties (all ages including age unknown)			
Fatal	56	33	89
Serious	503	155	658
Slight	4376	1372	5748
Total	4935	1560	6495
Child casualties (ages 0-15)			
Fatal	2	3	5
Serious	63	6	69
Slight	542	86	628
Total	607	95	702

APPENDIX 2

KENT (Including Highway Agency Roads and excluding Medway)

Kent Casualties	2010 Target (original reported numbers)	94-98 Average (original reported numbers)	2004	2005	2006	2006 %change compared with 94-98 Average	2006 % change compared with 2004
Total *KSI	716	1194	840	757	747	37.44% reduction	1.32 % reduction
Child *KSI	74	147	87	47	74	49.66% reduction	57.45 % (increase) (15% reduction on 2004)
Total Slight	5356	5951	5921	5835	5748	3.43% reduction	1.49% reduction
Child Slight	717	797	659	630	628	21.2 % reduction	0.32 reduction
Total Casualties	6072	7145	6761	6592	6495	9.10 % reduction	1.47 % reduction
Child Casualties	708	944	746	677	702	25.64% reduction	3.56% increase

Note Data taken from BVPI tables

* Killed or seriously injured (KSI)

APPENDIX 3

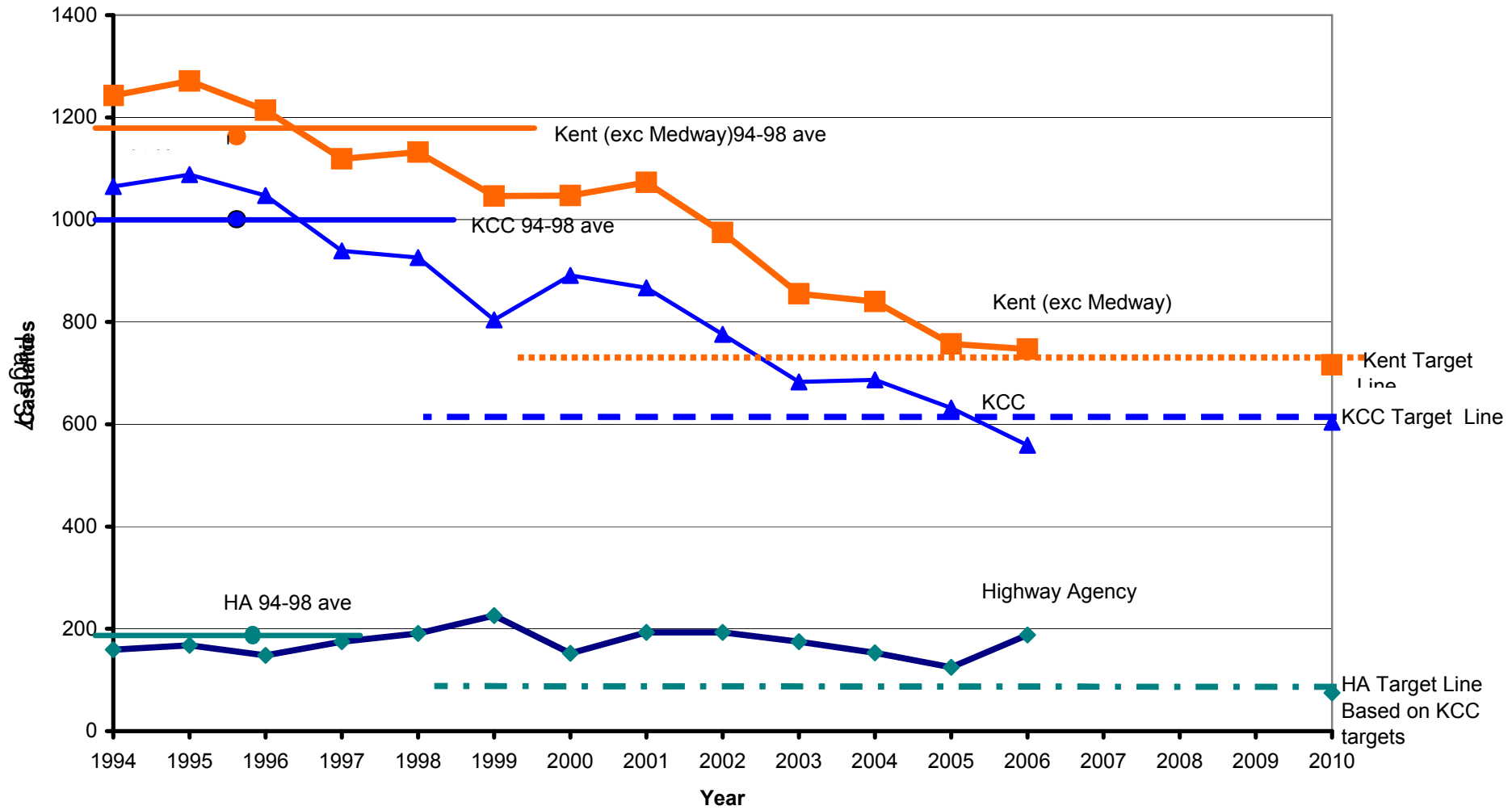
KCC ROADS

KCC Area Casualties	2010 Target (original reported numbers)	94-98 Average (original reported numbers)	2004	2005	2006	2006 %change compared with 94-98 Average	2006 % change compared with 2005
Total *KSI	604	1006	686	629	559	44.43% reduction	11.13 % reduction
Child *KSI	69	137	79	46	65	52.55% reduction	41.30% increase
Total Slight	4466	4962	4747	4847	4376	11.81% reduction	9.72% reduction
Child Slight	639	710	673	575	542	23.66% reduction	5.74% reduction
Total Casualties	5070	5969	5437	5490	4935	17.32% reduction	10.11% reduction
Child Casualties	708	847	644	621	607	28.34% reduction	2.25% reduction

