

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

HIGHWAYS ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the Highways Advisory Board held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 5 May 2009.

PRESENT: Mr W A Hayton (Vice-Chairman) in the Chair, Mr T J Birkett, Ms S J Carey, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr R F Manning, Mr J I Muckle, Mr R A Pascoe, Mr A R Poole, Mrs P A V Stockell, Mr R Tolputt and Mrs E M Tweed.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Hall, Head of Transport & Development, Mrs N Davis, Traffic Planner, Mr J Farmer, Major Projects Manager, Mr G Fitch, Kent Highways Services, Mr L Holliday, Network Performance Manager, Mr D Latham, Roadworks Manager, Mr I Procter, Road Safety Manager, Mr M Sutch, Head of Planning & Transport Strategy, Mr G Tanner, Travel Planning Team Leader; and the Head of Democratic Services (represented by Mrs K Mannering).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes – 3 March 2009

(Item. 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2009 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

2. Petition

Mr D Hall formerly reported receipt of a petition from parents/friends/students of the Hugh Christie Technology College, Tonbridge relating to the Kent Freedom Pass. Mr Hall informed Members that following a recent meeting of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee there would be a review of the Scheme in September 2009.

3. Kent Highway Services - Interim Director's Update

(Item. 4)

Road Safety

(1) The DfT's draft road safety strategy for 2010-2020 - A Safer Way: Consultation on Making Britain's Roads the Safest in the World - was published on 21 April for consultation. The closing date was 14 July 2009.

(2) Part of the consultation related to speed limits and revised guidance on ensuring that all roads had the appropriate speed limit. Members were of course aware that KHS was already undertaking the speed limit review, but the consultation took this beyond the current scope of the review.

(3) Once the consultation document had been looked at in detail, a response would be submitted after seeking the views of the Highways Advisory Board.

(4) During debate the Board requested that its thanks be placed on record for the outstanding work carried out by the Road Safety team.

Frost Damage and Potholes

(5) In early January, a further £500,000 was allocated to fund additional work required as a result of the cold weather. This was increased in February so that a total of 66 crews were working on minor and major surface repairs across the County.

(6) At the peak KHS staff were repairing approximately 3,000 potholes and larger patches per week.

(7) Even at this resource level, for a number of weeks demand outstripped repairs, although this was to be expected following such a prolonged winter event. However, by keeping staff and crews fully focused on the task at hand, completion times quickly improved.

(8) The high level of resource had been maintained until the end of April.

(9) Key Statistics from January to March 09

*Number of pothole reports from the public: 6,488

*Number of pothole reports from highway inspectors: 5,971

Number completed: 9,560

Average time to resolve public enquiry: 11.8 days

Average time to resolve inspectors defect: 18.1 days

* It should be noted that on many occasions a pothole report would contain more than one pothole.

Members' Grant

(10) The members' highway grant scheme was being developed so that it could be implemented quickly after the June elections. Work was underway to determine the likely scope and scale of grant-funded schemes.

(11) Details of the scheme, and guidance for members about the likely cost of various works were being written and would continue to be discussed with the Informal Members' Group which had been looking at the arrangements for the scheme already. The IMG last met on 15 April and recommended that the grant scheme should be named 'Members' Highway Fund (MHF)' and that its purpose would be 'to enable elected members to resolve local highways issues'. We would ensure that members, existing and new, had every support they needed when the scheme started in June.

Mercury streetlight replacement

(12) A capital programme to replace the 8100 mercury streetlights in Kent began in March. So far 1500 lights had been replaced with the remaining lights due for

replacement during 2009/10. Mercury lights were environmentally unfriendly, and it was also increasingly difficult to source stock when parts failed. The new lights were more energy efficient and would therefore provide savings – both financial and carbon.

S38 Cold Cases

(13) 175 'cold case' Section 38 road adoptions had been inherited from the Highway Units which were pre 2002. They all had specific problems such as land transfer or significant maintenance issues. A great deal of work had been undertaken to reduce the backlog, which stood at 38 at the end of April. It was expected that the majority would be completed early in the new financial year.

Scheme Prioritisation

(14) All submitted Transport and Safety package scheme assessments would go through a new scheme prioritisation validation process following Highways Advisory Board and Cabinet approval of the suggested changes to the scheme (paragraph 11 below refers).

(15) Following this process the Transport & Development Team Managers would present the draft list of schemes to the next round of Joint Transportation Boards (JTB).

(16) The Board noted the report.

4. Concrete Roads

(Item. 5)

(1) The report was in response to the issues concerning Magnolia Avenue, Cliftonville reported to the Board on 8 July 2008 (Minute 3) and the subsequent discussions about the new KHS approach to maintaining the authority's minor concrete roads asset on 6 January 2009 (Minute 6). It described the progress made in developing the approach and to promote a programme of repairs to concrete roads.

(2) The condition assessment of Kent's minor roads was achieved by a visual survey carried out on a two-year cycle. Six Districts were surveyed one year with the remaining Districts surveyed the next.

(3) In order to make an assessment of the condition of the concrete road asset, the 2008/09 survey was extended to cover concrete roads in the other six Districts that the local Highway Inspector considered were in urgent need of attention. Concrete roads in those same six districts which were not considered in need of attention would be surveyed by default in 2009/10.

(4) This year's visual survey was enhanced to enable a comprehensive assessment of the needs for maintaining the Authority's concrete roads. As a result, the concrete road survey had been separately analysed to develop a specific programme of repairs for the County's concrete estate roads.

