KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

HIGHWAYS ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the Highways Advisory Board held on Tuesday, 4 March 2008 at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Harrison-Mee, Director, Kent Highway Services; Mr D Hall, Head of Transport and Development; Mr N Bateman, Head of Technical Services; Mr D Bond, Transportation Manager; Mr J Farmer, Regeneration and Projects Manager; Mr M Palmer, Head of Finance; Mrs K Putnam, Regeneration & Projects Manager; Mr A Riley, KHS Landscape Manager; Mr J Whitehorn, Operational Finance Manager; and the Head of Democratic Services (represented by Mrs K Mannering).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes
(Item 3)

(1) Further to paragraph 8 – Fees and Charges for 2008/09, Mr Whitehorn informed the Board that the:-

(a) £120 fee agreed for a Pavement Licence referred to 'A' boards and goods on display, as well as tables and chairs;
(b) proposed £390 fee for review of independent safety audit was no longer appropriate; and
(c) note re traffic counts indicating no charge to members of the public/parish/district councils should be deleted and thereby enable actual costs be recovered on a discretionary basis.

(2) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2008 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

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

(1) The Director's update set out some of the key issues and developments in KHS.

(2) **Traffic Management Centre** - the recent heavy rain gave an unexpected insight into life without the Traffic Management Centre (TMC) and the effect it had on Maidstone town centre. The heavy rain led to flooding and the evacuation of the Traffic Management Centre on 15 January, and, as a result it was not able to change the traffic signal timings to respond to varying traffic flows and prevent queues building, nor to use the roadside variable message signs to inform people. This led to pretty big queues in and around Maidstone. Fortunately, the TMC was back up and running in two days. This showed the benefit of the system that was now being rolled out into Canterbury and Kent Thameside.

At a recent Maidstone Business Forum meeting with the Town Centre Manager, Borough Council Members and business representatives all agreed the TMC was helping and a real benefit. This was good news and a real sign of approval of the hard work of staff and investment by KHS. Caroline Bruce, Acting Head of Network Management, was leading on this.

(3) **Public satisfaction tracker survey** - Kent Highway Services latest residents survey was showing increasing levels of public satisfaction. Every year 1200 residents from across Kent were asked their views on the condition of roads, pavements and streetlights in the County. The headline 2007 results were set out in the report and traditionally progress was measured through something called 'Net-Satisfaction'. This was a figure calculated by taking the % of people who were dis-satisfied with the service from the % who were satisfied. This gave a true reflection of the service and a balance between those happy, those un-happy and those who were not sure. Members would remember that a positive net satisfaction in 2006 was achieved for the first time since surveys began 20 years ago.

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

(4) **Dealing with service requests and calls** – we were now reporting progress on dealing with service requests on a weekly basis to managers and staff. This reporting by the new seven service groups ensured managers got regular information about how their teams were performing. Over the last few months we had reduced the number of service requests that were still open after 28 days from over 2000 to under 500. We still had more to do however to meet the answering letter target within the 10 working day target. Again we were reporting results on a weekly basis but were currently achieving around 85% replied in 10 working days. More still had to be done to provide a more responsive service to the public and as the new teams were fully in place we would be driving this harder.

(5) **Annual Operating plan** – the draft of the 2008/9 KHS Operating plan was well underway and a draft was available for any member of HAB who would like to review and comment on the draft document. David Beaver, Acting Head of Business, Performance and Communications, was leading on this.

(6) **Inspector Vans and IT 'handhelds'**– The new highway and RASWA roadworks inspector vans would be rolled out during March and April. We would have 60 KHS branded vehicles out and about across the County. Inspectors were now being trained on their new 'handheld' devises which were mini computers that could be used on their inspections to speed up communications and the logging of faults. Kim Hills, Head of Community Operations, was leading on this work.

(7) **Response to Insurance Claims** - Over the last year the performance of processing insurance claims had been patchy. With potential changes to legislation proposed requiring shorter time scales, a review of the system was necessary. Initial meetings had been held with the corporate insurance team and the authority's insurer, Zurich. A small working group had been established and some areas of improvement already identified. These included a new electronic claims form (ensuring appropriate information was provided by the claimant), greater use of the contact centre and the new

KHS IT systems and earlier site visits. Kim Hills, Head of Community Operations, was leading on this work.

(8) **EDF and connections for streetlights** – we continued to be affected by EDF failure to deliver a responsive service for power supply faults and new connections. Norman Bateman, the Head of Technical Services was leading the work to get a better service and EDF were committed to a 'Excellence in Un-metered Connections' project to meet and exceed Ofgem targets. The project would cover connections, faults and emergencies in relationship to street lighting, targeting timescales and reporting procedures. We were keeping a close eye on the project and monitoring connection times to ensure that it delivered improvements.

(9) **Highway Drainage** – a paper on highway drainage was presented to the Board at the last meeting. Information on highway flooding was still being collected and this would be the basis of future improvements to the drainage system and asset. The new Drainage team within Norman Bateman's Technical Services Group were reviewing all programmed gully cleansing activity to ensure we had better information about when work was planned and better cyclic maintenance of known hot spots.