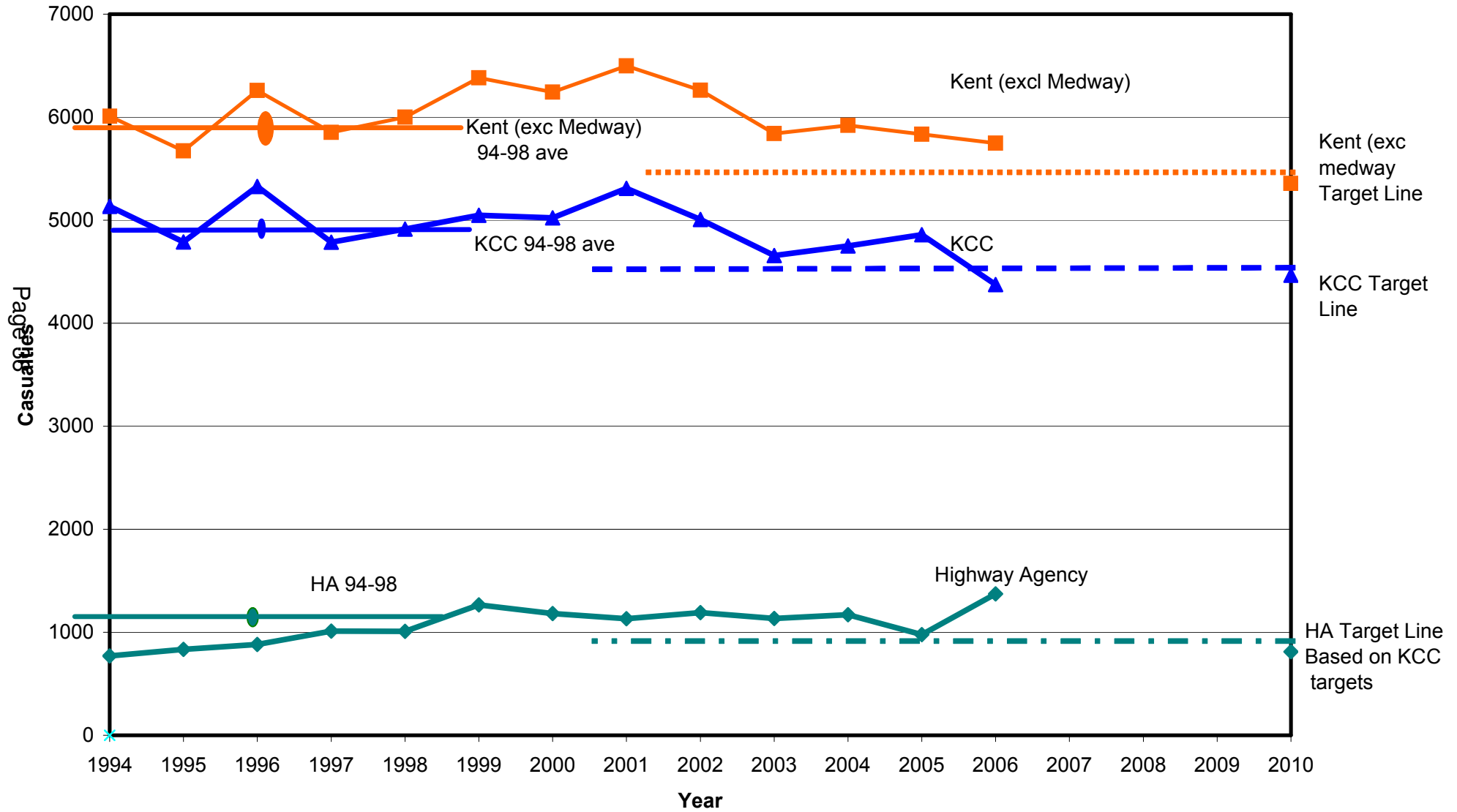
Note: Data taken from BVPI tables

*Killed or seriously injured (KSI)