(5) The visual survey data had been analysed to identify potential schemes and to calculate a Road Condition Index (RCI) for each scheme. Thresholds were applied to the RCI values for every 10m of the County’s minor roads and each section was colour-coded red, amber or green depending on the severity of defects recorded in the survey.

(6) This approach had enabled all minor concrete roads surveyed to be included in the Carriageway Asset Manager system (JCAM). JCAM identified clusters of red and amber 10m sections to identify potential schemes across the minor road network. JCAM then listed potential schemes in a priority order, suggested an outline treatment and provided a broad cost of repair for each scheme.

(7) The outline treatments included in JCAM were:

- Concrete roads: Strengthening, Localised Repair and Micro-asphalt
- Covered concrete roads: as for bituminous roads
- Block-paved roads: Strengthening and Relay Blocks

(8) The construction type was recorded during the visual survey, and the information had been included in JCAM. This enabled KHS to provide, for the first time, potential scheme programmes targeted for concrete, covered concrete and block-paved minor roads. The programmes would be finalised in June/July 2009 using the JCAM data published on the Kent Gateway.

(9) The role of the Highway Resurfacing Team was to now carry out detailed assessments of each of the high priority schemes to develop specific treatment requirements for each scheme. However, the outputs from JCAM allowed for the overall investment needs to be assessed, and to target concrete roads for detailed assessment and repair.

(10) The separate programmes of work had been collated and assessed to provide the following summary of value of schemes identified:

Road Type \ Treatment	Concrete Roads (£k)	Covered Concrete Roads (£k)	Block-paved Roads (£k)	Totals (£k)
Strengthening	12	0	0	12
Localised Repair	134	N/A	N/A	134
Micro-asphalt	3	926	N/A	929
Surface Dressing	0 Due to 1km rule*	0 Due to 1km rule*	N/A	0
Thin Surfacing	N/A	445	N/A	445
Relay blocks	N/A	N/A	0	0
Totals	149	1,371	0	1,520

* Surface Dressing schemes were currently restricted to those 1km in length or greater. Schemes on concrete roads tended to be shorter than this minimum length

and therefore were treated with Micro Asphalt, Thin Surfacing or localised repairs in the model.

(11) The above table indicated that the total cost of repairing all potential schemes identified on concrete, covered concrete and block-paved minor roads was £1.52m. The cost of all schemes identified on the minor network was £18.37m – this included a majority of schemes on bituminous roads. The schemes on concrete, covered concrete and block-paved minor roads made up 8.5% of the total minor roads schemes by cost.

(12) The Board supported:-

- (a) the new approach to identifying investment needs for the minor concrete road network in Kent, and that the Highway Resurfacing team now assessed detailed requirements for repair of the top priorities to finalise the programme of repairs for 2010/11 onwards; and
- (b) that, on the basis of the need for investment in concrete roads as demonstrated by the table above, £0.34m (8.5% of the indicated minor roads allocation) be dedicated to the repair of concrete roads annually from the 2010/11 programme onwards.

5. Ashford Ring Road Alterations

(Item. 6)

(1) Following publication of the ODPM's Sustainable Communities Plan 2003, Ashford was identified as one of the major growth areas in the South-East with a total of 31,000 homes and 28,000 jobs envisaged by 2031. Detailed masterplanning studies followed which had now led to the development of mutually supporting land use and transport strategies to ensure that the town's future growth was well planned and sustainable.

(2) Masterplanning studies to guide the sustainable delivery of the projected growth in the town were reported further in the Greater Ashford Development Framework (Urban Initiatives, April 2005), Ashford Town Centre Development Framework (Urban Initiatives, August 2005) and the Transport Strategy for Ashford (KCC, November 2005).

(3) Ashford Borough Council had previously consulted upon the Town Centre Area Action Plan (TCAAP) which would form one of the key documents of the Ashford Local Development Framework (LDF). A Transport Strategy for Ashford had also been developed by the County Council in line with the broad thrust of central government and County Council transport policy which was approved in January 2006.

(4) From the Sustainable Communities Plan 2003 and the Town Centre Area Action Plan, an early transformational project was identified to re-configure the one-way, traffic dominated environment to a series of two-way quality streets which would support and stimulate town centre development, and encourage greater joint use by traffic and pedestrians of the public realm, whilst maintaining safety. An early 'mend before extend' approach to the town centre was considered to be crucial, even before significant growth took place, and the transformation of the Ashford Ring Road was

regarded as a key priority since the future growth of the town could not be achieved with the one-way ring road configuration. Previous reports to the Board had discussed the concept, outline design, detailed design and construction progress.

The Scheme

(5) While ultimate aspiration was to provide a quality, shared space environment around the entire Ring Road, the current funding had enabled all of the Ring Road to be converted to two-way working. Elwick Road, Bank Street, parts of Godinton Road, West Street and Forge Lane had been radically changed to a high quality, shared space environment under a new 20 mph speed limit zone.

(6) Available funding had meant that improvements to Somerset Road, Mace Lane, Wellesley Road and Station Road had been more conventional in form at this stage although with unnecessary street clutter removed and a 30mph speed limit. A new Victoria Road/Romney Marsh Road/Beaver Road traffic signal controlled junction was also incorporated into the project.

Art, Engineering & Public Realm

(7) The shared space element (Bank Street, Tufton Street, Elwick Road, Godinton Road, West Street, Forge Lane) of the Ring Road alterations was an innovative project which was an example of best practice in the UK. It offered considerably more to the town's fabric than a standard highway scheme by incorporating a number of key shared space, urban design and artistic features. A high quality public realm had been created by the use of quality materials, landscaping, aesthetically pleasing yet functional street furniture together with the integral use of art and street lighting to bring out the scheme identity and distinctiveness.