(10) **A229 Bluebell Hill, Aylesford resurfacing** – We were putting in place a weekend closure on the uphill stretch of the A229 between 28 and 31 March to resurface the road. This would be from 21.00 hrs on 28 March until 05.00 hrs on 31 March. We had decided on a short, sharp hit over a weekend to ensure disruption was kept to a minimum. Our crews would be working 24 hours a day for both days laying 6,400 tonnes of material using 3 paving machines on the 3km scheme length. We would be putting in place an extensive publicity campaign to advise residents and road users as this was a key strategic route and the closure would cause disruption. Behdad Haratbar, Acting Head of Countywide Improvements, was leading on this.

(11) **Traffic Management Act update** – The Traffic Management Act 2004 had offered the opportunity for local highway authorities to introduce a permit scheme across their networks. The schemes had been designed with the aim of improving the management and co-ordination of all activities on the highway therefore minimising disruption and providing more reliable journey times for the travelling public. Kent County Council (KCC) had taken the decision to make a bid to the Secretary of State for Transport to run a permit scheme across the highway network in Kent. Our formal bid would be submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Department for Transport in May 2008. It was the intention to begin the introduction of our Permit Scheme in the last quarter of 2008 by permitting our own works for a 4 month period. It must be stressed that the dates could be only indicative at the current time. KCC would be one of the first authorities across the country to make an application for a permit scheme and there were many processes and guidance documents to be put in place. All local highway authorities were reliant upon the IT software providers to release the necessary applications around August time. Until the packages were released, installed and tested we would not be in a position to confirm the roll out date of our full permit scheme system. Caroline Bruce, Acting Head of Network Management, was leading on this.

(12) **Speed Management in Kent** - a successful launch of a new 'Understanding' leaflet and the PIPKIN process to assess schemes that 'change' the highway layout was held with Members and Parish Town Councils on 10 January. The conference, chaired by Keith Ferrin, was designed to explain KHS's new policy on local speed limits and traffic management schemes. In future any request for us to make improvements to the road must be supported by the local community in the area (for example through a known group, parish or town council). Information had been sent out to Members and Parishes

who were unable to attend the conference. David Hall, Head of Transport and Development, was leading on this.

(13) **New Quiet Surfacing** – following the successful trial of a new low noise surfacing on the A26 at Tonbridge we would be developing a policy and priority system to ensure sites for resurfacing were chosen fairly and prioritised in a quantitative manner. The policy would be submitted to the next Board. Behdad Haratbar, Acting Head of Countywide Improvements, was leading on this.

(14) **Re-organising KHS** – the new KHS structure was now around 75% populated with on-going recruitment processes both internal and external to fill the remaining posts by April. Two recruitment fairs had been organised to attract new talent to the Alliance. 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 I am working closely with Adam Wilkinson to ensure this did not affect service delivery on the front line. The organisation structure and posts currently filled was detailed in the Appendix to the report.

(15) **Graduate programme** – I am pleased to announce that a new engineering stream had been added to the successful Corporate 'Kent Graduate Programme'. This would roll out in June and we hoped to have two graduates working across the Alliance and ultimately taking up full time employment with us. This first phase was focussed on Transport and Development where there currently was a skills shortage. David Beaver, Acting Head of Business, Performance and Communications, was leading.

(16) During debate the Chairman referred to paragraph (8) above, and informed the Board that he had already met with 2 of EDF's senior managers who explained their reasons for non-performance, but these were unconvincing. It was now his intention to meet with the Managing Director of EDF in an effort to finally resolve the issues.

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

3. Highway Maintenance Budget for 2008/09

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

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

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

(3) The "Highway Maintenance Budget Model" report to the Board on 10 January 2006 described how the budget model had been developed for distributing the available funds. The report recommended that:-

- Allocations for highway assets were based on a relative assessment of their degree of depreciation, and

- Allocations to the areas were based upon an assessment of the size and condition of their networks.

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

(4) The Budget Model followed a process that:-

- Set out the revenue and capital budgets available for highway maintenance,

- Separated out the budget necessary for Operational maintenance (works that included safety repairs by NOMU gangs and routine maintenance such as gully emptying)

- Determined the remaining budget available for Repairs (works that maintained the structural integrity of the network)

- Allocated the Repairs budget between the various highway assets; and

- Finally allocated Operations and Repairs budgets to the new Services.

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

(5) The gross highway revenue and capital budgets were set out in table 2 of the report. The next stage in the budget process was to determine and separate out the Community Operations and Technical Services Operational maintenance budgets from the remainder of the budget available for highway maintenance. In calculating the budgets, an allowance for contract inflation had been included to maintain the current minimum level of Operational maintenance. Separating out the budgets for Operational maintenance from the overall maintenance budget determined the balance available for Repairs. This was summarised in table 3 of the report.

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

(7) The £24,445k Repairs budget consisted of £4,767k of Revenue and £18,928k of Capital funding. As mentioned previously, the HAB report of 10 January 2006 recommended that the Repairs budget be allocated to the various asset groups depending on the relative need of those assets. The relative need had been determined by evaluating the degree of depreciation of each of the assets and calculating the annual budgets necessary to address that depreciation. The budget model allocated the Repairs budget

depending on those relative annual needs. The resultant distribution of the remaining Repairs budget across asset groups, after deducting £750k for the second phase of LED traffic signal conversion and signal refurbishments, was shown in table 5 of the report.

(8) The next step was to allocate money to the new Community Operations and Technical Services teams and areas. The Budget model did this by assessing relative need within each district taking a range of factors into account that represented the size and condition of their highway infrastructure. In previous years a table showed the distribution to the Divisions but as these were now being phased out, although the district boundaries were still used as building blocks in the model, the funds for each asset group were no longer sub-divided in this way. A summary of the financial allocation for maintenance was provided in table 6 of the report.