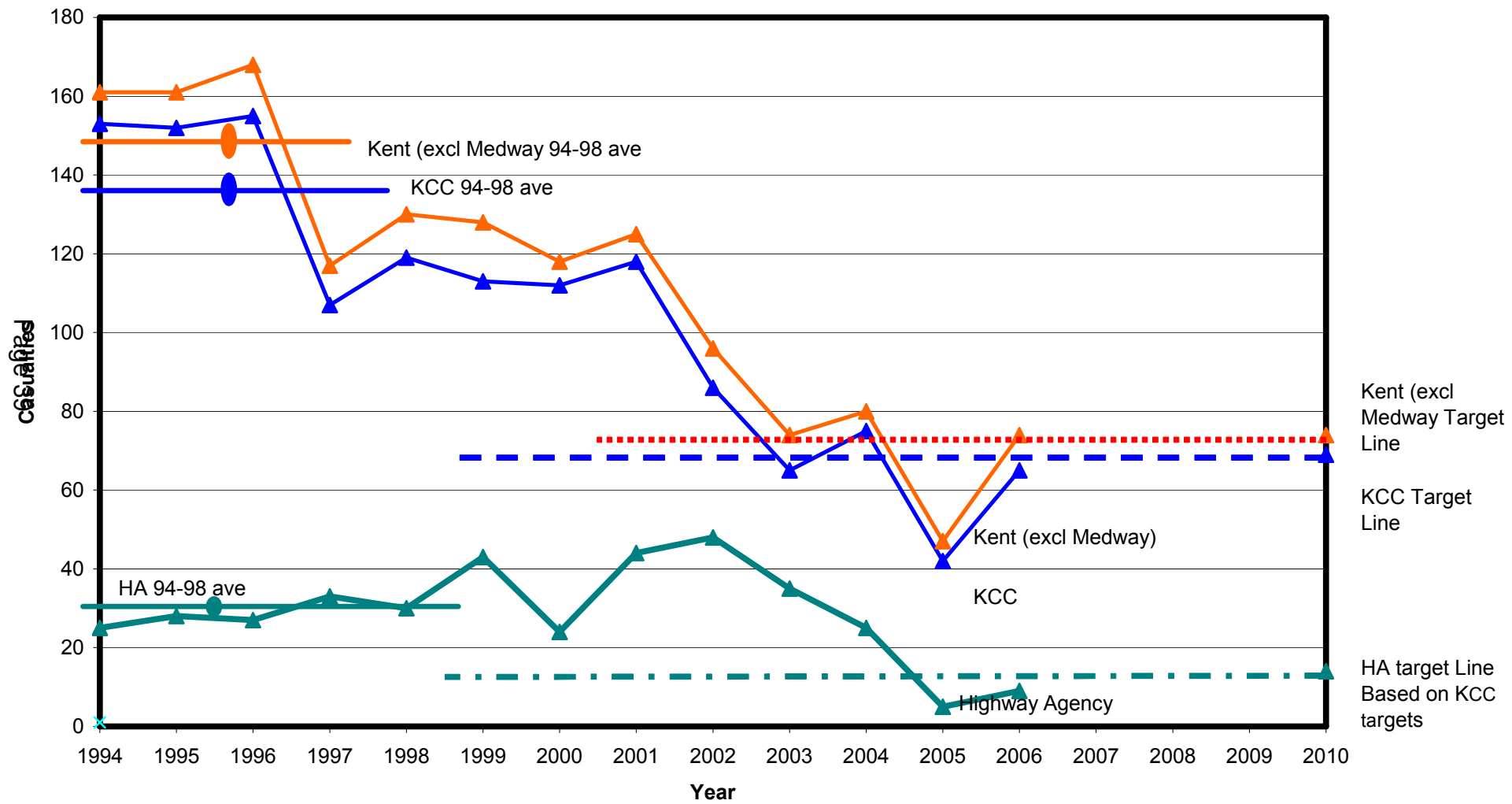
APPENDIX 4 - 2010 Target a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI



APPENDIX 6 -2010 Target a 10% reduction in slight injury casualties



APPENDIX 5 - 2010 Target a 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured (KSI)



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Priority Vehicle Lanes for HGV's, Buses & other vehicles

A report by the County Transportation Manager to the Highway Advisory Board on 10th July 2007

Introduction

1. At the meeting of this Board in May 2007, Members requested a report on the feasibility of bus lanes in Tunbridge Wells operating at peak times only and allowing HGV's access. As there are bus lanes elsewhere in Kent, consideration of the issue should be on a countywide basis.
2. This report outlines options under consideration both nationally and locally for the use of bus lanes by other vehicles and on a part-time basis.

Options for providing "priority vehicle lanes"

3. A priority vehicle lane is an area of carriageway reserved, using a Traffic Regulation Order, for the use of buses, bicycles, goods vehicles and taxis.
4. In addition to conventional bus lanes, a number of other models of priority vehicle lanes have been trialled in the UK and this report identifies the benefits of each approach.
5. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 allows local authorities to introduce experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) without public consultation.

Conventional bus lanes

6. A bus lane is an area of carriageway reserved, using a Traffic Regulation Order primarily for use by buses and coaches during the advertised hours of operation. Unless the bus lane has a 24 hour restriction, outside of these hours, all traffic are permitted to use bus lanes. In Kent bicycles and Hackney carriages are also permitted to use these lanes but not Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV's) or Light Goods Vehicles (LGV's). Private Hire taxis are also excluded from using bus lanes.
7. The concept of using designated lanes for buses is well understood and widely used by highway authorities in urban areas where bus services are adversely affected by traffic congestion.
8. The introduction of priority measures in Kent (for example bus lanes) has played a significant role in generating the 17% increase in bus usage achieved during Kent's first Local Transport Plan (LTP), through increasing the profile of services as well as improving reliability.
9. Bus priority measures are designed and introduced to help achieve easier and more consistent journey times through congested areas, particularly in towns and cities. Reliability is also very important in assisting operators to meet the standards set down by the industry regulator, the Traffic Commissioner. The challenge of operating 95% of all services within a "window" of 1 minute early and 5 minutes late is becoming increasingly difficult as traffic conditions worsen and congestion increases. Without assistance from the Highways Authority, the costs of catering for congestion will lead to a reduction in more marginal routes which are currently operated without financial support.