(8) In order to deliver such a transformational project, an Integrated Design Team (IDT) was assembled involving engineers, consultants, urban designers, planners, landscapers, traffic experts, lighting specialists and artists to produce a high quality project along the shared space.

Scheme Layout

(9) The overall scheme layout was presented within Appendix A of the report; and before and after photographs at various locations were presented in Appendix B of the report.

Construction phases

(10) Advance highway works along Station Road, Elwick Road, Mace Lane, North Street, Somerset Road and New Street commenced on-site on Monday 15 January 2007 and was open to 2 way operation on 1 July 2007 converting the whole of the Ring Road to a 2 way operation with temporary traffic management in place to assist in the change over period. The shared space public realm work in Bank Street, Elwick Road, Godinton Road, West Street and Forge Lane commenced in September 2007 with practical completion in November 2008. Landscaping work was delayed to allow Ashford to have a Christmas trading period free of road works. In February 2009, landscaping works commenced with completion in mid March 2009.

Traffic Flows

(11) The re-configuration of the one-way, traffic dominated road network had deliberately reduced overall highway capacity. However, one of the overarching aims of the transport strategy was to minimise traffic in the town centre area by a series of transport measures and car park relocation policy. Indeed, the ultimate success of the ring road alterations relied on a host of other transport schemes coming forward.

(12) A comparison of the before/after(predicted) morning peak (0800 – 0900) traffic flows around the Ring Road was presented in Appendix C of the report. The post scheme figures were predicted 2008 figures as surveys of traffic flows were not being carried out until later in 2009. Certain other modelling assumptions were made including the provision of a park and ride site at the Warren which the Borough Council had had difficulty in delivering.

(13) For a number of reasons including the reduction in the number of available traffic lanes, the greater route choice which two-way flow provided and the traffic restraint associated with a shared use concept (20mph/pedestrian/cycle interaction etc), traffic flows around the Ring Road were predicted to reduce. Elwick Road in the one-way system was carrying about 19,000 vehicles per day and following the alterations (including the J10 improvements and with Dover Place car park) flows were predicted to reduce to 8000 vehicles per day. A week long survey undertaken between Tuesday 9 December 2008 and Monday 15 December 2008 indicated an even lower flow of 5,000 vehicles per day but as stated above a more comprehensive survey was to be undertaken. In advance of formal traffic surveys, the view in overall terms was that the two-way, partly shared use scheme was proving to be viable in traffic terms and in any event was a necessary consequence of providing a sustainable growth agenda for the town.

Road Safety

(14) There were a total of 48 personal injury accidents around the ring road in the 3 year period up to October 2005. A qualitative road safety analysis was also carried out of the scheme based upon the existing accident history which took into account the reduction in traffic speed and change in highway environment which would increase driver awareness and care. The assessment predicted that personal injury accidents would reduce by around 30% as a result of the changes which compared favourably with the 44% reduction in personal injury accidents over 3 years which was achieved following the implementation of a similar type of scheme along Kensington High Street in London.

(15) The reversion of the ring road from a fast moving, one-way traffic dominated environment to a slower, two-way, partly shared surface environment was therefore predicted to improve road safety around the town centre as well as providing greater accessibility in terms of crossing and accessibility options.

(16) Post opening road safety audits had highlighted areas that needed further consideration such as the courtesy crossings, positions of trees with regard to visibility of pedestrians and vehicular movements around Apsley Street and Godinton Road. All areas highlighted in the safety audit report would be considered and appropriate action taken if necessary.

(17) Speed monitoring with road 'loops' was undertaken between Tuesday 9 December 2008 and Monday 15 December 2008 on the stretch of Elwick Road between Bank Street and Church Road which had a 20mph speed limit. In summary the speeds were measured as follows:-

Average median speed westbound – 21.3 mph
Average median speed eastbound – 21.0 mph

Average 85%ile speed westbound – 26.6 mph
Average 85%ile speed eastbound – 25.7 mph

The range of 85%ile speeds was 25.3 – 28.4 mph

(18) This was encouraging and it was hoped that speeds would reduce as drivers became more familiar with the concept. And. When the landscaping was completed that would help to reduce the openness of the area. However, complacency was not appropriate and a 'speed indicator' device had been installed in Elwick Road to assist with reducing speeds even further.

(19) Further speed and flow monitoring was planned following completion of the landscaping and residual highway works planned in Elwick Road.

Environmental Impact

(20) The ring road alteration formed part of a broad transport strategy for the town which aimed to 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.

(21) With the reduction in vehicle speeds and regularisation of traffic flows, traffic noise levels were predicted to fall slightly. Whilst the overall traffic related impact on air quality was forecast to be broadly neutral, there were some moderately beneficial improvements in terms of reducing the production of greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide.

(22) The existing landscape along the Ring Road was poor and the introduction of landscaping, public open space and use of quality materials would provide notable benefits to the street scene environment. The scheme itself also provided an opportunity to stimulate appropriate development opportunities and would therefore provide moderate benefits for social, cultural, physical and visual connection.

Accessibility

(23) In order to understand the accessibility issues, particularly within the shared space environment, a close working relationship was established during the design stage with representatives from Ashford Access, Wheelchair Users Group, Guide Dogs for the Blind and Kent Association for the Blind. As a result, certain amendments to the original design were incorporated such as kerb delineation in many areas, colour contrast, guidance path, informal crossing points with tactile paving on approaches and positioning of street furniture/trees to help guide vehicles.