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

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

(11) The Board supported the proposal for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that the Highway Maintenance budget for 2008/09 be approved as set out in the report.

Following a proposal by the Chairman, Members agreed to consider Item 9, followed by Item 8, prior to Item 6.

4. Speed Management in Kent

(Item 9 – Report by Head of Transportation and Development)

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

(2) The County Council received approximately 30 requests per month per division, often from individual members of the public, requesting some form of traffic speed control. In trying to be helpful, the County Council committed a significant resource to researching the reasons behind most of those requests. In the vast majority of cases, perception was not reality. Equally, there were a number of examples of speed control measures, such as traffic calming, which were both inappropriate in scale and unpopular with some members of the local community. There was no doubt that work on dealing with individual requests diverted transportation teams from undertaking more strategic work which was important in the context of the challenges which faced Kent.

(3) It was important that the County Council used its resources to the best effect. The recent introduction of PIPKIN demonstrated that the County Council wished to base criteria for expenditure on highway and transport improvements scientifically and not according to the greatest pressure. Equally, the work being undertaken on Government Circular 1/2006 previously reported to the Board would audit speed limits on all A and B class roads in Kent by 2012.

(4) Kent County Council held a PIPKIN Seminar for Parish Councils in January 2008. At the Conference, Parishes received a copy of the 'Understanding Speed Management in Kent'. A copy would be sent to all of those Parishes which were unable to send a representative to the seminar, and a copy of the text of the leaflet was set out in the Appendix to the report.

(5) In essence Kent residents were being asked to gain reasonable community support for any proposal relating to speed management. Once received, a data led approach would be used to determine the outcome as detailed in the Understanding Leaflet.

(6) During debate the Chairman referred to the draft Minutes of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board of 21 January 2008. Following consideration of a report relating to Heavy Goods Vehicle Management – 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 heavy goods vehicles in Yalding and Farleigh. The request had not been received, and, therefore, was not included on this agenda.

(7) Following various comments and requests from Members, the Board:-

(a) agreed that a joint review with the police and relevant agencies be carried out into the increase in deaths on Maidstone roads, and a report submitted to the Maidstone JTB and this Board;

(b) agreed that a report be submitted to the Board's meeting in May relating to the provision of 20mph zones in the vicinity of schools;

(c) agreed that the Heavy Goods Vehicle Management report referred to in paragraph (6) above be expanded and submitted to the Board's meeting in May; and

(d) noted the report.

5. Highway Tree Inspections – Customer Care

(Item 8 – Report by Alan Riley, KHS Landscape Manager)

(1) At Highways Advisory Board (HAB) on 1 May 2007, a paper on highway tree management was presented and the following adopted by Members:-

- Tree management procedure.
- Preparation and adoption of a tree policy.
- Purchase of the Confirm tree modules system.
- Use of preferred arboricultural contractors by all KHS partners

(2) At HAB on 18 September 2007, a paper on a highway tree policy was presented and adopted by Members. The purpose of this paper was to propose the adoption of a change in procedure when dealing with customer enquiries and complaints in respect of highway trees which would result in improved service delivery across a number of areas.

(3) The adoption of a Highway Tree Policy had provided clarity in a number of areas of highway tree management and had provided a consistent approach to making decisions ensuring that priority was always given to safety issues.

(4) From 1 April 2007 the arboricultural team took over the responsibility for all aspects of tree management including routine safety inspections and customer enquiries. Work was ongoing with the KHS Contact Centre to ensure that customer calls were directed to the right place and were properly dealt with within the appropriate timescales.

(5) 437 Priority 1 (P1) calls had been received from the KHS Contact Centre and dealt with. P1 calls involved trees that had failed or were in imminent danger of failing and average response time had been well under two hours.

(6) Approximately 2500 Priority 2 (P2) calls had been received. P2 calls related to general, rather than legal nuisance issues. Safety issues were always dealt with as P1. Approximately 25% of the P2 calls had resulted in some form of remedial works on site. General nuisance issues included leaf and seed fall, sap deposition, blocking of light and interference with television reception. The total volume of calls for 07/08 was anticipated to be in the region of 4000.

(7) A number of calls were filtered out by the Contact Centre but generally all tree related calls came through to the arboricultural team for attention. A number were dealt with immediately by letter or by telephone with an explanation that the type of problem indicated was not one that a responsible tree owner was required to deal with or that the works did not fall under the remit of KHS e.g. clearance of overhead services. The remainder of calls required an inspection. These were grouped into geographical areas to ensure best use of time and travel resources. An analysis of figures from April 2007 showed that in 75% of cases the inspection resulted in a decision not to carry out any works. The main reasons were that the complaint or enquiry had been overstated or was a general nuisance issue, as outlined above, that KHS was not required to deal with. The 25% requiring works was generally related to trees in decline, vehicular damage, vandalism and other non predictable events.

(8) The process of managing calls was a drain on the resources available to manage and enhance the highway tree stock. Due to the volume of P2 enquiries and the need to prioritise P1 visits and works there could be a delay before a response was given to the enquirer. The delay often led to an expectation that works would be undertaken. Customer feedback in the event that no works were undertaken was often critical of the delay rather than the decision.

(9) KHS met its duty of care by undertaking regular safety inspections of all highway trees based on the classification of the road. Current inspection frequencies were two years and five years. The asset database was an ongoing project and as it was developed it was likely that inspection frequencies would be refined to align with an identified risk. Current information recorded related only to trees requiring works but all trees were inspected and the inspection date recorded.