-
10. Reliable bus services are also important to passengers. In almost every survey about bus services, reliability is one of the most important issues for bus users. Unreliable bus services lead to declining bus patronage, increasing congestion on already busy roads.
 11. Providing bus priority measures such as bus lanes are also important in generating operator investment in new buses through Quality Bus Partnership agreements. In Canterbury, Stagecoach introduced 18 new low floor double-decker buses following the provision of bus lanes on the outskirts of the city centre.

Peak or off-peak operation

12. The hours of operation of any bus lane will need to consider:
 - the hours of bus service operation and frequency
 - the extent and timing of traffic congestion and its impact on bus reliability
 - the method for enforcing bus lanes
13. Bus lanes generally operate for one of the following periods:
 - 24 hours
 - 12 hour period (usually 7am – 7pm)
 - peak hours only (usually 7-10am and 4-7pm)
14. Some local authorities outside London do use 24 hour operation of bus lanes. However as most bus services do not operate between the hours of 12pm and 6am such a restriction is excessive and many such authorities are reverting to a 12 hour period.
15. Although bus services derive most benefit from bus lanes at peak periods, such peak periods are spreading (for example in Canterbury) and traffic patterns are becoming less predictable due to changing employment patterns (e.g. shift work and call centres). With this in mind, many local authorities have reverted from a peak-hour operation to a 12 hour period of operation (i.e. 7am – 7pm).
16. Many local authorities have found that the most appropriate hours of bus lane operation to include in Traffic Regulation Orders is 7am – 7pm. This makes such measures self-enforcing and reduces the need for camera enforcement and the issuing of Penalty Charge Notices. The majority of bus lanes in Kent operate between these hours and experience relatively low levels of abuse by other traffic despite the absence of camera enforcement.
17. Within Tunbridge Wells, there is little potential benefit to motorists from entering bus lanes during the off-peak period. The cost of changing the signage is £10,000 and this could provide better value for money spent on other appropriate schemes.

Conventional bus lanes (including HGV use)

18. A Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) is defined as a vehicle with a maximum gross weight in excess of 7.5 tonnes and are identified through yellow and orange striped rear marking plates. At present the DfT have not produced any specific guidance on the use of bus lanes by HGV's.

Priority Vehicle Lanes for HGV's, Buses & other vehicles

19. There are concerns amongst bus operators about the use of bus lanes by HGV's. It is not clear whether HGV use encourages other vehicles such as Light Goods Vehicles, for example white vans and delivery vehicles, or other traffic to use bus lanes which could undermine bus reliability. There is also concern about HGV's, particularly non-UK lorries, parking or waiting in bus lanes and causing an obstruction or making slow turning movements into side streets, further delaying bus movements. It is recommended that more work is undertaken in consultation with the DfT before making a decision on this in Kent.

Conventional bus lanes (including use by motorcycles)

20. DfT note 2/07 provides guidance on the use of bus lanes by motorcycles. A number of experimental Traffic Regulation Orders have been made permanent allowing motorcyclists to use bus lanes. Research conclusions suggest both potential benefits and drawbacks.

21. The main drawback of such an approach is the potential conflict between motorcyclists and other users, such as pedal cycles and pedestrians. Motorcycles tend to travel at faster speeds than buses, cycles and HGV's and this could have safety implications. DfT guidance suggests consultation with other road user groups before making a permanent TRO. In London, cycling groups strongly opposed the introduction of motorcycles into bus/cycle lanes as part of a pilot scheme, citing an increase in road accidents. Motorcycles have been permitted to use bus lanes in Northern Ireland since 2004.