(24) A post scheme opening workshop involving disability groups took place on 27 January 2009 and involved group discussions and a visit to site to get first hand experience. A report was to be produced by the external facilitator as part of the monitoring of the shared space and it was expected that this would be available mid 2009.

(25) In overall terms, the scheme attempted to create a much more friendly environment which reduced the dominance of the motor vehicle although this was not pursued without due consideration for all users including drivers, pedestrians, cyclists and people with mobility impairments. Best endeavours had been made to involve and consult widely on the project with all affected parties and provide a scheme that was accessible for all. It was also worth remembering that the fast moving, traffic dominated one-way ring road environment was a barrier for both disabled and non-disabled people alike and the intention was to remove those barriers and allow other road users to reclaim the street.

(26) Shared space was a new but proven concept but the underlying difficulty in Ashford was one of timing. Elwick Road was a very open vista. It would only be when the south side of Elwick Road was fully developed and a pavement café culture created with a critical mass of pedestrians that the concept would properly operate.

Finance

(27) The total cost of the scheme including fees, works and other ancillary costs was approximately £16m and was funded as follows:-

ODPM (Growth Area Fund 1)	£0.300m
ODPM (Growth Area Fund 2)	£8.262m
CLG (Growth Area Fund 3)	£3.718m
English Partnerships	£1.260m
Interreg	£0.930m
Kent County Council	£0.777m
Ashford Borough Council	£0.500m

(28) Carrying out major road works in a town centre was always difficult and we were always mindful of the commercial impact on small businesses in particular. The argument that it was to the long term benefit of the town was not always convincing when businesses were struggling with the commercial reality of the moment. Traffic management was high on the agenda and many changes were made to the construction programme to try and minimise disruption.

(29) When combined with public realm and innovative shared space the scheme attracted wider attention and frequently made the national press and media. Anything new attracted opinion and often views were polarised and it was sometimes difficult to separate out the genuine concerns from inbuilt fear of change. Many things now taken for granted were considered radical when first introduced.

(30) There was also a tension between the wider regeneration objectives and the narrower highway operational and maintenance aspects. Ashford was a major growth area and the town centre must expand to meet that challenge. It had the opportunity to be different and needed to be different and the changes had been

welcomed by those most driven by the growth and regeneration agenda and as a public realm scheme it had already started to receive national recognition.

(31) However, it was a highway scheme and the County Council had the operational, safety and maintenance responsibility and inevitably was the focus for any criticism. The scheme was developed by an Integrated Team and drawing on wider experience through a Champions Group. The shared space aspects appeared to be working well but safety was the immediate focus of monitoring. The implied courtesy crossings had invited some comment and in addition to the speed indication device installation their operation would be monitored closely. It was important to remember the existing safety record of the old Ring Road and that even formal signal controlled crossings had an inherent safety risk and hence the need to monitor and avoid any possible knee jerk reactions.

(32) The cost of some aspects of the scheme such as the street lighting and street furniture had attracted local and national comment recently. It could be argued that the street lighting was a key contributor to the aesthetic distinctiveness that had been created and was a relatively small proportion of the overall cost of the project that in the main had been funded by central Government. On the other hand, trying to justify the cost of the street lighting in isolation when there were so many other demands on public funding could seem incongruous. This was a difficult subject area and particular in the context of the current economic climate. However, the intent was not to provide this standard throughout the expanding town centre and Victoria Way would use a simpler pallet of materials and the street lighting would be elegant but using stock equipment.

(33) The long term robustness of the public realm and increased maintenance liability was an issue both in Ashford and the wider interest being shown in such schemes in Kent and nationally. Some aspects of the 'Flume' feature in Bank Street were showing distress and this was a difficult issue because they were formed of individually created slabs. Other areas of paving were cracking but it had not yet been established whether this was a construction or design fault. These issues should not be overstated but they were indicative of aspects of high quality public realm schemes that needed to be considered. Work was underway within Regeneration & Economy on a Maintenance Protocol for public realm that would include consideration of maintenance funding regimes.

(34) The report updated the Board on proposals to re-configure the one-way A292 Ashford Ring Road into a series of two-way quality streets.

(35) It was important to allow a settling in of the scheme as it would take several months for users to become familiar with the changes. Monitoring would be required initially and over the next 12 to 24 months and formal safety audit procedures extended beyond that period.

(36) Ultimately, the scheme would secure a better balance between the needs of car users, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, radically improve the environment of the town centre, encourage further investment in the town and strengthen the town centre's economy by making the centre easily accessible for all.

(37) The Board noted the report.

6. Smarter Choices – 2009 Progress Report

(Item. 7)

(1) In July 2004, the DfT published 'Smarter Choices – Changing the Way We Travel'. The document was the result of a project that looked at the potential impact that 'soft factor' or indirect interventions could have on travel demand. These 'soft' transport policy measures included workplace and School Travel Plans. The report demonstrated that, for relatively little investment compared to large capital infrastructure schemes, 'soft' measures had a key role to play in changing travel patterns and improving accessibility.

(2) In 2004 KCC secured additional funding from the DfT and DfES (DCSF) to employ a team of School Travel Advisors whose principal role would be to work with schools across the county to deliver School Travel Plans. School Travel Plans were a strategy developed by the whole school community to address issues of local congestion, pollution and safety attributable to the school-run. They contained clear objectives and targets and a range of measures tailored to the circumstances of that school.

