

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

HIGHWAYS ADVISORY BOARD

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

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

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:- Mr L Christie and Mr M V Snelling.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Mee, Director, Kent Highway Services; Mr D Hall, Head of Transport and Development; Mrs C Bruce, Head of Network Management; Mr B Haratbar, Head of Countrywide Improvements; Mr L Holliday, Network Performance Manager; Mr C Martin, Transportation Engineer; Mr J Martin, Ringway; and the Head of Democratic Services (represented by Mrs K Mannering).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

Petition

Mr D Hall formally reported receipt of a petition relating to improvements to the traffic calming measures in Coxheath. The matter had been referred to the Maidstone JTB.

1. Minutes - 4 March 2008
(Item. 3)

Petition

Mr D Hall formally reported receipt of a petition relating to improvements to the traffic calming measures in Coxheath. The matter had been referred to the Maidstone JTB.

(1) Members were assured that the next meeting of the Board on 8 July 2008 would include reports relating to:-

- (a) New Quiet Surfacing – policy and priority system;
- (b) No waiting restrictions on London Road, Sittingbourne; and
- (c) the provision of 20 mph zones in the vicinity of schools.

(2) Further to paragraph 2(16), the Chairman informed the Board that the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive had written to the Chief Executive of EDF. No response had yet been received.

(3) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2008 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Following a proposal by the Chairman, Members agreed to consider Items 12 and 13.

2. Gate on Manor Road (Gravesend Town Centre)

(Item. 12)

(Report by Head of Transport and Development)

(Mr L Christie and Cllr W Dyke, Chairman of Gravesham JTB, were present for this item)

(1) Gravesham Borough Council sought to introduce a gate on the highway at the entrance to Manor Road. Manor Road was on the periphery of the pedestrian zone in Gravesend town centre. The plan in Appendix 1 of the report showed the road in relation to the town centre. The Joint Transportation Board resolved at its meeting on 26 March that 'the County Highways Board be requested to consider the installation of an unmanned gate at the entrance to Manor Road in order to ensure highway safety'.

(2) A major extension of the town centre pedestrian zone was introduced in 1990, the restrictions in the town centre (including Manor Road) included restrictions on the times of day when vehicles could enter roads and the class of vehicle permitted to enter the roads, and permission to enter for access or loading/unloading purposes. The conditions had remained unchanged during this period with the exception of a small variation in the time during which access was permitted.

(3) The restrictions in Manor Road were however complex. All vehicles were prohibited between 10.30 am and 4.30 pm except for access to small private off-street car parks and access for loading by goods vehicles. The exceptions were necessary to ensure the viability of small businesses in the road.

(4) The complex nature of the restrictions had resulted in the restrictions being ignored by some drivers as Manor Road offered an opportunity to travel from west to east across the town centre without using the one-way system. This was however useful to a limited amount of traffic visiting the town centre as there were west to east routes just outside the immediate town centre area.

(5) Surveys of traffic activity were undertaken when Gravesham Borough Council promoted the introduction of the gate, these were included in full in Appendix 2 of the report. In summary, the survey revealed 834 vehicles using the route between 7 am and 7 pm of which 98 appeared to be legitimate. During the busiest hour (17.30 to 18.30) 196 vehicles used the route.

(6) In addition the crash data was reviewed as Gravesham Borough Council had also cited road safety as a reason to provide a gate. The 10 year crash record for Manor Road showed 3 crashes recorded. The three crashes occurred overnight between 11 pm and 1 am, one of which involved a driver who tested positive for alcohol. They occurred in 1998, 2001 and 2006.

(7) Consultation with Kent Police indicated that whilst they acknowledged there was a degree of abuse of the current restrictions, this had been ongoing for many years and enforcement was unlikely to create a significant long term reduction in

use. The Police also acknowledged the sign was complex and therefore difficult for drivers to understand, but it must reflect the conditions that applied. If the sign was to be simplified the restrictions (in the Traffic Regulation Order) must be revised. As had already been indicated, the restrictions reflected the needs of the town centre businesses.

(8) The Police did not support the provision of an unmanned gate as suggested by Gravesham Borough Council. Their concern was that the gate would not be properly managed and that it could be opened when it was meant to be closed and vice versa. Pedestrians could therefore be more vulnerable thinking traffic was not allowed to enter, but in fact had access because the gate had not been closed.

(9) The provision of a gate across a highway was not generally allowed. Any form of 'obstruction' be it a gate or rising bollards had to be risk assessed to ensure it would operate correctly and did not introduce danger to road users or liability to the Highway Authority. The proposal by Gravesham Borough Council i.e. an unmanned gate which might be closed by legitimate users or parking attendants or town wardens was not a robust or safe system. It exposed the Highway Authority to unnecessary risk of claims.

(10) The unauthorised use of the road (and any road) was a matter for Police enforcement – as with speeding or ignoring no entry signs or prohibited turns. In all these cases there were drivers willing to break the law. Sometimes it was possible to introduce physical measures to aid enforcement, sometimes enforcement was the only option. The proposed introduction of an unmanned gate in Manor Road was not acceptable to the Police or Kent Highway Services as it introduced unacceptable risks of liability to Kent Highway Services. The 10 year crash record did not provide evidence to support the Borough Council's contention that the road was not safe.