(10) The asset database would include information on tree characteristics and dimensions and actions would include an assessment by an inspector that, under normal circumstances, would take the tree through to the next inspection cycle.

(11) The current and future inspection processes were robust and defendable and took into account the period until the next inspection. There should be no need, under normal circumstances, to undertake tree works between inspection cycles except for emergency and programmed cyclical maintenance works. On the same basis there should be no need to carry out additional tree inspections between inspection cycles. Customers

should be given details of the inspection frequency and the date of the last inspection along with a copy of the 'Understanding leaflet – How we look after trees on the highway'.

(12) Where an enquiry related to a changed circumstance, such as disease or physical damage to a tree, then an interim inspection would be undertaken and the records updated. It was likely that some customers would, despite the justification of the process, complain about the lack of an inspection linked directly to their enquiry. Some customers would exaggerate the safety aspects of an enquiry to ensure that an inspection was undertaken. Both these issues existed within the current system of enquiries and should have no significant impact on the revised process. Overall the level of customer satisfaction was expected to increase with a quicker decision making process that still took into account safety of the highway.

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

(14) The Board approved:-

(a) the adoption of the revised process for dealing with customer enquiries; and

(b) the use of savings from the revised approach for other elements of the tree management and enhancement programme.

6. Dover Priory Station Approach – Detailed Design Concepts

(Item 6 – Report by Katherine Putnam, Regeneration and Projects Manager)

(1) The report advised the Board on scheme progress to re-configure Dover Priory Station forecourt and the easterly section of Folkestone Road (from the railway bridge to Effingham Street junction), Dover. The report presented the detailed designs including the art interventions; examined traffic and environmental issues; feedback from the consultation process; clarified funding sources; and outlined the delivery programme.

(2) The Board was asked to support the detailed designs and subsequent procurement process for reconfiguring Dover Priory Station forecourt and the easterly section of Folkestone Road into a quality urban space that acted as a key 'gateway/arrival space' into Dover town centre, and recommended to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Supporting Independence that the scheme goes out to tender along with all the necessary approvals.

(3) The Dover Pride Regeneration Strategy, Dover's town centre Masterplan and the Public Realm Strategy were key drivers in transforming the perception of the town centre. The improvement of the public realm was an integral part of an overall strategy for Dover town centre, which built on the 9 major projects outlined in the Public Realm Strategy (July 2006) for Dover town centre.

(4) Throughout the extensive consultation process to date many stakeholders, interest groups and local residents had recognised that Dover town centre's current transport infrastructure presented physical and psychological barriers that severed the town centre from its environs. The current road network hindered a comprehensive approach to outward and connected expansion that should place a strong emphasis on high quality public transport, a safer walking environment (for both the able bodied and the disabled) and safer cycling routes rather than car use.

(5) A comprehensive and innovative approach to implementing high quality design to all new and existing areas of public realm, public open space and traffic/pedestrian management within Dover town centre was acknowledged as a high priority by Dover Pride. The quality of improvements to the public realm would be critical in setting the context and a benchmark for the transformation of the town centre, whilst at the same time avoiding abortive work.

(6) More importantly, if not implemented, it was unlikely that businesses, developers and new residents would be attracted to the town in sufficient numbers to achieve this transformation. Development sites would remain empty, external investment would be harder to attract and the town centre will not improve.

(7) The Dover Pride Board on 14 July 2006 considered a report on the Public Realm Strategy and its 9 major projects, and agreed to the importance of preparing concepts and detailed designs for Dover Priory Station Approach and the easterly section of Folkestone Road, the first major project emerging from the Public Realm Strategy (July 06).

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

(9) In overall terms, the project was very much an exemplar and innovation project, which aimed to radically change the station's external environment. The scheme had a number of aims and objectives, which could broadly be summarised as follows:-

- increasing 'connectivity' by creating better links between the railway station (to be linked to the CTRL in 2009 when the rail passenger usage by local people as well as visitors to Dover would increase considerably above existing levels by some 400,000 per annum), the docks, the town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods such as Tower Hamlets (one of the most deprived areas of east Kent);
- tackling the road network and creating a pedestrian & cyclist friendly environment;
- ensuring a positive sense of arrival by train and/or bus at key nodes, including the railway station forecourt as an external reception space whilst providing adequate parking for commuters, where a high quality entrance to the town centre was required; and
- improving public safety and help reduce crime in the locality.

(10) The scheme goes beyond the requirements of a traditional highway design by incorporating the facets of good urban design in order to deliver high quality public realm which would compliment the future development aspirations in the town centre. There was considerable overlap and interaction between the public highway space, the station forecourt, existing links to adjacent neighbourhoods, nearby development opportunities, and the mutual benefits were highlighted as follows:-

- **Character** – a place with its own identity.
- **Continuity** – a place where public & private spaces were distinguished but complimentary.
- **Quality** – a place with attractive and successful public realm and outdoor areas.
- **Ease of Movement** – a place that was easy to get to and move through.
- **Legibility** – a place that had a clear image and was easy to understand.
- **Adaptability** – a place that easily changed.
- **Diversity** – a place with variety and choice.

(11) The proposals were exciting and traditional highway standards could not be applied in the normal way. As the detailed designs had developed, a balance had been struck between the purist urban design aspirations and the operational, buildability and maintenance aspects, and all alongside innovative and high quality.