(3) Since 2004 the team had developed and expanded its remit, working collaboratively with partners both inside and outside of KCC to deliver a broad range of targeted measures aimed at promoting and facilitating 'smarter' travel choices for people of all ages across the county. The report indicated the breadth and scale of the work that was currently underway to complement the wider 'Greener Kent' agenda, ensuring that Kent Highway Services and its partners made a substantial contribution to tackling congestion, pollution and greenhouse gas emissions across the county.

Key Achievements

(4) Some headline achievements in 2008/09 included:-

- 50-60 new School Travel Plans, taking the Kent Total to 470 (approx) or 78%
- A 1% shift to sustainable modes of travel to school (against 2006/07 school census base data)
- 114,000 school-run journeys saved through walk to school initiatives (as of March 09)
- Over 13,000 Kent Freedom Passes issued, with an estimated 2%-6% improvement in journey times outside those schools with a significant uptake of the scheme
- 400 personal pledges from Maidstone residents to make 'greener' travel choices as part of In Town Without My Car (September 2008)
- £100,000 of capital investment in sustainable travel to school facilities, within school grounds (Local Transport Plan)
- A projected 3,163,283 car journeys saved in 2009 through Kentcarshare which equated to a saving of over 1000 metric tonnes of CO₂

School Travel Plans

(5) The highly successful School Travel Plans project was now entering its final 'official' year. As part of funding secured by the Government's "Travelling to School"

initiative, KCC – along with all other Local Authorities – was expected to deliver School Travel Plans at 100% of schools in the County by March 2010. At the time of writing, it was expected that between 50 and 60 Travel Plans would have been completed during 2008/09, bringing the total to approximately 470 schools (78%). While this still left a further 130 (22%) schools to achieve in 2009/10, this was considered achievable, particularly if a more direct and prescriptive approach was taken to producing the documents at harder to reach schools. Regardless of the final tally at March 2010, the project represented a huge achievement, having built on a baseline of just 7 schools with Travel Plans in 2004.

(6) As well as showing a demonstrable impact on the school-run, the initiative had also secured in excess of £2.3 million of additional Capital funding to schools in Kent which had been spent on a wide range of initiatives to support the objectives of School Travel Plans e.g. cycle storage, sheltered waiting areas for parents, footpaths etc.

(7) A recent announcement confirmed that the School Travel Advisor funding, currently received as part of KCC's Area Based Grant, would be continued in 2010/11. Further guidance is awaited from Government as to their priorities for delivery beyond 2010.

Local Transport Plan School Capital Grant Funding

(8) For the first time in 2008/09, funding was made available through Kent's own Local Transport Plan to schools proactively driving forward their School Travel Plans and providing solid evidence of modal shift away from the car. £100,000 of funding was split between 12 schools across the county leading to the development of a range of initiatives including secure cycle/scooter storage, improved pedestrian access, signage and sheltered parent waiting areas. The scheme had been an excellent tool to secure the longevity of School Travel Plans and to further engage schools in taking responsibility for their carbon footprint and impact on local traffic congestion. A new set of submissions were currently being assessed for funding in 2009/10.

Kent Freedom Pass

(9) KCC first introduced the Kent Freedom Pass scheme in June 2007, providing bus travel free at the point of use to students attending school in three pilot areas (Canterbury district, Tonbridge town and Tunbridge Wells district). Since then it had proven very successful, encouraging children away from car travel and on to Kent's bus network. By the end of the first year, pass holders had made more than 1 million journeys and over 13,000 passes had now been issued.

(10) The original pilot scheme was intended to run until 2009 however its success led to it being extended to the remainder of Tonbridge & Malling, Dover, Maidstone and Shepway districts in June 2008 and Swale and Thanet in January 2009. The scheme would be extended to its final countywide phase in June 2009 by covering schools in the districts of: Ashford, Dartford, Gravesham and Sevenoaks

(11) Preliminary research had indicated that:-

- 30% of those applying for a Kent Freedom Pass, were previously driven to school (it was unclear at this stage what proportion of those students had actually made the switch for their home to school trips)
- Journey times had improved between 2% to 6% outside those schools with a good uptake of the scheme

Sustainable Travel to School Strategy and supporting initiatives

(12) The Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed a duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport on the journey to school. Kent's Sustainable Travel to School Strategy was duly published as a consultation draft on 31 August 2007 and was published in its final form on 31 August 2008.

(13) Good progress was being made on the delivery of the Strategy and its development had led to improved joined-up working between directorates involved in co-ordinating travel to school, including KHS, CFE and Commercial Services.

(14) As part of its Area Based Grant, Kent received £112,865 per annum (5 years from 2007/08) from Government to support the delivery of the strategy. The following had been delivered in 2008/09, as required by the Act.

- An infrastructure audit, highlighting sustainable transport provision at all Kent schools
- A Sustrans Bike IT officer promoting cycling to schools in Ashford
- Partnership funding for the Kent and Medway Walking Bus Group Charity
- Improving web based travel information for schools, pupils and parents

(15) In 2009/10 it was intended to explore the potential for Theatre in Education to support key messages and also software to support and streamline the ongoing monitoring and auditing of Travel Plans (see para (21) re. iTRACE)

(16) Additionally two new initiatives were being piloted including a hard hitting campaign targeting parents parking on 'School Keep Clear' zig zags and a scheme called Journease which aimed to engage secondary school aged children in providing journey planning information and resources to their peers. This was a similar concept to the Junior Road Safety Officer scheme where pupils acted as a conduit within the school, promoting key messages.

