
From: Bryan Sweetland, Cabinet Member – Environment, Highways & Waste
John Burr Director of Highways & Transportation

To: Environment, Highways & Waste Cabinet Committee

Date: 11 May 2012

Subject: The Olympics and Keeping Kent Moving

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary:

This report sets out the key issues that will impact upon the Kent's highway and transportation network and the actions being planned to mitigate them and ensure Kent keeps moving.

Recommendation:

The report recommends that Members of the Cabinet Committee consider and endorse the work being planned to ensure that the Olympics are a success for the travelling public in the County.

1. Introduction

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games will have a significant effect on the County. To identify the issues and what mitigation might be necessary to ensure that Kent keeps moving an Integrated Olympic Transport Plan has been developed. The plan is a multi agency approach to managing the road network to ensure that the County is prepared and includes a number of mitigations to the impact of the games.

2. Financial Implications

The plan does not have a financial impact although the publicity plan does require financial support that the Olympic Delivery Authority has offered to fund. The plan seeks to utilise existing resources and use the Highways Management Centre (HMC).

3. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

1. To help the Kent economy grow

The development of the integrated plan will ensure that the economic impact of the games is minimised. This will ensure that businesses are aware of the likely impact to enable them to plan effectively.

2. To put the citizen in control

The plan and publicity associated will help to ensure that the community is aware of the importance of planning their travel during the games. This will promote planning for those who need to continue to work as well as those that will be taking a more active part in the games experience.

3. To tackle disadvantage

The more vulnerable parts of the community will be made aware of the possible issues to ensure that they are still able to carry out their normal lives. The plan will also provide access to travel information so that these groups are not adversely affected.

4. The Games

The Olympic Games and Paralympics will have an impact on Kent. This is due to a number of issues that the County faces as the Gateway to Europe. With the importance of the access to mainland Europe through the Channel ports and the use of the strategic road network (M20/M25 & M2/A2) the County will be facing challenges as travel patterns change. The challenges faced by the County include the Olympic Torch Relay, the Paralympic Cycling event at Brands Hatch and Ebbsfleet International station being used as a transport hub during the main games.

Olympic Torch Relay

The Torch Relay enters the County on the 17th July briefly and fully enters on the 18th July until the 20th July. The torch consists of 2 convoys with the first containing the sponsors vehicles and the second the main torch bearer. The Boroughs and District Councils have signed contracts with London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG). The Torch schedule is listed below:

- 17th July: Tunbridge wells only
- 18th July: Ashford, A259 towns, Folkestone and Dover (evening celebration)
- 19th July: Deal, Thanet, Canterbury and Maidstone (Leeds evening event)
- 20th July: Maidstone, Medway, Gravesend, Sevenoaks and off into Surrey

Planning and mitigation

To plan for the torch entering the County the following planning and mitigation actions have been taken:-

- KCC have chaired a county wide planning and coordination meeting
- Detailed workshops have been introduced
- Wider warning signing will be installed
- Integrated media campaign with boroughs and districts
- All routes will be checked directly before the relay

Brands Hatch Paralympics Cycling event

The cycling event will be using the Brands Hatch racing circuit and use the A20 outside Brands Hatch, Scratchers Lane and a short stretch of Fawkham Road. It then enters Brands Hatch through an improved access off Fawkham Road. KCC have funded the resurfacing of the A20, Scratchers Lane and Fawkham Road. The length of time that LOCOG require for their practice and race days has resulted in the adoption of a full 24 hour closure of the A20, Scratchers Lane and the short stretch of Fawkham Road.

- Full closure starts on the 3rd September at 04:30
- Re-opening of the carriageway will be at midnight on the 8th September

There will also be a practice day on the 19th June where the road will be shut from 10:00 to 20:30.

The full closure has resulted in opposition from local residents due to the length of time involved. The full closure is necessary to ensure that the risk to the field of play (the public highway) is minimised, it gives a clear message to the public about opening times and it reduces the risk to staff and drivers by not having to lift the closure.

Planning and mitigation

The event has been facilitated by the development of a Transport Plan for the event. The plan covers a number of issues including:-

- Developing a full signing scheme for the event
- A Park & Ride in conjunction with the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) for non-ticketed spectators' developed to reduce the numbers of people trying to park in West Kingsdown
- Official diversion route identified using the A225 and A25
- Unofficial one way system developed with the community
- Working with the Highways Agency (HA) on strategic diversion routes

Ebbsfleet Transport interchange

The ODA have identified Ebbsfleet as a key method of transporting a large number of people into the Olympic Park. The Javelin service will run every 6 minutes and transport 1000 people per train. The ODA have set up coach services that will run from a number of towns in Kent and East Sussex to link with the train service. These services will have to be pre-booked and will provide an alternative to normal rail services. The Javelin service is a key element of the ODA Strategy as it is predicted that 10% of the Olympic Park capacity will use Ebbsfleet. It is expected that a significant number of coach services will use the service after travelling from the continent. KCC has voiced its concerns regarding the road and parking capacity around the station as there will be approximately 3500 pre-booked spaces for cars, a limited number for the total capacity of the train service. It is understood the ODA are investigating an overflow car park in the area.

Associated with the use of Ebbsfleet there are concerns that the Dartford Crossing will be under pressure from traffic reassigning away from London. KCC are working with Dartford Borough Council to look into how this can be mitigated.

Planning and mitigation

To mitigate the risks around use of the road network near Ebbsfleet, KCC are taking the following actions:-

- Working with the ODA and other stakeholders on a Traffic Management plan for the station
- The HMC will work with the HA Regional Control Centre to coordinate how the network is managed
- A publicity campaign has started to encourage people to plan and use public transport
- The HA are being encouraged to lift the Dartford Crossing tolling when there is heavy congestion on the M25 quickly
- Traffic Management changes are being made to Junction 1b on the M25

Contingency Planning

Highways & Transportation staff have taken an active role in working with the multi-agency partners in preparing for unexpected events that could occur in Kent. This has involved taking part in incident simulation exercises that test the communications and readiness of all partners to respond in the event of emergencies. In preparation for the games Kent Police will be following their normal emergency response procedures and will have silver command at Medway Police Station throughout the period of the Torch Relay and the games. A District Manager from H&T will be present as part of the road cell within the command structure during the Relay and games periods. At the same time the HMC will be open for 24 hours during both games time and will be available to deploy resources as necessary. There have also been plans developed for dealing with a number of unexpected incidents that could occur across the county. Examples include:

- Dealing with the real possibility of Operation Stack
- Incidents on the HA network that could lead to increased congestion on Kent roads particularly around Ebbsfleet
- Working with the HA on strategic diversion when the A20 is shut

5. Conclusions

This report sets out the current situation with regard to the impact of the Olympics on Kent. It also details how Highways & Transportation is prepared for the games and how it is working with stakeholders to keep Kent moving.

6. Recommendations

Members consider and endorse the work being planned to ensure that the Olympics are a success for the travelling public in the County.

7. Background Documents

Kent and Medway Integrated Transport Plan

Contact Information

Name: Andrew Westwood
Title: Traffic Manager
Tel No: 01622 222729
Email: andrew.westwood@kent.gov.uk