(12) An Integrated Design Team (IDT) had been set up to deliver the project, with consultants Jacobs UK Ltd (Maidstone office). The team included engineers, landscape architects, a Public Art Project Manager (Sarah Wang) and a Lead Artist (Jacqueline Poncelet), both of whom were of international repute. Building on an Art Plan for the project, Public Art was an integral part of the engineering design; it also included specifically commissioned art works in appropriate spaces created by the scheme design; and an outreach project to engage with the local community. All members of the IDT worked closely together with the ultimate goal that the scheme be a well-balanced multi-functional project of the highest standard.

(13) The need to de-clutter, make safe, minimise road signage & markings, improve wayfinding, introduce better landscaping, use quality materials and create an enhanced and widened public realm for increased social interaction had been maintained throughout the scheme development.

(14) Over a period of months, an outline design scheme/masterplan had evolved in close consultation with the Client Group and wider stakeholders. Elements intrinsic to the concept design included:-

- the concept of a “arrival space” onto the main station forecourt where there was better balance between the pedestrians, buses, taxis and motorist;
- improved access, facilities and service penetration for buses and taxis within the station environs and beyond, to strengthen the overall transport hub;
- an improved pedestrian and cyclist environment enhancing existing routes and facilities between the station and the town centre, and adjacent communities such as Tower Hamlets (including improvements and realignment of the southerly section of the Priory Steps footpath (a Public Right of Way) as phase 1), and landmarks such as Western Heights;
- opening up views into and out of the station environs, to enhance visual links and sightlines in all directions, in order to aid navigation, improve actual and perceived safety and security within the area, through the regrading of the embankment;

- improvements to signage and wayfinding, street furniture and features that helped to define routes and links to nearby landmarks;.
- improvements to lighting generally (both strategically and detail), tree planting and pavement improvements along Folkestone Road;
- removing any unnecessary clutter and general clearance (including large advert boards and self-seeded trees for example); and the
- removal of outdated traffic and pedestrian management schemes including a reconfigured entrance/junction arrangement with Folkestone Road.

(15) The concept design/masterplan had evolved further, and the detailed designs were being finalised in preparation for procurement at the end of March 2008.

(16) Advanced vegetative site clearance works had been carried out during January and February 2008 to satisfy ecological restrictions regarding nesting birds. Advanced works were also being carried out to the Priory Steps to improve the footway surfacing and lighting to this vital pedestrian link to the Tower Hamlets area.

(17) The main works delivery programme aimed to go out to tender at the end of March 2008 and award a contract by early June. On-site construction was estimated to take approximately nine months, from July 2008 to the end of March 2009. The programme took into account all the approvals required through Network Rail, Dover District Council and Kent County Council.

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

(19) The proposal would help reduce reliance on the private car and promote other more environmentally friendly and sustainable forms of transport such as walking, cycling, and use of passenger transport including rail & port. Reduction of traffic speeds into and from the forecourt, would create a more pedestrian friendly environment.

(20) The existing landscape structure would also be radically altered, and the proposed introduction of new landscaping, a new and more formalised public open space and the use of quality materials would provide notable benefits to the overall street scene environment. The scheme itself also provided an opportunity to stimulate appropriate development opportunities (in the long term) and would therefore provide benefits for social, cultural, physical and visual connection.

(21) The scheme would change the whole perception of the station forecourt and surrounding links by creating a quality public open space, with improved accessibility, lighting, landscaping, and close-circuit television. Increased usage would result in better natural surveillance for both pedestrians and cyclists.

(22) Community severance had been a problem for many years and the lower section of the Priory Steps was known as a crime hot-spot for burglaries, drug use and serious sexual assault (during the period of 2002 - 2005 there were 150 reported crimes and 2000 calls to Kent Police related to crime and disorder incidents). The creation of a new pedestrian access between the Priory Steps and the station forecourt, combined with the removal of vegetation and upgraded lighting would improve public safety and help to reduce crime in the locality, and was supported by Kent Police, Dover District Council and the local community. The improvements would reinstate and reconnect this key space and access route with surrounding neighbourhoods. In overall terms, it was anticipated that the

scheme would enhance community safety and usage, and deter anti-social behaviour along with its undesirable consequences.

(23) The total cost of the project was estimated at £2,800,000. Most of the capital funding had been secured from a range of partners/sources, some of which would be committed by the end of 2007/8 financial year on advanced clearance works on the embankment and the Priory Steps. Through the Basic Asset Protection Agreement between Kent County Council and Network Rail, Kent County Council would be the accountable body for all the funding and delivery of the project. The financial breakdown was set out in the report.

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

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

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

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

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

(28) Reports had been submitted to Dover's Joint Transportation Board (JTB) meetings on 26 March 2007 and 8 November 2007, and Dover District Council's (DDC) Executive

seeking support for the concept scheme and progression to detailed scheme design. The recommendation from both JTB's and subsequently DDC's Executive was supportive of the scheme concept and progression to detailed design.

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

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

7. Progress Report on Major Capital Projects

(Item 7 – Report by Capital Programme Manager)

(1) Further to Minute 6 of 18 September 2007, the report provided an update on progress of the major transport and highway schemes The last six months continued to be dominated by the considerable efforts in progressing the growth area schemes in Kent Thameside and Ashford within the funding and time constraints and general resource pressures on the Team.