Employer/Developer Travel Plans

(17) Changes in Government Guidance had led to a significant increase in Travel Plan Conditions secured through the planning process. In this context a Travel Plan could be defined as 'A strategy for managing multi-modal access to a site or development focusing on promoting access by sustainable modes'. The main objective of a Travel Plan was to reduce the number of single occupant car trips to a site. A successful Travel Plan would give anyone travelling to and from a business or organisation a choice of travel options and encourage them to use the more sustainable ones.

(18) Provision of an effective Travel Plan would never be able to justify the siting of a development in a totally unsuitable location. However, a sufficiently strong Travel Plan might help to counterbalance the disadvantages of a site where sustainable

access without Travel Plan measures would be less than ideal. A Travel Plan would need to be robust enough to give assurance that the sustainable travel patterns predicted by the developer would be delivered once the site was complete and operating.

(19) Significant progress had been made in the last year in clarifying protocols and processes between KHS, District Planning Authorities and the Highway Agency for the scoping, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of Travel Plan conditions. This had included the publication of Kent's "Guidance on Transport Assessment and Travel Plans" which was intended for adoption by KCC as a material consideration in Planning.

(20) The five tests relating to the appropriate use of planning obligations (as set out in ODPM Circular 05/2005) would be adhered to when considering the Travel Plan as part of the legal agreement. The use of conditions would also need to be in line with the guidance outlined in the DoE Circular 11/95. This was particularly important in the current economic climate where KHS and the Planning Authority needed to balance what was 'reasonable' and viable with environmental and sustainability considerations.

(21) KHS were seeking to procure a bespoke piece of software called iTRACE to substantially streamline and improve the tracking and monitoring of the Travel Plans. iBase Systems Ltd (iBase) had developed and implemented the iTRACE system for capture management and reporting of work place and schools Travel Plans across London. iTRACE had been developed over the last 4 years with the support of Transport for London.

National Rail Station Travel Plan Pilot

(22) In 2008 a partnership led by Kent Highway Services, Southeastern and Ashford's Future made a successful bid to participate in a National Rail Station Travel Plan Pilot. The 2007 Rail White Paper proposed that station travel plans be tested through a series of pilots, and ATOC was co-ordinating a national pilot scheme on behalf of the Department for Transport DfT. Ashford station was selected as one of 31 successful applications across England out of a total of 70 bids.

(23) The National Rail Station Travel Pilot provided an exciting opportunity for Kent to participate in a national initiative to promote sustainable travel to rail stations. The development of the Travel Plan and supporting initiatives would assist the sustainable expansion of commuter rail travel in Kent as a result of the new High Speed (HS1) services. It was intended that best practice be rolled out to other stations in due course.

(24) The Ashford Station Travel Plan was due to be launched in May 2009, with a series of innovative measures, including personalised travel planning and marketing tailored to the specific needs of individual commuters.

Kentcarshare/Kentjourneyshare

(25) In the context of the Ashford Station Travel Plan (highlighted above), the successful Kentcarshare journey matching facility was being developed and expanded to include greater flexibility for journey matching.

(26) This would include new 'budi' elements for walking, cycling and taxi trips aimed at improving personal security, knowledge and confidence of local cycle routes and cost sharing opportunities. The Kentcarshare scheme currently had 3000 members with 3117 journeys registered. Based on current matches it was estimated that in 2009 the scheme would save:-

- 3,163,283 miles
- £577,312
- 1,040.7 metric tonnes of CO²

Streetcar

(27) Kent's partnership with Streetcar to promote and develop Car Clubs in the county continued. The core scheme at County Hall had recently expanded to include an additional third car and the intention was that this would ultimately be located in The Mall car park, with the potential to serve Maidstone Borough Council and Jacobs employees, as well as being more readily available to residents to the south of the town centre.

(28) Positive discussions had taken place with District Council partners and developers, raising awareness of the potential for such schemes to address parking limitations on new town centre residential developments. A number of developments across the county had the provision of a Car Club facility conditioned as part of S106 Agreements and it was hoped that this model would serve to quickly develop a viable network of Car Club cars across the County, presenting a genuine alternative to traditional car ownership

Travel Awareness Campaigns

(29) A key part of the strategy was to carry the sustainable travel message to people through a series of campaigns, promotions utilising the media and face to face communication. Examples of such activities in 2008/09 had included:-

- Maidstone Goes Green

The development of an exciting new partnership between KCC, Maidstone Borough Council, The Maidstone Town Centre Management Group and Maidstone's three main shopping centres (The Mall, Fremlins Walk and Royal Star Arcade) led to opportunities to promote sustainable transport in the town under the umbrella of 'Maidstone Goes Green'. Free space was made available in all three of the shopping centres to promote KCC led 'green' initiatives and it was hoped that this activity would prelude a major event on 'In Town Without My Car Day' on the 22 September. This was traditionally the culmination of European Mobility Week (13-21 September).

- In Town Without My Car

Building on the success of the Maidstone Goes Green partnership, In Town Without My Car held in Maidstone in September 2008, represented the largest promotional and awareness raising campaign that KHS had delivered to date. A week of activity and promotion in all 3 major shopping centres, culminated in a day when all Maidstone residents and employees were encouraged to leave their car at home and

try a sustainable alternative. A partnership with the KM helped to ensure excellent and positive publicity for the event.