(11) Although drivers did ignore the restrictions, the Board agreed that there were no overriding safety reasons for a gate to be introduced for safety reasons.

3. Downs Road and Hogg Lane, Northfleet

(Item. 13)

(Report by Head of Transport and Development)

(Mr L Christie; Cllr W Dyke, Chairman of Gravesham JTB; and Mr M Snelling, Vice-Chairman of Gravesham JTB were present for this item)

(1) Downs Road and Hogg Lane were narrow country lanes linking the hamlet of Northfleet Green and Istead Rise (south of A2) with the Pepperhill and Painters Ash estates in Northfleet; linking residents with the primary school at Painters Ash and local shops and doctors surgery.

(2) The use of the road had been limited to cars and small vans by the presence of a low underpass under the A2, with typically a few hundred vehicles per day. However, because of its remoteness and low use there was a history of dumping and unsocial behaviour in the underpass. At other times of congestion on A2 it had become a rat run between villages south of A2 and Gravesend.

(3) The section of the route from Northfleet Green Road (just south of the Channel Tunnel Rail link) to just north of the A2 had been realigned in two stages, once for the CTRL and now for the A2 widening works. For the later scheme, the underpass had been replaced by a bridge, hence removing the physical height restriction. The road had been closed since August 2006 and under the A2 widening permission it was due to reopen in October this year with no restrictions as to its use.

(4) It was appreciated at the time of the Public Inquiry into the A2 scheme that this was an opportune time to debate the future of the Downs Road/Hogg Lane link and this should be carried out by the relevant Local Authorities.

(5) Attached as Appendix 1 to the report was a paper, written by the Gravesham Engineering Services Manager, and submitted to the Gravesham Joint Transportation Board on 26 March 2008, which explained the options considered and consultations carried out to date.

(6) The view of Kent Highway Services was given in paragraph 3.3 of that report, essentially being that the consultation had not proved that the highway was no longer required and to the contrary the needs of the local communities were paramount and that the road should therefore remain open but with weight and physical width restrictions on it.

(7) The Joint Transportation Board resolved to recommend to the County Highways Advisory Board that Downs Road/Hogg Lane be closed to all vehicular traffic but remained open to pedestrian, cycle and equestrian traffic.

(8) To stress the feelings of local residents who would have their most convenient link cut off, there was a 148 signature petition sent to Gravesham Borough Council, an article in the local newspaper of 3 April and a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

(9) The Board:-

(a) supported the proposal for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that approval be given to progress the statutory consultation on Traffic Regulation Orders to place a 3.5 tonne and 7 ft width restriction on the sections of Hogg Lane and Downs Road between Northfleet Green Road and just north of old A2; and, subject to favourable consultation, implement said Orders, appropriate signing and physical width restriction to be in place on the reopening of the road in October this year; and

(b) requested that the use of the road be monitored, together with any abuse of the restrictions, dumping, unsocial behaviour and complaints from the general public, and these be reported back to the Board one year after the road opened in October 2009.

4. Kent Highway Services - The Director's Update

(Item. 4)

- (1) The Director's update set out some of the key issues and developments in KHS.
- (2) **A229 Blue Bell Hill** – Crews worked 24 hours a day over 28-31 March weekend laying 5,500 tonnes of material using 3 paving machines over the 3km scheme length. We successfully delivered on time and budget and a wash-up meeting had been held to learn lessons for the future and how this type of project delivery could be translated into smaller schemes. This was a great Alliance team effort and demonstrated the value of the long term relationship with Ringway and Jacobs. Behdad Haratbar, Acting Head of Countywide Improvements led on the project.
- (3) **Accommodation - Wrotham** – Following discussions with KCC Planning Team and after seeking Counsel advice we had decided to withdraw from the Wrotham site and look for alternative location for the second major office/depot. As the planning and construction process was likely to take 18 months we planned to move to consolidate staff in the Doubleday House complex once the new site at Ashford was completed. This would mean that KHS staff would primarily operate from Ashford, Doubleday and Invicta House. The Director, KHS was taking responsibility for this key project.
- (4) **Potholes** – The effect of last year's wet summer, followed by the wet winter had caused damage to many roads resulting in potholes. To combat this, Kent Highway Services launched a blitz on potholes during April. We had redirected over 24 crews to focus on repairing only potholes and raised a high profile campaign of reporting with the public. At its peak we were repairing over 3000 potholes a week. The media and radio campaign had been successful in raising the awareness of who to report a pothole to and we planned a similar campaign in the Autumn. Kim Hills, Head of Community Operations was leading on this.
- (5) **New high profile vans** – the first order of liveried vans has arrived to raise the profile of our inspectors and help drive the 'keeping kent moving' target. We will shortly have over 60 vans around the county advertising the 08458 247 800 telephone number and the new red KHS logo.
- (6) **Re-organising KHS** – The new KHS structure was now around 90% populated with on-going recruitment processes both internal and external to fill the remaining posts. We were finding some posts difficult to fill due to the market chasing a small number of people with specialist skills. We continued to use recruitment fairs to attract new talent to the Alliance. Staff were bedding down in their new roles and teams and staff development/training had started to ensure everyone was clear on their roles and how to use the new technology that had started to be rolled out. The changes to the Environment and Regeneration Directorate Resources Division would have an impact on the Business, Performance and Communications Group and the Finance Group and the Director, KHS was working closely with Adam Wilkinson to ensure this did not affect service delivery on the front line.