22. Motorcycles are easily distinguishable from other vehicle types using existing detection techniques so technical issues with enforcement are unlikely.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes

23. A High Occupancy Vehicle lane is an area of carriageway restricted under a Traffic Regulation Order to allow cars with multiple occupants to use it.

24. HOV lanes have been backed in Traffic Advisory Leaflet 3/06 from the Department for Transport. It states that "HOV lanes are a method of utilising spare capacity in existing bus lanes". Car sharing organisations such as Liftshare support the extension of bus lanes to HOV status.

25. One of the few trials of HOV lanes has taken place on Stanningley Road in Leeds which was introduced in 1998. These lanes are available to buses, coaches, other vehicles carrying two or more people, motorcycles and pedal cycles. HGV's over 7.5 tonnes are not permitted to use them. The HOV lanes operate in the morning and evening peak periods (07:00 – 10:00, 16:00 – 19:00 on Mondays to Fridays).

26. Monitoring data has shown increases in average car occupancy and bus patronage as well as big improvements in journey time reliability for people using both modes.

27. The application of an HOV lane is most suited to heavily trafficked corridors, particularly during peak times, where a Local Authority wants to encourage car sharing and discourage single occupancy car traffic. There are at present no HOV lanes in Kent and with no means of camera enforcement at present it would be difficult to ensure that such lanes were not being abused.

Conclusions

28. There are a range of priority vehicle lanes that have been piloted across the UK with varying degrees of success. Any measure needs to be appropriate to the local conditions but clearly understood by motorists and other road users.
29. The vast majority of the travelling public understand which vehicles are permitted to use conventional bus lanes, without referring to each individual sign or marking. Bus lanes provide priority through congested urban areas which helps to ensure bus reliability.

Recommendations

30. Subject to the views of this Board, it is proposed to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that
 - (i) bus lanes in Kent continue to be operational between the hours of 7am and 7pm;
 - (ii) further investigations are undertaken to establish the benefits and disbenefits of HGV's using bus lanes.
-

Accountable Officer - David Eaton (01622) 696845

Background Documents

Report to HAB "Use of Bus Lanes by Licensed Hackney Carriages (Taxis)" Sep 2006

Report to HAB "Bus Lane Enforcement – DfT Guidance" Jan 2006

DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet 3/06 "High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes" December 2006

DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet 2/07 "The Use of Bus Lanes by Motorcycles" February 2007

Bus Roadside Publicity & Infrastructure Unit

A report by the County Transportation Manager to the Highway Advisory Board on 10th July 2007

Introduction

1. This report outlines the current arrangements for providing bus timetable information and infrastructure at bus stops in Kent.

Background

2. The Transport Act 2000 provides a duty for each Local Transport Authority in England and Wales to ensure that adequate information is provided by local bus operators. It also empowers them to make arrangements as necessary to plug any gaps in the provision of information, recharging the costs to the appropriate bus operator. Transport Authorities set out their proposals in an Information Strategy which formally came into effect in April 2002.
3. Kent County Council's Public Transport Information Strategy was first published in 2001 and reviewed by a specialist independent consultant in 2006. The consultants report recommended that greater attention was given to the arrangements for and funding of the provision of information at bus stops.

4. Kent's Public Transport Information Strategy (2001) concluded that:

"Roadside information for bus service users is poor in many parts of Kent and the County Council in partnership with Arriva has developed a Roadside Infrastructure Unit which is responsible for the display of up-to-date information on bus services throughout the County. This scheme was initially introduced on a trial basis during 1999 and the County Council has agreed a formal two-year arrangement with Arriva."

5. The consultants review in 2006 concluded that:

"These arrangements are still in place today, but the procedures and resources for providing roadside information must be reviewed if it is to meet the desired target level of 75% of bus stops in the County. Also improvements must be made to the design standards to ensure the public find the publicity easy to understand and it improves the image of public transport services in the County."