(30) Through the development of these initiatives, KCC had forged excellent partnerships with local organisations e.g. Maidstone Town Centre Management, local shopping centres, retailers, lobby groups and the media. This partnership working had maximised the potential of such initiatives and had also allowed them to be delivered in a very cost effective way through sponsorship in kind. KHS aimed to build on these partnerships in 2009/10, facilitating the delivery of the core messages at the local level through funding to support locally led campaigns and initiatives. A Maidstone Goes Green/In Town Without My Car event was planned for Maidstone in 2009 and was to be led by the Town Centre Management. Early discussions were also underway with Canterbury City Council and the Canterbury Employers' Travel Plan Forum regarding a similar event later in the year.

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

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

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

7. Stopping Up the Highway – Stopping Up Order (Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980)

(Item. 8)

(1) The proposed policy set out how Kent Highway Services would comply with the requirements of the Highways Act in relation to applications where the highway was unnecessary, in a manner which was functional, effective, transparent and did not expose the Council to financial risk. The policy covered financial matters and the processes involved in managing an application, including declaring the highway unnecessary and land ownership matters.

(2) The Board supported the proposal for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that Kent Highway Services introduce a new policy on how the Council carry out the management of stopping up the highway (Stopping Up Order) under Section 116(1)(a) of the Highways Act 1980.

8. KHS Policy for Managing Skips on the Highway

(Item. 9)

(1) Control of skips placed on the highway under S139 of the Highways Act, required permission of the highway authority for the skip (or equivalent type of container) to be placed. This had driven the need for formal licensing of skips in Kent

at a minimal charge, currently £20 per week or part week, in order to be able to fully consider the safety and disruption factors for highway users whilst the skip was in place.

(2) If any skip was placed upon the highway without a licence the operator would be required to immediately apply for a licence and pay the respective charges – including for time already spent on the highway. Regular inspections would be carried out by local inspectors, checking skips for valid licences and compliance and investigating any complaints received. A penalty charge of £47 (in line with the NRSWA defect site inspection fee) was to be applied when a skip was on the public highway without a licence. Records would be kept of offending operators and where there were repeated offences, we reserved the right to refuse an operator permission to place skips on the highway. Where circumstances dictated we could remove offending skips and recharge costs to operators where known. In exceptional cases, we had the option to prosecute the skip operator.

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

- (a) the policy to actively manage skips placed on the highway be approved;
- (b) continued licensing of skips on the highway be approved;
- (c) continued charging for licences at current levels of £20 per week or part week be approved; and
- (d) a penalty charge of £47 (in line with the NRSWA defect site inspection fee) to be applied when skips were placed on the public highway without a licence be approved.

9. KHS Policy for Managing Tables and Chairs on the Highway

(Item. 10)

(1) The existing policy for ‘The Location and Licensing of Street Furniture’ had been reviewed and revised to reflect current issues and working practices, and focussed on Tables and Chairs on the highway, removing A boards from the policy. It was to be renamed accordingly.

(2) The Board supported the proposal for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that the existing Street Furniture Policy be revised, with changes as outlined above, forming the new Tables and Chairs policy. The current annual charge of £150 was proposed to remain unchanged for 2009/10, and the penalty, imposed for non-compliance with the licence on inspection, was to be increased from £25 to £47 in line with the NRSWA site inspection charge for defects.

10. Scheme Prioritisation System

(Item. 11)

(1) In 2006, Kent County Council adopted its second Local Transport Plan (LTP2). The LTP2 was KCC’s strategy for transport for the period 2006-2011. A key part of the LTP2 was outlining how funds provided by central government would be spent by

KCC in order to provide the best possible transport improvements for the people of Kent.

(2) In LTP2 a new approach was used for assessing integrated transport schemes; all proposals went through the same assessment process and received points depending on how well they delivered against national, regional and local transport policies. The system was called PIPKIN, and it had been used to assess over 500 scheme proposals for construction in 2008/09 and 2009/10 totalling over £40m. The funding allocation for schemes to be constructed over the two years was £27m. This showed the need for a robust assessment system to ensure the most worthwhile schemes were delivered.

(3) PIPKIN was a useful guidance tool to assist in prioritising integrated transport schemes, but at the end of the 2009/10 assessment period, the Cabinet Member asked that PIPKIN be revised to address a concern that safety schemes were not receiving a high enough weighting in PIPKIN. This opportunity presented the chance to revise the prioritisation system as a whole. An improved method of assessing schemes was now being proposed, called the Scheme Prioritisation System.

(4) The Scheme Prioritisation System had been developed to achieve two things:-

- Enable KCC officers to assess every scheme proposed resulting in a score. This allowed comparison between one scheme and another, with the highest scoring schemes being the ones that contributed the most to national, regional and local transport targets.
- Provide a score for every scheme which could be ranked to prioritise the proposals. This acted as a guide for officers and Members on which schemes should be funded and constructed, and which were less worthy of a share of the limited budget.

(5) The new system had been devised following consultation with the Cabinet Member, Members of an Informal Members Group (IMG), and officers responsible for generating and assessing Integrated Transport proposals. It was based on the national, regional and local priorities set out in LTP2, and revolved around the four shared priorities agreed by the Local Government Association and Government in 2005: Tackling congestion; improving accessibility; increasing road safety; improving air quality.

(6) Seven different options were tested and were outlined in Appendix 1 of the report. These involved different weightings, scores and bonus points in order to illustrate the variations that different scores and rankings achieved. Using the schemes submitted for construction in 2009/10, 100 schemes were assessed using the seven different options.