(7) **Highways Agency Area 4 Contract** – as previously reported to the Board, KCC, Ringway and Jacobs were creating a joint venture company to bid for the Highways Agency (HA) Area 4 contract. If successful we would be maintaining the motorways and trunk roads in Kent (and parts of West and East Sussex) and take over from the current provider InterRoute. We had a long way to go yet but we had recently been told we had made the tender list and completed the Highways Agency assessment process they called CAT - Capability Assessment Tool. This was a bit like a school 'Ofsted' inspection and was an assessment just of the KCC part of the KHS Alliance. Ringway and Jacobs had already been assessed and had a very good score of their own.

We achieved a score of 167.8, the highest score from the 40 contractors and consultants who had gone through the assessment process up to three times was 187. So for our first assessment we were pretty pleased with our score.

The assessment was made up of 24 separate parts and the good news is that all our scores were above the 'Operationally Effective' rating with 10 being rated as 'Strategically Valuable' and 3 rated as 'External Differentiator' (and we think two of these were the highest CAT scores recorded). The lead CAT assessor said '*KCC had created a unique alliance structure and this was bringing benefits across the service and access to greater expertise and resources that would be available in a traditionally structured arrangement. Coupled with the inherent focus on social responsibility that comes with being a County Council, this gives a highly distinctive character to KCC compared with other suppliers in the CAT program*'.

The assessment report was a very useful check in the progress of KHS and had some very useful improvement actions that we would be taking forward.

(8) The Board noted the positive progress being made to improve service delivery and supported to staff as the organisational changes bedded in.

5. Bluebell Hill Resurfacing Scheme

(Item. 5)

(Report by Head of Countywide Improvements)

(1) The A229, Bluebell Hill, was a major strategic road and carried around 26,000 vehicles per day. Over thirty years of heavy traffic meant that the surface along the uphill section (northbound) of the road had reached the end of its useful life. The surface had developed deep ruts along wheel tracks and in places the deformation extended beneath the subsurface layer. Detailed investigation showed that 3km of the road between its junctions with M20 (Running Horse Roundabout) and M2 was affected, this was therefore included in the list of 2007/08 schemes to be resurfaced at a cost of £1.0 million.

(2) A number of options for doing the works were considered and chief amongst them were:-

- (a) A series of overnight closures
- (b) Contra-flow operation, and

(c) A weekend closure

(3) To cope with the large volume of traffic that the road carried and to minimise disruption would have meant restricting the working period to a few hours a night and up to 30 sessions of overnight site possessions would have been needed to complete the works. The cost of introducing and removal of traffic management and site clearance for each possession would have been in excess of £10,000, therefore resulting in £300,000 additional cost to the scheme.

(4) Closing the road over a weekend offered the quickest, cheapest and least disruptive method of surfacing the road; the whole-road possession offered the best opportunity of achieving a top-quality surface. After careful consideration this option was adopted and KHS were given a short window of 55 hours to complete the works.

(5) This was the largest scheme ever undertaken by KHS over such a short period. A scheme of this magnitude and complexity demanded expert planning and execution. KHS Alliance worked as one team with the single aim of getting the job done. We set to work at 9pm on Friday 28 March, completing the transformation of the worn-out road into a high standard highway fit for the 21st century. Using a team of over 200 staff and 50 machine and construction plant, KHS Alliance worked non-stop to ensure that, come 5am Monday morning, the road would be handed back to the tens of thousands of people who use it to travel from Maidstone to the Medway Towns everyday; we completed the works several hours ahead of schedule.

(6) 5,500 tons of surfacing material, 900 cats-eyes and 6 miles of white lining were replaced. The whole route was litter picked and swept and the drains along it were cleaned to complement the recently installed energy saving bulbs in the street lights. The results speak for themselves; the new surface had much better ride quality, was significantly stronger and quieter than the one it replaced. It also suppressed spray in wet weather, making night-time driving much safer.

(7) Extensive advance publicity on the local radios, on-line articles, on-site information signs and the distribution of over 3000 information leaflets to the local communities meant that traffic along the signed diversion routes ran freely, so disruption and inconvenience to the road users was kept to a minimum. Breakdown trucks were on standby throughout the closure period to rescue any vehicle that broke down on any of the diversion routes. This showed KHS's commitment to "Keeping Kent Moving" A poll by the KM group showed that 88% of the community backed this type of approach to resurfacing major roads which backed KHS's ethos of doing it right the first time, to budget and on time.

(8) This was a significant achievement and was the direct result of joined up working amongst the KHS Alliance partners.

(9) The Board noted the report and requested that its thanks be placed on record for the outstanding work carried out by the KHS Alliance team to deliver on time and budget.

6. Operation Stack and the Lorry Park
(Item. 6)

(Report by Head of Network Management and the Head of Countrywide Improvements)

(1) Operation Stack was a Police led incident that closed the M20 coastbound between junctions 10 and 11 (phase 1) and junctions 8 – 9 (phase 2) when there was disruption at the port of Dover or Eurotunnel through bad weather, industrial action or technical failure.