(2) A claim against the County Council for some £500,000 was successfully defended in the High Court. Schemes had achieved successful internal and external financial audits and a Gateway review. Fastrack continued to be recognised for awards and in particular was a key factor in the County Council receiving the prestigious Transport Authority of the Year award in November.

(3) A progress or status report on Fastrack Thames Way, Fastrack Everards Link Phase 2, Ashford Ring Road, Newtown Road Bridge, Ashford, Rushenden Relief Road, Eurokent Phases 4 & 5, Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road, East Kent Access Phase 2, other schemes and Land matters was set out in the appendix to the report. For brevity, only some of the background provided in previous reports was provided with the focus given to activity in the last half year.

(4) There had been substantial progress and the key milestone achievements had been:-

- Fastrack Thamesway. Completed. – March 2008
- Ashford Ring Road. Award of contracts for the final stages and complex public realm stages of the Ring Road and Bank Street. – October 2007
- Newtown Road Bridge, Ashford. Network Rail instructed to award contract– January 2008
- Eurokent Phases 4 & 5. Funding and land Agreement completed. Contract award and start of construction – January 2008
- Fort Hill De-dualling. Ringway instructed – February 2008

- Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road. Planning permission for amended scheme and publication of new statutory Orders – January 2008
- Rushenden Relief Road. Planning consent – October 2007
- West Malling Station Link. Completion of the Deed of Easement with Network Rail that would allow the private car park implementation – December 2007
- Everards Claim. The claim for about £500,000 successfully defended and a vindication of actions taken in 1994, in the High Court with award of costs.– October 2007
- Union Railways/London & Continental Railways claim. Preliminary Issues Hearing before the President of the Lands Tribunal – December 2007.
- ZED Homes Planning Inquiry Ashford – January 2008
- East Kent Access Phase 2– Successful Gateway 1 Review by 4ps – November 2007.
- Corporate Finance Audit of A228 Leybourne & West Malling Bypass and East Kent Access Phase 1C noted good project management and no recommendations.
- EU Commission and DCLG audit of expenditure of European funding on Fastrack Thames Way. Successful audit with no adverse comments – December 2007

(5) The key problems in the period had been:-

- Ashford Ring Road remained a challenging project to deliver with its innovative public realm design, many interfaces, funding uncertainties and working within a difficult urban environment.
- Rushenden Relief Road contract award remained on hold as SEEDA continued to assemble all the land and satisfy the planning conditions.
- East Kent Access Phase 2. Delay by Secretary of State confirming statutory Orders.

(6) The Chairman referred to the progress report relating to Borough Green and Platt Bypass, and informed the Board that the coverage of the Celcon planning application and the Certificate of Lawful Development was incorrect. The view of the Council's legal advisor was:-

> "KCC did issue a Certificate of Lawful Development/Use in relation to the 1990 bypass planning permission. Upon being challenged it determined that the certificate was issued in error and was therefore unlawful. KCC however regarded and still regards that CELCON could have carried on with its planning application for the blockworks factory and that a permission could have been issued subject to a Grampian style condition. KCC committed itself to make a fresh planning application for the balance of the bypass. Despite these assurances, CELCON without consultation of its own accord determined to withdraw its planning application for the blockworks factory."

(7) The Board:-

(a) noted the report; and

(b) agreed that a site visit to a selection of schemes be arranged to enable Board members to meet relevant officers involved, and witness progress first hand.

8. Highway Tree Inspections – Customer Care

(Item 8 – Report by Alan Riley, KHS Landscape Manager)

(1) At Highways Advisory Board (HAB) on 1 May 2007, a paper on highway tree management was presented and the following adopted by Members:-

- Tree management procedure.
- Preparation and adoption of a tree policy.
- Purchase of the Confirm tree modules system.
- Use of preferred arboricultural contractors by all KHS partners

(2) At HAB on 18 September 2007, a paper on a highway tree policy was presented and adopted by Members. The purpose of this paper was to propose the adoption of a change in procedure when dealing with customer enquiries and complaints in respect of highway trees which would result in improved service delivery across a number of areas.

(3) The adoption of a Highway Tree Policy had provided clarity in a number of areas of highway tree management and had provided a consistent approach to making decisions ensuring that priority was always given to safety issues.

(4) From 1 April 2007 the arboricultural team took over the responsibility for all aspects of tree management including routine safety inspections and customer enquiries. Work was ongoing with the KHS Contact Centre to ensure that customer calls were directed to the right place and were properly dealt with within the appropriate timescales.

(5) 437 Priority 1 (P1) calls had been received from the KHS Contact Centre and dealt with. P1 calls involved trees that had failed or were in imminent danger of failing and average response time had been well under two hours.

(6) Approximately 2500 Priority 2 (P2) calls had been received. P2 calls related to general, rather than legal nuisance issues. Safety issues were always dealt with as P1. Approximately 25% of the P2 calls had resulted in some form of remedial works on site. General nuisance issues included leaf and seed fall, sap deposition, blocking of light and interference with television reception. The total volume of calls for 07/08 was anticipated to be in the region of 4000.

(7) A number of calls were filtered out by the Contact Centre but generally all tree related calls came through to the arboricultural team for attention. A number were dealt with immediately by letter or by telephone with an explanation that the type of problem indicated was not one that a responsible tree owner was required to deal with or that the works did not fall under the remit of KHS e.g. clearance of overhead services. The remainder of calls required an inspection. These were grouped into geographical areas to ensure best use of time and travel resources. An analysis of figures from April 2007 showed that in 75% of cases the inspection resulted in a decision not to carry out any works. The main reasons were that the complaint or enquiry had been overstated or was a general nuisance issue, as outlined above, that KHS was not required to deal with. The 25% requiring works was generally related to trees in decline, vehicular damage, vandalism and other non predictable events.