(7) Following two IMG meetings, the following option received the unanimous support of Members present:-

- Increasing road safety, tackling congestion and improving accessibility should each receive a 30% weighting in the scheme assessment. Improving air quality should receive a 10% weighting.
- Bonus points awarded to personal injury crashes should be increased by 50% in comparison to the points received in PIPKIN.

- JTBs should be able to boost their priority schemes by nominating the top 8 schemes in their district. These would receive additional points: the number 1 priority would receive 8 points, decreasing to number 8 priority receiving 1 point.

(8) The Board supported the proposal for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that the proposed Scheme Prioritisation System for integrated transport schemes be approved, for assessing and prioritising schemes to be constructed from 2010/11 onwards.

11. Participation of Highways Advisory Board Members in the Road Safety stand at the 2009 Kent County Show

(Item. 12)

(1) Since 2004 the KHS Road Safety team had worked with its partners to deliver key messages to the public at the County Show under the collective banner of 'Fit for the Road'. The partnership approach involved KCC, the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership, Medway Council, the Highways Agency, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue, South-East Coast Ambulance Service and the Kent Probation Service.

(2) The primary purpose of the 'Fit for the Road' stand was to promote key road safety messages; these were agreed at the early stages of planning the project. The promotion of who was delivering the messages was seen as a lesser priority. This approach had enabled KCC to engage people with key messages in a more effective manner and maintained good partnering relationships. Significantly the stand was deliberately located amongst the car dealers and deliberately away from the Local Government or Kent Police tents.

(3) Every opportunity was taken to make the displays interactive. This year the displays would include a wide range of topics:-

- Seat-belt demonstrator
- Eye-sight screening
- Pedestrian safety
- Cyclist safety
- Road crashes and their causes
- Driver impairment
- Collision investigation
- Safety Cameras (with real cameras and speed limit information)
- Motorcyclist safety.

(4) This approach engaged people of all ages in the important areas of concern and for this reason the stand was awarded second prize in the Public Sector category in 2008.

(5) Typically the stand attracted over 5,000 visitors each year. Completed questionnaires about the displays provided valuable feedback. The findings indicated consistently high levels of satisfaction, with visitors being able to recall important messages and how they were delivered on the day. The findings also enabled the road safety team to better understand which aspects had the most appeal and where improvements were needed. This had been particularly useful in the development of the current approach.

(6) It was proposed that Highways Advisory Board Members be invited to participate in the Road Safety stand in support of the team drawn from the various partners. The objectives of the proposal were to:-

- Make a clear leadership statement by demonstrating political support for the road safety priorities
- Provide encouragement to team members
- Enable members to gain a greater insight into how people react to messages.

(7) It was envisaged that each Member would spend around two hours at the stand and would be asked to attend pre-event briefings.

(8) The Board supported the Kent County Show Road Safety stand in the manner described above; and agreed to contact Mr Procter following the June elections.

12. Proposed Prohibition of Driving Traffic Order - Mill Lane, Beltinge, Herne Bay

(Item. 13)

(1) At its meeting on 8 July 2008 the Highways Advisory Board considered an objection to a proposal to make a traffic regulation order to prohibit driving in Mill Lane, Beltinge, Herne Bay. The Board agreed that the traffic order should be made as advertised, but following a complaint from an objector, the decision was taken that the traffic order should be readvertised so that his objection could be reconsidered by the Board.

(2) The Development Brief for the residential development north of the Thanet Way and west of Margate Road included a requirement to make Mill Lane North a cycleway/footway. This was to be achieved by a traffic regulation order prohibiting motor vehicles whilst leaving access available for an adjacent landowner at the northern end of the road. Vehicular access to the new development was not to be permitted via Mill Lane as this road had a poor junction with Margate Road which the development brief did not propose to improve.

(3) Eight letters of objection had been received. Five of these were signatories to the same letter and were from residents of Talmead Road who back onto Mill Lane. The vehicular access to these premises was via Talmead Road. One objection was from a resident of Cedar House which was outside the length of road that was proposed to be closed.

(4) One letter was from a horse owner who rented the field adjacent to Mill Lane and required access for tractors and trailers via the southern most access point. One letter was from the owner of the land bordering the western side of Mill Lane whose objection was based on the fact that the traffic order would prevent him from accessing his land from all of the accesses that he had constructed.

(5) The landowner had constructed a number of accesses into his land from Mill Lane including the access into the field rented by the horse owner. The proposed traffic regulation order would prohibit driving to all but the most northerly access to his land. If an exemption were to be made to allow access along Mill Lane as far south

as the junction with Talmead Road, this would meet the objections that had been raised but would negate any improvements to Mill Lane to make it a pedestrian/cycleway.

(6) Members of the Board had the following options available:-

- (i) make the traffic regulation order as advertised. This would permit access to the northern end of Mill Lane only;
- (ii) make the traffic regulation order with an exemption for access to adjacent land. This would permit access to the length of Mill Lane north of Talmead Road and would meet the objections of the respondents, but would not meet the terms of the development brief;
- (iii) abandon the traffic order. This would allow residents of Talmead Road to gain access to the development via Mill Lane and would increase traffic at the junction with Margate Road.

(7) The best arrangement for the area was for the Prohibition of Driving Order to be made in Mill Lane with no exemptions, apart from emergency vehicles. This would mean that the Order could be enforced with a robust bollard that only the emergency services could remove.

(8) The Board agreed to defer consideration of the report to the next meeting, to enable officers to seek advice from the Legal Unit.