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To: Environment, Highways & Waste Policy, Overview and
Scrutiny Committee - 12 January 2012

Subject: Highway Management Centre and Highway Network
Management

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This report provides an update on how KCC's new Highway Management Centre at the Aylesford Highways Depot is helping to improve highway services and network management across the County using technology and by integrating services.

FOR INFORMATION

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Highway Management Centre was opened in September 2011 and is located on the first floor of the new Aylesford Highways Depot. The Centre seeks to 'Keep Kent Moving', ensuring the highway network is operating efficiently by:

- managing the day-to-day highway maintenance activity;
- co-ordinating responses to incidents across the County;
- increasing traffic management efficiency; and
- keeping people informed.

2.0 What the Highway Management Centre (HMC) does

2.1 Coordinates and manages various teams to ensure that highways are maintained, incidents are dealt with and accurate timely information is provided.

2.2 Brings together the previous Traffic Management Centre staff, all Highway District Managers, Priority Response Officers, road works coordinators and the term maintenance contractor Enterprise.

2.3 Receives all customer enquiries and using the technology present helps resolve them quickly. The benefits are realised by the reduction in visits required by stewards and inspectors and the enriched traveller

information that is now available. The information is sent out by email alerts, links with Traffic link and Twitter.

- 2.4 Works closely with the Highways Agency sharing information and to ensure that incidents on the strategic road are managed as effectively as possible.

3.0 Investment in technology

- 3.1 The UTMC (Urban Traffic Management and Control) project included investment, initially in Maidstone, in:

- CCTV cameras
- Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras
- Classified Counters
- Variable Message Signs (VMS)

The project produced a number of measurable benefits including:

- Increase in under-used car park occupancies
- Travel time savings by opening the traffic management centre on Saturdays
- Travel time savings during incidents of £100,000 per annum in Maidstone based upon the number of incidents recorded
- Car park VMS produce travel time savings of £140,000 supported by the car park data in Maidstone

- 3.2 These benefits can be transferred to other towns and the project has been extended to cover Canterbury, Gravesend, Tunbridge Wells and Dartford. The Dartford scheme is underway and will be completed over the current and next financial year. It is expected that development will provide similar benefits to the Maidstone implementation.

4.0 Initial success of the Highway Management Centre (HMC)

- 4.1 The HMC has only been operating for a short time but there have been a number of examples that demonstrate the benefit of integrating services and maximising the use of technology. Two examples are described below:

Example 1

A road works coordinator was able to utilise the technology of the HMC to identify unauthorised roadworks on Crescent Road, Tunbridge Wells at the beginning of December. Having the HMC saved an inspector's visit, removed the works quicker and reduced the delays the works would have caused to travellers.

Example 2

In mid November a District Manager used the HMC to investigate customer complaints regarding a carriageway defect on the Bridge Gyrotory in Maidstone. The HMC enabled visibility of the defect without going on site and the resulting repair provided an opportunity to share the traffic management with a repair to traffic light detectors and therefore saved resources.

- 4.2 The HMC will also be a key element of the work being carried out to mitigate the impact of the Olympic Games by enabling management of the road network and by working with other agencies.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1 As the HMC develops, the measurement of the benefits will be key to delivering service efficiency and identifying further areas to explore for improvement.
- 5.2 Extending the hours of opening and improving communication links with the Police are key development areas currently being considered.
- 5.3 The identification of benefits in the HMC will ensure that funding in the technology that supports the centre is focussed on the areas of maximum benefit. Further expansion is being considered for Ashford if funding is available.

6.0 Recommendation

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report.

Background documents:

None

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