(8) The process of managing calls was a drain on the resources available to manage and enhance the highway tree stock. Due to the volume of P2 enquiries and the need to prioritise P1 visits and works there could be a delay before a response was given to the enquirer. The delay often led to an expectation that works would be undertaken. Customer feedback in the event that no works were undertaken was often critical of the delay rather than the decision.

(9) KHS met its duty of care by undertaking regular safety inspections of all highway trees based on the classification of the road. Current inspection frequencies were two years and five years. The asset database was an ongoing project and as it was developed it was likely that inspection frequencies would be refined to align with an identified risk. Current information recorded related only to trees requiring works but all trees were inspected and the inspection date recorded.

(10) The asset database would include information on tree characteristics and dimensions and actions would include an assessment by an inspector that, under normal circumstances, would take the tree through to the next inspection cycle.

(11) The current and future inspection processes were robust and defendable and took into account the period until the next inspection. There should be no need, under normal circumstances, to undertake tree works between inspection cycles except for emergency and programmed cyclical maintenance works. On the same basis there should be no need to carry out additional tree inspections between inspection cycles. Customers should be given details of the inspection frequency and the date of the last inspection along with a copy of the 'Understanding leaflet – How we look after trees on the highway'.

(12) Where an enquiry related to a changed circumstance, such as disease or physical damage to a tree, then an interim inspection would be undertaken and the records updated. It was likely that some customers would, despite the justification of the process, complain about the lack of an inspection linked directly to their enquiry. Some customers would exaggerate the safety aspects of an enquiry to ensure that an inspection was undertaken. Both these issues existed within the current system of enquiries and should have no significant impact on the revised process. Overall the level of customer satisfaction was expected to increase with a quicker decision making process that still took into account safety of the highway.

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

(14) The Board approved:-

(a) the adoption of the revised process for dealing with customer enquiries; and

(b) the use of savings from the revised approach for other elements of the tree management and enhancement programme.

9. Free Travel for 11-16 Year Olds
(Item 10 – Report by Head of Transportation and Development)

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

(2) In September 2006, Kent County Council published "Towards 2010" (T2010) with an aspiration to introduce free travel for school children in secondary education aged 11 – 16. In June 2007 two free travel pilot schemes called Kent Freedom were introduced in Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells and Canterbury. Excellent press coverage was gained from the launch events.

(3) The key policy aspirations of free travel for 11 – 16 year olds were:-

- A reduction in peak hour congestion.
- Improved social inclusion through improved mobility of young people outside school hours.
- Encouraging longer term use of public transport by young people.

(4) Two free travel trials were introduced on 4 June 2007 in Canterbury and Tunbridge Wells/Tonbridge. Over 5000 passes had been issued which was above expectation. Additional bus capacity had been provided by bus operators in the pilot areas to cope with extra demand given that most existing service buses were full in the morning peak. Eight additional vehicles in each pilot area from 4 June ensured a seamless introduction of free travel providing sufficient capacity for the extra demand. This had been increased to 10 from the start of the September term. The incumbent operators had been asked to provide additional capacity, used on a flexible basis. This was the most efficient way of providing additional seats as trying to set up "competing" additional KCC funded services on commercially provided routes would undermine local bus networks and would be outside the free market spirit of the Transport Act 1985. Excellent support from the South Eastern Traffic Commissioner for this approach had been received.

(5) Detailed work had been undertaken on the usage of passes in the two pilots and the cost to the County Council in 2007-08 was estimated at £1.4m with a full year cost of £1.9m. In other words, the additional take-up had not directly translated to additional costs. The operators were reimbursed on the gap in their income as a result of the scheme on an open book accounting basis. This was largely income from students who previously paid a fare plus the cost of providing additional capacity.

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

(7) At the meeting of Cabinet Scrutiny on 12 December 2007, the Committee asked that 'the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste be requested to announce as quickly as possible the areas to be covered by the extension to the existing Freedom Pass Pilot Schemes in June 2008'. An early decision was also necessary to enable bus operators to prepare for additional resource required.

(8) Cabinet had now approved the phase two roll-out for June 2008. Freedom would be extended to all secondary schools in the remainder of Tonbridge and Malling District plus the District areas of Maidstone, Shepway and Dover. The District areas of Swale and Thanet would be added in January 2009 with the remainder in June 2009.

(9) The roll-out programme reflected discussions with bus operators and the fact that it was not possible to introduce a countywide scheme at the same time. Acquisition of buses and drivers was a key driver in this respect. Concern had been expressed by some Members about the fee of £50. Evidence suggested, however, that there had been no

adverse reaction to the charge with many recipients praising its excellent value for money. The charge would be retained in 2008/09.

(10) In 2008/09, the County Council had allocated £5.5 million for the Freedom scheme which would enable the additional schemes to be introduced. There had been considerable discussion about the inclusion of rail in the countywide roll-out of the Freedom scheme. There were sound arguments not to include rail and the operator South Eastern remained unenthusiastic about participating. If rail was not included, this would reduce the potential revenue burden by an estimated £1 million per annum.

(11) Once free travel had been introduced on a countywide basis, it was recommended that the home to school transport mainstream and Freedom budget were administered from one source to ensure that financial and procurement efficiencies could be met.

