

# **Kent Highway Services – A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Service**

A report by the Director, Kent Highways Services, to the Highways Advisory Board on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2007.

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## **Introduction**

1. On 4 December 2006 the final version of the Paper 'Kent Highway Services - A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Service' was approved unanimously by Cabinet and fully endorsed by Paul Carter and Peter Gilroy. The paper described why it is desirable for Kent Highway Services to operate from two divisions rather than three.
2. This optimisation of accommodation will free up capital funding to reinvest in the service, to fund new technology to drive efficiencies, reduce annual overhead costs and improve customer satisfaction. This paper gives more detail of a technology enabled service.

## **The Current Situation**

3. All local authorities are being placed under increasing pressure, including financial scrutiny, to make the best use of available resources in delivering their services to the public. A well-managed highway network is a core component of these services and the highway asset is probably the most valuable asset that many local authorities maintain.
4. KCC only knows in general terms the size and condition of the highway asset since the asset registers were prepared back in the 1980's and 1990's and very little updating has taken place since. At best KCC can only suggest investment levels necessary to maintain the asset and offset depreciation. There is an absence of co-ordinated forward works programmes that could save costs and minimise disruption to the travelling public.
5. The asset records are held in disparate databases that rely on manual input. It is not currently possible to fully record inspection regimes and maintenance operations and therefore the Council is exposed to risks, including corporate manslaughter charges.
6. There is a varying degree of sophistication with the use of technology across the KHS Alliance partners. Ringway and Jacobs maintain quality business management systems and have invested in document management. TSUK make use of innovative technology in intelligent traffic systems. In KCC the business procedures are not consistent, the technology is not integrated and therefore none of the systems talk to each other. Staff are deprived of the basic tools to deliver a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Service with a significant impact on efficiency.

## **What KHS wants to do differently?**

7. The vision is to create systems that all the Alliance want to use because they are easy to navigate, bring efficiencies and add value to our service. The systems will have the following attributes:-
  - One shared Alliance system with single entry point to current, accurate information updated in real time.
  - A system that informs the public and others, manages expectations and improves the reputation of KHS.

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- A system that is valued by staff and supports them in delivering a high quality service, supports the culture and drives innovation, improvement and efficiency
  - Delivery of measurable benefits through self auditing performance measurement
  - Clear accountability for workflow, information, budget management and allows us to meet all our legislative obligations.
8. Technology requirements can be split into two clearly defined work streams:
9. **Network Management tools** designed to give a single point data source that meets the Alliance business needs
- It will be an integrated database containing all of our asset information, inspection and survey results, works programmes, and other records held globally against the road network. The data will be stored centrally with robust system architecture but which can be maintained by remote specialist teams.
  - It will consist of a single set of core data that will instantaneously update all relevant datasets using wherever practical mobile technology, supporting all parts of the service from the Contact Centre to the Divisional and other Alliance offices.
  - The core business processes will be standardised to ensure efficiencies but specialisms will also be available, such as Roadworks, Street Lighting, Arboriculture and Highways maintenance applications.
  - There will be end to end work flow management. This will ensure that defects reported to the contact centre will automatically initiate a response by an inspector or maintenance team to minimise the report to fix times. Mobile technology will provide accurate feedback information.
  - There will be links to inform the public where our works are planned and we will be able to co-ordinate these works with the utilities. These links will include real time information from the Kent Traffic Management Centre to help us plan the efficient operation of the highway network.
  - The system will automatically raise works orders, capture actual costs and provide reports to Corporate Finance. It will also have the ability to provide personally tailored performance indicators to KHS users.
10. **Business Management tools** will ensure that the day to day business can be operated effectively, efficiently and consistently with the minimum number of touch points in any delivery process. Required actions will be notified automatically and progress monitored and reported.
11. The processes will ensure compliance with Alliance Contracts, Legal requirements, Health and Safety, Recruitment, Training and Employment policies. They will assist with Performance Management and Risk Assessment.
12. New technology will allow knowledge and Best Practice to be disseminated across the Alliance and will include:-
- Policies Procedures and Guidance notes
  - Corporate Information and branding
  - Technical Indices

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- Human Resource Information
  - Document Management
  - Communications and information cascades.
13. An essential ingredient in raising overall performance levels will be the adoption, wherever appropriate, of common systems and standards across the Alliance. This will be achieved by designing the relevant elements of our systems to meet the nationally recognised standards in the fields of Quality, Environment and Health and Safety (i.e. ISO 9001,14001,18001). The procedures and processes of all parties will be built into an overarching system certified by an external accreditation body. A fully disciplined approach to applying these systems will lead to more consistency, less waste, less duplication, better use of resources and overall cost savings.
14. It will be the 'single source of truth' for all necessary management information to enable the Alliance Board to monitor and improve performance of the Alliance in managing our highway asset.

### **What benefits will a technology enable service bring?**

15. KHS are confident that the benefits will be:
- Faster response to, and resolution of, fault reports.
  - 25% reduction in calls to the Contact Centre by increasing customer access to information and fault reporting through the KCC website and by cutting the number of repeat calls.
  - A reduction in incidents which lead to insurance claims by between 5 and 10% through improved maintenance management.
  - Streamlined processes enabled by technology from start to finish, integrating client, consultant and contractor leading to a 10 to 15% saving in staff time across the KHS Alliance.
  - Reduction in administration through an integrated business and asset management system releasing staff time to focus on improving customer satisfaction.
  - Increased staff motivation, better career prospects, greater job satisfaction and flexibility, and a workforce plan that is sustainable against the challenges of an ageing workforce and industry competition.
16. KHS has been reviewing how it delivers all operational aspects and the conclusion to this work is due early in 2007. KHS must take the output from this review and implement it. But only with a significant investment in technology will KHS be able to deliver the service that stakeholders and the public want, and that staff are proud to provide.