(2) Between 28 February 2008 and 21 March 2008 Operation Stack was in place for an unprecedented length of time, causing disruption to residents and visitors. For the first time ever, Kent Police made a tactical decision to deploy phase 2 in preference to phase 1 for 2 main reasons:-

- (i) Phase 1 had limited capacity and held only 800 lorries whereas phase 2 held 3,300 lorries.
- (ii) Police resource issues.

(3) During Operation Stack, staff from Kent Highway Services, Emergency Planning and Corporate Communications staff worked with Kent Police to represent the community's interests and to mitigate against congestion on our own road network. This took the form of attendance at Gold and Silver Command Group meetings and Kent Resilience Forum Policy sub-group, as well as sharing information and intelligence and delivering a joint communication strategy.

(4) Although the prolonged nature of Operation Stack was extremely frustrating for the public, we did find that, in time, people staggered journey times and found alternative routes and forms of transport. There were a number of concerns, shared by the public, such as traffic management on and off the motorway during stack, signage, effects on Maidstone, contingency plans and so on, and these were all being explored further with Kent Police and the Highways Agency. A full update would be submitted to the Board at its July meeting.

(5) The disruption caused by Operation Stack as well as significantly inconveniencing the community had an adverse impact on the national economy, because much of the national trade with Continental Europe passed through Kent. This therefore was a national problem and the County Council had been pressing the Government to resolve the issue.

(6) With no other options on the table and given the effect on Kent's economy and communities of Operation Stack and overnight HGV parking on local roads the Council decided that we must lead the way on finding a permanent solution. Working with other agencies we carried out a study which found that there was a need for a lorry park in Kent and that it should be dual purpose. As well as providing secure overnight parking it should be available in the event of Operation Stack. The Freight Transport Association supported the proposal. We agreed with the Department for Transport that we would identify a preferred site.

(7) The severe shortage of suitable secure overnight parking facilities meant that drivers were forced to stop in unsuitable places such as lay-bys, business estates and some near to residential properties. This led to inconvenience to local communities and environmental problems. This was particularly evident in Dover and Ashford and to a lesser extent in Shepway.

(8) In order for the lorry park to provide an effective and workable alternative to Operation Stack, it had to be along the M20 corridor and fairly close to the Channel crossings. A number of sites were explored before reaching a decision about a preferred location. The preferred site was between junctions 10 & 11 on the south side of the M20 between Sellindge and Aldington.

(9) The site, which covered more than 70 acres, was chosen for its good connectivity and proximity to the Channel Tunnel and Dover Docks and because it was isolated from built-up areas. The site was very close to the M20 keeping access roads to a minimum and therefore reducing the impact on the local environment. It was also shielded from view by the Sellindge Converter Station to the east, the M20 to the north, a railway embankment to the south and woodland to the west. There were no planning designations such as AONB or Special Landscape Area applied to the area. To access the site, we proposed on and off slip roads to and from the M20 on both east and west bound carriageways. The site would link to the eastbound carriageway via an overbridge or a tunnel if ground conditions permitted. The site would not have access on to the A20.

(10) The proposed site would provide 500 secure overnight parking spaces for HGVs and an overflow area for up to 2,500 additional HGVs during Operation Stack. The site would have appropriate security, a properly laid out parking area for HGVs, a canteen providing refreshments, toilets, showers and fuel. The remainder of the site would be kept as green as possible and extensive and sympathetic landscaping would be used to further reduce the visual impact.

(11) The County Council's approach had been that the cost of building a lorry park should not fall on Kent's tax payers. Currently 75% of the lorries crossing the Channel were foreign registered and enjoyed cheaper costs than UK firms. The best way to generate the capital to build and run the site was by introducing a vignette system of charges on HGVs entering the country, similar to systems already operating in Austria and Switzerland, we have proposed this to the Government. UK hauliers could be rebated by a corresponding reduction in Vehicle Excise Duty.

(12) This would mean that overnight HGV parking would be free at the lorry park, encouraging HGV drivers to use it. The current cost a night to park on a licensed site was around £20. The proposal meant that there would be no excuse for HGV drivers to park on local roads overnight. At the same time HGV parking ban on local roads could be effectively enforced and there should see an end to lorries parking on verges and lay-bys in many parts of the county. Two further secure overnight lorry parks were also being proposed; one along the M2 corridor and the second along the M25.

(13) During debate Members received a copy of the Campaign to Protect Rural England Kent's reaction to the proposals.

(14) Miss S J Carey moved, Mr C G Findlay seconded as an amendment:-

“That the report which led to the decision to have a lorry park be published, together with the analysis of the alternative sites; and that the Board receive a report on what KCC intended to do short term and long term about transit road freight traffic growth; and that a public consultation be held on the

solutions before any planning application on a specific lorry park site is considered.”

Carried (Mr Muckle and Mr Poole abstained and requested it be recorded)

(15) We were in the early stage of the process; we had discussed the aims of the proposal with the Highways Agency, Kent Police, Kent Fire & Rescue Service and Ashford Borough Council. Their comments were expected by the end of April 2008. This would be followed by a detailed planning process which would include a full public consultation.

(16) The Board noted the report.

