

Kent and Medway Considerate Contractor Scheme

A report by the Director, Kent Highway Services, to the Highways Advisory Board on 9th January 2007

Introduction

1. Public perception of Highway Authorities' control over roadworks is generally predicated on a lack of influence around poor workmanship and traffic delays.
2. This report outlines the latest on the proposal to introduce a Considerate Contractor Scheme into Kent and for the approval to proceed with launching such a scheme which will encourage a higher standard of works and safety consistently across Kent's roads.

Background

3. Corporation of London started up the original Considerate Contractor Scheme in 1987.
4. Considerate Contractor Schemes are now recognised by the construction industry. There is also a degree of public recognition and with the introduction of more schemes around the country this is bound to grow and become a national initiative.
5. Equally important is the approval and support being given by the Tidy Britain Group and the Health and Safety Executive. Both organisations realise that these schemes are a significant step towards furthering broader environmental, health and safety objectives.

The Philosophy

6. The aim of the scheme is to introduce a reward system for high performing contractors who consider all highway users during the works. Through offering coveted Awards based on the condition of the interface between construction sites and the public, the Scheme induces a spirit of pride and excellence in the workforce.
7. The scheme is also designed to flag up those contractors who are not performing adequately. This will give KCC a better opportunity to monitor performances for all contractors signed into the scheme and deal with them promptly to improve standards.
8. The scheme will be a development and improvement from the current Highways Authority & Utilities Committee (HAUC) Joint Site Safety surveys and the Kent Highway Services (KHS) Divisional site safety checks.
9. There will probably be willingness by Utilities and a contractor to be a member of this scheme, as to opt out almost shows a "don't care attitude". The winning of a high achievement award can be displayed on company vehicles (sticker) and jealously guarded and fought for the following year.

Kent and Medway Objectives

10. The Kent and Medway Considerate Contractor Scheme aims to encourage all contractors working on the highway to carry out their operations in a safe, consistent and considerate manner by;
 - Fostering a joint initiative to demonstrate the spirit of co-operation,
 - Improving Standards,
 - Ensuring that anyone coming along the highway from any direction will understand exactly what is happening and what is expected of them,

Kent and Medway Considerate Contractor Scheme

- Give constructive feedback and praise to develop continuous improvement.

How these will be measured

11. The scheme comprises of a Code of Good Practice, which includes the requirements of "Safety at Street Works and Road Works", using four categories; Safe, Clean, Considerate and Co-operative. Sites are judged against a checklist that takes into account safety, cleanliness, considerate behaviours, co-operation and environmental considerations.
12. It is by following the code of practice that the standards of works will be raised, rates of progress maximised and the condition of the highway will be improved.

Public Participation

13. Members of the public passing works on the highway are invited to comment on the conditions of the site using the Kent Contact Centre. Callers will point out infringements of the Code, but are also encouraged to provide any constructive feedback.

Staffing

14. The successful operation of this scheme relies upon sufficient site inspections being made. Senior representatives from each of the participating bodies as detailed below will undertake inspections:
 - Site safety surveys (HAUC) – 84 sites inspected per year
 - JUG (4 reps from SU's) - 48 sites inspected per year
 - Kent & Medway Divisional Offices - 150 sites inspected per year
 - Ringway and Jacobs - 48 sites inspected per year
15. A working party will be set up to manage most aspects of the scheme. This includes site inspection, records, award recommendations, correspondence, outline responses, site counselling and co-ordinating public relations activities.

Site Inspections and Records

16. Accurate written site records are essential, as these provide the basis for Awards judgements. Also photographic evidence is essential, especially in the case of sites which fail to meet the correct standards and examples of exemplary practice for the awards ceremony and publicity.

The Awards

17. All sites are judged according to the standards set out in the Code of Good Practice. There are three categories of award:
 - **Gold Award** - Organisations which show a consistent and high degree of compliance with the requirements of the Code of Good Practice.
 - **Considerate Contractor** - Organisations which regularly meet the requirements of the Code of Good Practice.
 - **Individual Awards** - Companies or operatives that have excelled. This category could also be contractor and gang of the year if merited.

Kent and Medway Considerate Contractor Scheme

Judging

18. An adjudicating panel of representatives will be appointed. The panel will include independent members from outside the industry. The panel allocates awards on the basis of this evidence provided by the working party.

Managing the scheme

19. The scheme will be run as cost neutral. An annual joining fee will be charged to the contractor/utility companies. This is to cover the cost of the awards ceremony, the initial supply of information and regalia, and the in-house resources to run the scheme. However there will be a minimal amount of set up staff time which will be recovered from the scheme.
20. We are already carrying out enough site surveys to give meaningful results and we have an existing collation system. Also the Joint Utilities Group (JUG) representatives and Highways Authority & Utilities Committee (HAUC) representatives will also contribute towards the management of the scheme.
21. Medway Unitary Authority has historically had close links with KCC and discussions are taking place to finalise Medway's involvement with the scheme. Should Medway decide not to join then the scheme will only need to be re-branded prior to the launch.

Public Launch

22. The proposal is to launch a Considerate Contractor Scheme in Kent at the start of 2007. This should be a high profile launch with a media representation. KCC will benefit publicly for launching such a scheme and we stand to improve public perception of works on our highway and gain safer and cleaner streets as a result

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