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

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

(14) The Board:-

(a) noted the success of the Freedom scheme and the arrangements for a further roll-out in 2008 and 2009; and

(b) congratulated Mr Hall on a commendable and successful scheme.

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

(Item 11 – Report by Mid-Kent Programme Delivery Manager)

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

(2) At its meeting on 29 May 2006 the Tunbridge Wells JTB considered the report submitted by the Mid Kent Divisional Manager which identified several options for reducing congestion at the junction of the A26, Yew Tree Road and Speldhurst Road, Southborough. The JTB recommended that Kent Highway Services proceed on the basis of Option 2a 'Provision of new left turn lane into Yew Tree Road' and Option 3 'Alternative Staging'. If it was found that Option 2a was either not achievable or too expensive then Option 2b should be progressed. An extract from the above report identifying the proposed options was attached to the report.

(3) The report submitted to the JTB anticipated that Option 2a would typically allow 3 vehicles per cycle to benefit from the left turn lane whilst Option 2b would typically allow 1

vehicle per cycle to benefit. Both of the options would have an impact on vehicles turning right into Yew Tree Road.

(4) Based on initial costs estimates an allocation for the delivery of the scheme had been set at £141,400 within the 2007/08 Capital Maintenance Programme.

(5) Subsequent to the JTB's recommendation an outline design was prepared and a cost estimate produced for Option 2a 'Provision of new left turn lane into Yew Tree Road'. The option would include:-

(a) Construction of a new 50m long left turn lane into Yew Tree Road and associated footway.

(b) Realignment of the Yew Tree Road junction.

(c) Relocating the Yew Tree Road stop line further back to accommodate the swept path of left turning large vehicles and subsequent relocation of the existing controlled crossing point.

(d) Construction of an offside traffic island for the positioning of the primary traffic signal.

(e) Full replacement of the existing pelican crossing north of the junction, resultant from a combination of the widening on the east side and the age of the current installation.

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

(6) Because the estimated cost for Option 2a significantly exceeded the budget allocation and in accordance with the Board's recommendation Option 2b was considered. This option would vary from Option 2a in having a 25m left turn lane as opposed to the 50m left turn lane in Option 2a and the removal of the need to replace the existing Pelican Crossing on the A26. The cost estimate provided for the outline design of Option 2b was £178,100 which was £29,600 above the schemes current allocation. A significant cost component of both schemes related to the alteration to public utility apparatus. It had been anticipated that the costs would be significantly lower in the case of Option 2b due to the shorter left turn lane. However most costs were incurred in the immediate area of the Yew Tree Road junction which was affected equally by each proposal and therefore costs were similar for both options.

(7) A further report was submitted to the JTB at its meeting on 21 January 2008 detailing the issues identified above and including the following Officers Proposals and Recommendation:-

'Proposals

(a) The view of officers is that the anticipated improvement in traffic movements for either Option 2a or 2b are insufficient to justify the level of expenditure indicated by the cost estimates, and the disruption that would result from the delivery of either option. Therefore officers propose that neither option be progressed further.

(b) The report submitted to the Board on the 29th of May 2006 recommended the implementation of Option 2c 'Extend 2 lane approach on Speldhurst Road' and Option 3 'Alternative Staging' In addition it recommended that the causes of the congestion prevalent in Southborough be investigated. This should take the form of a route study to look at the wider local network that would fully establish and understand the traffic

movements and demand along this section of the A26 corridor and also facilitate a micro simulation modelling exercise.

Recommendation

(a) Having regard of the cost for the delivery of either Option 2a or 2b the Board reconsider the original recommendations contained within the Mid Kent Divisional Managers report submitted to the Boards meeting on the 29th of May 2006.'

(8) After considering the report the JTB recommended that KHS proceed with Option 2a. Because of programme pressures it was not possible for the scheme to be delivered during the current financial year. In addition, because the allocation for the scheme within this year's Capital Programme was £141,400 there was a deficit of £64,700.

(9) As the scheme had not been identified as part of the Capital Programme for 2008/09 previously approved by the Board it would be necessary to make provision within this programme for it to be delivered.

(10) Because of the cost benefit aspects of the scheme and the potential impact on the Capital Programme for 2008/09 already approved by the Board, officers considered it appropriate for the Board to review the recommendation made by the JTB at its meeting on 21 January 2008.

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

(12) The Board was requested to review the recommendation of the Tunbridge Wells JTB in respect of the scheme and consider the potential benefits and costs associated with the delivery of the scheme. If the Board supported the JTB's recommendation to proceed with Option 2a, Officers review the Capital Works Programme for 2008/09 to facilitate the schemes delivery and report to the Board on the reprioritisation of schemes.

(13) The Board reviewed the scheme and recommended that officers:-

(a) proceed with the delivery of Option 2a in accordance with the recommendation of the JTB of 21 January 2008 and review and reprioritise the Capital programme for 2008/09;

(b) proceed in accordance with the officer recommendations for options 2c and 3 with the associated route study contained within the report submitted to the JTB on 21 January 2008; and

(c) defer the implementation of Option 2a and review in the light of forthcoming development proposals, for example, the Southborough hub.

Transportation Manager – Mr D Bond

The Chairman informed Members that this was the last meeting of the Board that David Bond would be attending prior to taking up a position in the private sector. Mr Bond was congratulated and thanked for the excellent service he had given to Kent Highway Services.