7. Satellite Navigation Devices - an update

(Item. 7)

(Report by Head of Network Management)

(1) The report provided an update on the progress by KCC in dealing with the problems associated with satellite navigation devices and other specific matters relating to HGV movements. The March meeting of the Board considered a reference from the Maidstone JTB relating to heavy goods vehicle management to the south and west of Maidstone. The JTB had requested that the Board recommend the funding of necessary surveys to establish the position with regard to HGVs in Yalding and East Farleigh. It was agreed that a report be considered by this Board in May and was covered in paragraph (7) below.

Freight Quality Partnerships

(2) Over the years the Freight Quality Partnerships facilitated by KCC had looked to address the use of the network by HGVs. Through these partnerships, KCC had engaged with Local Hauliers, National Freight Organisations and other stakeholders, such as business associations, District, Parish and Town Councils and Neighbouring Authorities.

(3) Strategic routes across Kent for HGVs had been agreed with the Freight Quality Partnerships and for most areas maps showing the strategic routes had been generated and made available to hauliers. Additionally, the maps also included other points of interest such as restrictions, rest stops and services, so that the most appropriate selection of route could be made. Unfortunately the maps became out-of-date very quickly due to new developments, regenerations, improved highway links and therefore needed regular updating and re-publishing. KCC were in the process of reviewing the current maps and would be updating and publishing a new set of maps this calendar year.

Sat Nav Data

(4) KCC were collating a comprehensive inventory that would provide accurate data relating to road widths, height restrictions, gradients and traffic orders. The data would be given to Ordnance Survey and the Sat Nav companies in order to introduce this data into their devices. In addition, KCC were encouraging Ordnance Survey to carry out regular driven surveys to record the location of traffic orders

(weight limits and one way streets) and supply this information to the sat nav companies.

(5) KCC was keen to see that Sat Nav equipment and data was improved to avoid HGVs being directed down unsuitable roads occurring in future. It was recognised that this was a long term solution due to the complexity of the data that was held by KCC and the method by which data was transferred and utilised by Sat Nav companies. The data was likely to take one to two years to collate and become fully available to the Sat Nav companies.

Route Signage

(6) "Unsuitable for HGVs" signs had been used in Kent for many years to deter drivers from using very minor roads. At present there were no DfT approved "sat nav" signs for use on the public highway in England. There was a concern that the provision of such signs could lead to a proliferation of signs in the countryside, which was in direct conflict with the desire to reduce sign clutter. However KCC would introduce DfT approved multilingual route signing to direct British and foreign lorry traffic to and from commercial premises by the most appropriate routes. The signs would be introduced on the network as and when they had been assessed as a necessity.

HGVs in Yalding and East Farleigh

(7) The Maidstone JTB raised the key issue was the funding of vehicle movement surveys to produce the necessary evidence to instigate a weight limit on Yalding Bridge in order to relieve the area of excessive heavy lorry movements in the area. It was considered that in order to ensure that the imposition of a weight limit and consequent re-direction of lorries did not have an adverse impact on other locations, a Kentwide Freight Strategy would be produced during the current financial year which would consider a number of options. An opportunity would also be taken to up-date the lorry route map which was produced some four years ago and was now out of date. The Freight Strategy, once complete, would be put on a future agenda of this Board. At this point, it was not proposed to take any further action on the imposition of a weight limit on Yalding bridge.

(8) In response to the increasing concerns relating to use of inappropriate routes by HGVs using satellite navigation systems, KCC had been collating complaints received to identify locations that were frequently affected by inappropriate use of minor roads by HGVs.

(9) In response to this KCC were developing the following list of strategies to effectively manage the HGV traffic on its network:-

- Undertake a Kentwide Freight Strategy.
- Introduce multilingual route signing to direct British and foreign lorry traffic to and from commercial premises by the most appropriate routes.
- Update and publicise a 'Kent Lorry Route Map' for lorry drivers to direct them to principal commercial areas.

- Promoting 'Freight Quality Partnerships' to ensure working in partnership with Freight Associations, the police and other bodies to promote good practice and develop innovative ideas.
- Continue regular liaison with the DfT, Ordnance Survey and Sat Nav companies to improve the accuracy and quality of data being provided.
- Continue to press the DfT to provide some leadership in the development of In-Vehicle Information Systems (IVIS) legislation.

(10) The Board noted the report.

8. HA Tactical Diversion Routes

(Item. 8)

(Report by Head of Network Management)

(1) The report provided information on the progress of the proposed HA Tactical Diversion Routes. The Traffic Management Act, and its specific Network Management Duties, emphasised the need for adjacent highway Authorities to work together to reduce congestion on the network.

(2) It was the duty of the local traffic authority to manage their road network with a view to securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network and facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for bordering authorities. This meant that we must proactively manage traffic on the network even if the traffic was a result of an incident caused on any bordering traffic authority's network, and included the Highways Agency motorway & trunk road network.

(3) Over several months we had been working with the HA to identify suitable Tactical Diversion Routes. The success of the work and the progress made over a short period of time had been as a result of each authority's willingness to work harmoniously together to improve how we dealt with the aftermath of congestion as a result of traffic incidents on the motorway and trunk road network.

(4) The Tactical Diversion Routes would be used to divert traffic off the HAs network onto KCC roads to assist in incident management. These would only be used as a last resort. The HA would use its variable message signs to implement Strategic Diversions using its own roads first. In Kent this would involve advance signing from M25 and beyond. When an incident closed a section of motorway at present traffic was given no directions when it was forced to leave the motorway. The purpose of signing a diversion route was to manage the situation. Local traffic might still make its own decision about the route to take but longer distance traffic would be seeking guidance and should be expected to follow the signed route.