Roadside Infrastructure Unit

6. The Roadside Infrastructure Unit was formed in 1999 through a fixed cost contract with the main bus operator in West and Mid Kent, Arriva, to provide timetable publicity and information at bus stops and interchanges. Arriva post timetables and other relevant information at bus stops giving information on all bus services in Kent run either on a commercial basis or under contract to Kent County Council. KCC currently spends £7 million per annum on procuring "socially necessary" bus services across Kent. Approximately £200,000 of this budget is spent on promoting and advertising these services.

Bus Roadside Publicity & Infrastructure Unit

7. The only exception to this arrangement is that Stagecoach, who opted out of the countywide scheme, maintains all stops in areas where they were the sole or principal bus operator. This covers most Districts of East Kent and some areas of Mid Kent such as Ashford town.
8. The Roadside Infrastructure Unit officers carry out a number of functions:
 - they seek to ensure that timetables for all commercial and Kent County Council funded bus services are accurate, up-to-date and readable;
 - they resolve or report to the relevant authority, cases of vandalism, graffiti and traffic damage to bus stops;
 - they deal with a large number of enquiries from members of the public acting as the agent of Kent Highway Services, aiming to respond to reports of dangerous bus stops within 24 hours and 48 hours for less urgent enquiries;
 - they help to distribute timetables to outlets across Kent;
 - they provide roadside information about short term changes to bus services caused by roadworks;
9. There is now a need to review the arrangements currently provided by Arriva under contract to Kent County Council. Between 1999/2000 and 2005/2006 the Roadside Infrastructure agreement remained virtually unchanged with only minimal inflationary price rises to cover the bus operators cost increases.
10. However the value of the contract increased from £30,000 in 2005/06 to £40,000 in 2006/07 to reflect Arriva's proposal to expand the team from two to three officers, with the aim of providing a more responsive service to the public and higher quality information at bus stops and interchanges.
11. To maintain consistency with the procurement of local bus services, the current arrangements need to be put out to tender from April 2008. This will give all interested bus operators and other organisations such as Kent County Council's Commercial Services Department the opportunity to tender for this work, thereby ensuring best value for the County Council and the highest possible level of service to the public.

Recommendations

12. Subject to the views of this Board, it is proposed to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that approval is given to putting the Roadside Infrastructure agreement out to tender with the new contract starting in April 2008.

Accountable Officer - David Eaton (01622) 696845

Sustainable Travel to School Strategy

A report by the County Transportation Manager to the Highways Advisory Board on 10th July 2007

Introduction

1. A report was considered by this Board on 1st May 2007 (Item 5) on the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and its implications for Kent County Council. A key requirement of the Act is for Kent to produce a Sustainable Travel to School Strategy. This report seeks Member approval for a consultation draft of this strategy.

Background

2. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a general duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport on the journey to school. Section 508A of the Act, in force from April 2007, requires local education and transport authorities to develop a strategy for the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are better catered for.

Sustainable Travel to School Strategy – Key Elements

3. The strategy comprises a statement of the authority's overall vision, objectives and work programme for improving accessibility to schools. The accessibility strategy should build on, and be developed in the context of the authority's community strategies and Local Transport Plan (including its accessibility plan and bus strategy). The strategy is intended to be an important source of information to parents on the travel options available to them when expressing their preferences for particular schools in the admissions round.
4. In developing its strategy, the local authority should consider how improvements can help to deliver other objectives, including environmental improvements (from reduced levels of congestion and pollution), health benefits (from increased levels of walking and cycling) and enhanced child safety and security.
5. The strategy should be evidence-based, including an assessment of the accessibility needs and problems of the local authority's area and demonstrate how a range of interventions can address these problems. The strategy should set out the accessibility priorities over a time frame that fits the LTP cycle.
6. The Education (School Information) (England) Regulations 2002, amended with effect from 1st June 2007, requires local authorities to publish their Sustainable Travel to School Strategy on their web-site by 31 August each year, starting in 2007. Local authorities must monitor the implementation of their strategy and revise these annually as they feel necessary.
7. In response to this requirement, Kent Highway Services have established a Steering Group, including representatives from CFE and Commercial Services to oversee the development of a Consultation Draft of the Kent Sustainable Travel to School Strategy. This will be consulted on internally during July and August 07 and will be published as a draft for external consultation on the kent.gov site in time for the DfES deadline of 31st August 2007. The September 2008 revised version, will therefore constitute the final strategy.