(5) The procedure for identifying routes was set out in the National Guidance Framework. This detailed that whilst the HA and local traffic authority would bear their own costs for identifying routes, the HA would fund the introduction of the route, including sign design and, if appropriate, make a contribution to an improvement on a local road to facilitate the establishment of the tactical diversion.

We chose M20 Junctions 2 to 13 to pilot the procedure. There were already a number of de facto diversions in the area and suitable roads linking with M2.

(6) Plans of all the potential routes were drawn up and were then assessed on a risks basis recognising that the potentially high volumes of traffic would be difficult to handle on local roads. We identified certain areas as unsuitable for use, such as A20 through Ditton and all town centre routes in Maidstone, and these had been excluded.

(7) The most suitable route for each section of motorway was then examined in detail. KHS surveyed the routes and made proposals for various improvements that would mitigate the impact of the diverted traffic. The improvements had been agreed and would be funded by the HA. The routes identified were principally on 'A' roads or major strategic routes that were capable of occupying large volumes of traffic at any given time.

(8) KHS and HA were currently preparing costs for the improvements in order to get the necessary funding from the HA. The majority of the work comprised signing the route, with agreed symbols fixed to KHS signs, some carriageway markings, improvements to traffic signal operations to allow special timings to be introduced remotely and some other small measures. Each route would only be available for use once the work was complete.

(9) In the event of an incident on the HA network that required the activation of a Tactical Diversion route, the implementation would only be with the agreement of KHS. We would need to compile information on conditions on the route, including roadworks, events and other conditions which would prevent the use of the route. This would be a responsibility of our Network Management Team. We would look to combine all the factors into a common database and make them available to the HA through a preferred system called eLGIN (Electronic Local Government Information Network).

(10) Once the initial routes had been formally agreed and the process for establishing and operating the routes was understood, it was intended to carry out the same process for the remaining motorway and trunks roads across the County. A proposed implementation timeline was included in the report and would be delivered subject to the authorisation from KHS of the proposed routes and approval from the Highways Agency to implement the recommended route improvements. Further routes would be reported to the Highways Advisory Board in the coming months for information.

(11) The Board noted the report.

9. Proposed KCC Permit Scheme

(Item. 9)

(Report by Head of Network Management)

(1) Under the Traffic Management Act, Local Highway Authorities (LHAs) had been given the option to operate a permit scheme in accordance with Part 3 of the Act. Permit schemes were designed to give the local authority further control over

all works on the highway. It was intended that LHAs would have powers to direct all roadworks with regard to where, when and how they might be carried out.

(2) KCC had made a strategic and political decision to introduce and operate a permit scheme at the earliest possible opportunity. We had been working in partnership with the DfT on developing a KCC Permit Scheme and at the present time we were the first County to implement a scheme.

(3) KHS believed that a permit scheme was the right option for KCC for the following reasons:-

- met requirements under TMA Network Management Duty
- assisted towards improving the use of road space by proactively managing roadworks
- satisfied the public desire for KHS to improve the control of roadworks
- improved the ability to minimise disruption from roadworks
- increased KCC's powers to direct and control activities on the highway
- improved co-ordination and planning of activities on the highway
- increased the scope for collaborative working arrangements and best practice.

(4) The report provided an update on the progress of the proposed KCC Permit Scheme and the consultation process. A summary of the key issues within the scheme were detailed in the report.

(5) KHS had decided to introduce a structured timeline for **all** works promoters to adhere to when applying for a permit to ensure that they had sufficient time to review all applications. The proposed timeline forced works promoters to apply to work on the highway up to three months in advanced of the start date.

(6) The report set out the Permit Fees KHS proposed to charge. KHS proposed to introduce reductions in permit fees to encourage best practice amongst works promoters. The fee reductions were:-

- 30% discount for shared sites
- 30% discount for guaranteed extending working hours (e.g. 24 hour working)
- 5% discount for Considerate Contractor Scheme Members who met site safety standards

DfT had stipulated that any permit scheme must be designed to run as 'cost neutral'. The income must be ring fenced to offset the ongoing operating costs for the scheme (e.g. staff, systems).

(7) KHS had decided to introduce fines for certain offences as follows:-

- Working without a permit (£500)
- Contravening the permit condition (£120)
- No information board or permit displayed on site (£120)
- Overrun charges (up to £2500 per day)

(8) KHS were proposing to increase the application period for a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (road closure) from 6 weeks to 12 weeks. The extension would allow public transport operators the statutory 56 days to inform the Traffic Commissioner of a change of route.

(9) KHS were proposing to introduce restrictions to activities in the highway following substantial roadworks such as resurfacing of up to 5 years. Certain activities would be exempt from the restrictions such as emergency works, service connections, etc.

(10) From the KPIs proposed by the DfT, KHS had decided to introduce four that reflected our approach. These were as follows:-

- KPI 1. The number of permit and permit variation applications received, granted and refused.
- KPI 2. The number of conditions applied by condition type.
- KPI 3. The number of approved extensions.
- KPI 4. The number of inspections carried out to monitor conditions.

Additional performance indicators were being developed within Network Management so that the impact of the permit scheme could be evaluated in qualitative and quantitative terms.

(11) Under Permit Scheme Regulation 13, DfT required that all prospective permit scheme authorities must consult externally for a period of 12 weeks. KHS commenced the external consultation on 12 February 2008 and decided to run the process until 25 April 2008. The consultation had consisted of a consultation seminar held on 10 March 2008 and a consultation questionnaire that consisted of 24 key questions related specifically to parts of the scheme where KHS had made decisions.

(12) The consultees had been carefully chosen to ensure that we were consulting as wide an audience as possible. These included the Emergency Services, Utilities, Transport Operators, Councillors, etc. All comments received through the consultation process had been published on the KHS website along with KHS responses. So far, we had received positive support for the proposed scheme, the consultation process and for the general way in which KHS were dealing with the scheme.

(13) KHS had decided to introduce a Permit Scheme at the earliest possible time. The earliest a Permit Scheme could be introduced was 1 October 2008. KHS

planned to implement the permit scheme in three stages. Stage 1 would be introducing permits on KHS works, phase 2 would be permitting utility works on 0, 1, 2 roads and stage 3 would be introducing permits on all works on all roads. There would be a 3 month gap between each stage to ensure that we used the time to improve systems and processes.

(14) In early May, KHS would be submitting a final KHS Permit Scheme to the DfT along with an application to operate such a scheme. The DfT would then be given up to 4 months to review the application and if successful KHS would be given an Order from the Secretary of State to run the Permit Scheme.

(15) The Board gave their support to the Permit Scheme.

10. Management of Footway Parking

(Item. 10)

(Report by Head of Network Management)

(1) The 12 Kent District/Borough and City Councils were responsible for the practical application of parking policy within a framework set by the County Council. The report summarised the current situation with regard to the management of footway parking. There was a general concern that cars parked on pavements were a problem in many parts of the County. The main concerns were:-

- Parked cars caused serious obstruction on the footway which caused a safety issue to pedestrians.
- Cars caused damage to the structure of the pavement.
- Uneven pavements resulted in trip hazards for pedestrians and created an unsightly environment.

(2) Without the implementation of a Traffic Regulation Order, the responsibility for the enforcement of footway parking remained with the Police. However, this was not a high priority for them and the Police might only choose to enforce if the parked vehicle was causing an obstruction to other road users. There was a public perception that all parking issues were now dealt with by the Local Authority and it was expected by the public that Civil Enforcement Officers would deal with the issue of vehicles parked on a footway. The Police would support the implementation of a Traffic Regulation Order allowing both the introduction of signs which would act as a visual deterrent to the motorist and the enforcement of footway parking by Civil Enforcement Officers as part of their day to day functions.

(3) The report updated a previous HAB report of September 2004 concerning problems caused by vehicles parking on footways and the proposals to introduce a pilot scheme in Canterbury, with a view to investigating whether such prohibitions could, in future, be applied more widely. In March 2007, Canterbury Council introduced a footway parking enforcement pilot scheme, by means of a Traffic Regulation Order, in 4 areas in the City's enforcement area which were identified following verbal and written complaints from the general public. For the first month written warning notices were issued and formal enforcement commenced on 1 April 2007. Each of the areas in the trial were covered by the normal enforcement beats

and the frequency of enforcement was not changed for the specific purpose of dealing with footway prohibition.

(4) The costs incurred by Canterbury Council for the signs, erection of signs and advertisements for the trial totalled £3500. During the first 9 months of the trial up to 24 January 2008 a total of 31 Penalty Charge Notices were issued, of which 29 were paid and 2 were cancelled due to inaccurate enforcement. The income generated through the issue of fixed penalty notices totalled £960. However no extra staff resources were required and 'set up' costs were a one off expenditure. The trial indicated that footway prohibition was not a substantial income generator and unlikely as a specific enforcement activity to become self-financing. However, as part of other routine enforcement, the trial had elicited an income of £960 that would not otherwise have been collected.

(5) Based on the figures from the pilot scheme it would take 3 - 4 years to recoup the initial set up costs required to enforce footway parking, however other trial areas might incur less initial costs, dependent upon the size of the location and the amount of signs and advertising that was required.

(6) There was anecdotal evidence that the enforcement of footway parking in the pilot areas had been successful in reducing the problem and the general public had been generally supportive of the concept. The issue of Penalty Charge Notices to offenders appeared to have raised awareness and had increased compliance with the regulations which was shown by the relatively small number of Penalty Charge Notices issued and the high acceptance of liability for this contravention.

(7) The instances of parked cars causing obstruction to pedestrians in the pilot area had dramatically decreased leading to an increased safe environment for footway users. Damage to the structure of the pavement had also reduced, resulting in fewer trip hazards, an improved environment and a future saving on repairs carried out by the Highway Authority.

(8) Canterbury Council had reported to Members of their Joint Transportation Board with proposals to extend footway enforcement into 3 further areas that had objective evidence of a problem; had the support of local residents; were within existing enforcement areas; and where problems could not be resolved through cost effective physical measures such as bollards.

(9) Maidstone Council along with Gravesham Council would also be reporting to Members of their Joint Transportation Boards to request Members approval to commence the enforcement of footway parking at specified locations within their areas.