Sustainable Travel to School Strategy

Conclusion and Recommendations

8. Members are asked to support the development of Kent's Sustainable Travel to School Strategy and to agree for this to be finalised in draft form for consultation under delegated powers and to be published as a draft at the start of the new school year in September 2007, as required by the Act.

9. Members are invited to view a copy of the Draft Strategy (hard copies will be available at this Board meeting, or alternatively copies can be made available in paper or electronic format by contacting Graham Tanner). Comments to be considered as part of the published draft, should be received by 31st July 2007.

Accountable Officer – Graham Tanner (01622) 696 819 graham.tanner@kent.gov.uk

The Draft Local Transport Bill Consultation

A report by the County Transportation Manager to the Highway Advisory Board on 10th July 2007

Introduction

1. This report outlines the provisions in the recently published draft Local Transport Bill and their implications for Kent. The Bill is intended to help tackle congestion and improve public transport. The consultation closes on 7 September.

Proposed Changes to Legislation

2. Many of the measures proposed are aimed at major urban areas or modify provisions in the Transport Act 2000 that local authorities have not chosen or been able to use. The legislation is also updated to allow local authorities to take forward local road pricing schemes should they chose. The proposals most relevant to Kent are those that:
 - Provide new powers enabling local authorities in non-Metropolitan areas to set up Passenger Transport Authorities (PTAs).
 - make the implementation of Quality Contracts with public transport operators a realistic option in areas where it is in the public interest for local authorities to take greater control over bus services. This could provide a mechanism to secure the delivery of Smartlink in Ashford and future phases of Fastrack in Kent Thameside.
 - provide a new regime to deliver improved bus punctuality, holding local authorities as well as bus operators to account for their contribution to punctuality performance. Local Authorities are required to provide the Traffic Commissioner with information connected with the performance of their network management duties under the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA). Should Kent be found not to be identifying and addressing the causes of poor punctuality the Secretary of State may choose to issue an Intervention Notice under the TMA. The report to this meeting on priority vehicle lanes is particularly important in this context.
 - support for further development of the community transport sector than is currently permitted. Kent has a mix of such community transport schemes across the county and this should ease the development of new and expanded schemes and will provide us with an opportunity to review the provision of services to rural areas.

Improving Bus Services in Kent

3. Whilst the elements of the draft legislation set out above have the potential to be of use to Kent, and these will feature in our response to the consultation, most of the proposals relate more to large metropolitan areas. Indeed Kent is already making good progress with delivering improvements to bus services through voluntary Quality Bus Partnerships with operators. In contrast to much of the country, Kent has managed to sustain a year on year 2% growth in bus patronage. In 2005/06 there were 45.7 million trips made in Kent and in 2006/07 there were 47.1 million trips. Members will be aware of Fastrack in Kent Thameside where passenger numbers are 50% over projections and include 19% of people who would have previously used their car. There are similar examples in Thanet and Canterbury. This will form the basis of our response to Government. In the context of the developing Kent Thameside and Ashford areas, consideration will be given to the potential benefits of applying for PTA status in order to access additional Government funding.

The Draft Local Transport Bill Consultation

Recommendation

4. Given the timing of the consultation, where responses are being asked for by 7 September, Members are asked to agree for a response along the lines of that set out above, to be produced and sent to the DfT under delegated powers.
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Accountable Officer – James Cook 01622 221398

Background Documents – *placed in the Members Library*
Strengthening local delivery: The draft Local Transport Bill