(10) The Board supported the proposal that District/Borough and City Councils continue to introduce and increase the enforcement of footway parking. This could be carried out on a gradual approach, in areas which had objective evidence of a problem, had the support of local residents, were within existing enforcement areas and where problems could not be resolved through cost effective physical measures.

11. Transportation and Safety Package Programme 2008/09

(Item. 11)

(Report by Head of Transport and Development)

(1) Kent County Council's (KCC) local transport funding for 2008/09 was determined by the Department for Transport (DfT) in December 2007 as part of its assessment and settlement announcement regarding Kent's transport strategy, the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The funding had been provided to support local transport schemes that delivered the LTP, which itself set out the County Council's approach to achieving a number of key transport objectives:-

- Improve access to key services by sustainable modes of transport;
- Tackle the occurrence of peak hour congestion, particularly in larger urban areas;
- Improve road safety by reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured on Kent's roads;
- Improve local air quality, particularly in designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).

(2) Kent's LTP funding for 2008/09 was £12.883M, which consisted of 67% supported borrowing and 33% grant. An additional sum of £0.5M income from the Dartford Tolls was to be added to the fund for schemes in Kent Thameside, giving a total budget of £13.383M. Of the £13.383M, £2.233M would be used to fund detailed design and supervision of construction of 2008/09 schemes and forward design of 2009/10 schemes, and £1.5M was required to complete the 2007/08 programme. This resulted in a budget of £9.65M for scheme implementation.

(3) The report detailed how the funding allocation was proposed to be spent on implementing Kent's Transportation and Safety Package Programme. It was an update of a draft list of schemes presented to the Board in September 2007. A summary of the allocations together with countywide schemes was shown in Appendix 1 to the report. The schemes proposed for 2008/09 were presented in order of District and included the individual PIPKIN score, scheme rank (out of 124 schemes) and cost.

(4) The proposed Transportation and Safety Package Programme for 2008/09 represented a significant milestone in delivering Kent's local transport priorities and establishing local investment programmes in that it had been devised using Kent's Scheme Prioritisation Methodology, PIPKIN. A report outlining the principles and a proposal to implement PIPKIN was presented to the Board in July 2006, and was approved by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste on the strength of the recommendations of this Board.

(5) The introduction of PIPKIN had resulted in all scheme proposals being subjected to a formal assessment, then being prioritised in accordance with their likely impact and wider contribution towards Kent's strategic and local transport objectives. PIPKIN measured the relevant merit of a scheme in comparison to others submitted in the same financial year, it did not result in schemes being rejected.

(6) PIPKIN provided the County Council with the ability to assess an infinite number of schemes and between February and May 2007, the County Council formally assessed and prioritised a list of 286 scheme contenders. The cumulative build cost of the schemes equated to more than £20M. Revisions to the viability of some schemes and the inclusion of others in the 2007/08 programme had resulted in a final list of 124 schemes to be funded from the 2008/09 budget.

(7) Kent's scheme priorities for 2008/09 provided ongoing investment in urban traffic management measures, including UTMC in Maidstone and Canterbury and support for local public transport services, particularly in Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) areas. The proposed schemes also included a programme of Casualty Reduction Measures (CRMs) and support for continued investment in sustainable transport measures including Smarter Choices initiatives.

(8) The proposed programme included:-

- Following the successful launch of the Maidstone Traffic Management Centre funding was allocated for the continued expansion of **UTMC across Kent** (£250k) and targeted funding would be used to support UTMC in Canterbury (£400K), Dartford (£100k) and Gravesham (£50k);
- Investment in **Quality Bus Partnership** (QBP) and public transport initiatives Countywide (over £3.4m) including infrastructure to support **Park & Ride** in Ashford (£250k) as the first step towards delivering Smartlink, and also in Maidstone (£700k).
- Improved access to key services by **walking and cycling**, including improved access to schools through a countywide programme of Safer Routes to Schools and Smarter Choices initiatives (over £3.2M) and improvements to Public Rights of Way countywide (over £400k);
- Phase 1 funding for improvements to the **A2 Slip Roads** in Canterbury (£200K);
- Investment in **road safety** initiatives through a targeted programme of Countywide Casualty Reduction Measures (CRMs) (£400K).

(9) All the schemes listed in the report would be reported to the appropriate Joint Transportation Boards and all schemes should be disclosed in local land charge searches.

(10) The proposed Transportation and Safety Package Programme for 2008/09 represented a balanced programme of investment for Kent. The schemes demonstrated the strategic nature of the proposed programme. A key strength of the PIPKIN process and therefore the programmes of investment derived from it, was that whilst PIPKIN recognised the need to tackle strategically important issues it also recognised the genuine need to focus on localised issues. This feature had enabled KCC to provide ongoing investment to improve access to local services, and promote and support local sustainable travel initiatives including public

transport, walking and cycling. This approach also enabled Kent to prioritise local safety schemes using data relating to personal injury crashes.

(11) The Board:-

- (a) supported the proposal for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that the proposed Transportation and Safety Package Programme for 2008/09, set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved;
- (b) provided ongoing support for the development and application of Kent's Scheme Prioritisation Model, PIPKIN; and
- (c) agreed that the Joint Transportation Boards receive a report on the approved schemes for their area.