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**By:** Countywide Improvements Major Projects Manager

**To:** Highways Advisory Board – 3 March 2009

**Subject:** Progress Report on Major Capital Projects

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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**Summary:** Bi-annual report on the progress of major projects for information. Members are asked to note the report.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 It is an appropriate time to update the Board on progress of the major transport and highway schemes following the last report in September 2008. It is the intention to continue to provide reports half yearly and when there are important issues to bring to Members notice.
- 1.2 The last six months continue to be dominated by the considerable efforts of the Team in progressing the growth area schemes in Kent Thameside and Ashford within the funding and time constraints; and progressing other schemes, mainly in East Kent. There have been some considerable successes and substantive progress in this period against a backdrop of continuing change within KHS and E&R and new operating systems.
- 1.3 **Eurokent Phases 4 & 5** was opened on time in November. This scheme has been forward funded by the County Council to facilitate future mixed use development with pay-back from the raised land values.
- 1.4 **Fort Hill De-dualling** was completed on time in October. A Stopping Up Order for the redundant highway was successfully achieved on 6 November. Both of these aspects were crucial to allowing the Turner Contemporary construction contract to start on time. The scheme included public realm improvements to The Parade, King Street and Duke Street on behalf of Margate Renewal Partnership and these were substantially completed in February. Public Realm works to Harbour View at the entrance to Turner Contemporary and the Pier are about to start.
- 1.5 The **Shared Space** elements of Ashford Ring Road opened in November, consistent with its revised budget and programme, so that Ashford town centre was clear of traffic management in the critical pre-Christmas trading period. The scheme has had mixed reviews but as an innovative scheme its operation and safety will be closely monitored. Newtown Road Bridge was completed in December giving a less oppressive wider span and in particular increased headroom to accommodate future Smartlink buses.

- 1.6 The statutory orders for **Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road** were confirmed by the Secretary of State for Transport on 23 December 2008. This follows the Public Inquiry in July and has endorsed, in particular, the proposal for a low level fixed link bridge crossing of Milton Creek. All efforts are now being directed at the next stage of funding approval to enable a substantive start to be made before September 2009, within the validity period of the planning consent.
- 1.7 The statutory orders for **East Kent Access Phase 2** are expected to be confirmed by the Secretary of State for Transport in March 2009. This follows a frustrating period over nearly 2 years, since the Public Inquiry, to secure a piece of land by voluntary negotiation for a replacement EDF sub-station that in turn allowed the orders to be confirmed. All efforts are now being directed at the next stage of funding approval to enable a substantive start to be made before September 2009, within the validity period of the planning consent. Construction tenders were invited in anticipation of the Orders decision and these are to be returned in March.
- 1.8 **Rushenden Relief Road** has made considerable progress. SEEDA has secured replacement and compensatory ecological habitat which was a key planning condition. SEEDA has also let a contract for enabling works for its own development that includes advance works for the Relief Road. The County Council has invited tenders for the Relief Road and these were returned in February and are currently being assessed. Substantial progress now needs to be made on the funding and delivery agreement with SEEDA and it is hoped that this will be concluded soon so that the County Council is able to award the construction contract in late March/early April 2009.
- 1.9 The Board will recall the substantial claim by Union Railways/London & Continental Railways against the County Council in connection with the **South Thameside Development Route Stage 4**. The County Council was given leave to appeal against the decision, in favour of the claimants, by the President of the Lands Tribunal into Preliminary Issues. The appeal is to be heard in the Court of Appeal in the week beginning 23 March 2009.
- 1.10 Fastrack has received further awards as follows.
- Highways Magazine Excellence Awards 2008- Shortlisted.
  - ITS UK Award for Excellence 2008 – for Fastrack’s “pioneering approach to local urban regeneration using innovative technology to completely overturn passenger perception and experience of bus transport.
  - ACE Engineering Excellence Award 2008 – Transport Category.
  - PTRC Bus Priority conference - Outstanding success in bus priority.
- 1.11. **On Eurokent**, the agent for the contractor, Jackson Civil Engineering, won a Considerate Contractor award for ‘Performance beyond Compliance’.
- 1.12. The recent and rapid down turn in the economy has made it difficult to judge the effects on construction costs and construction inflation. However, the analysis of the tenders for East Kent Access Phase 2 and Rushenden Relief Road will be of considerable assistance. A robust understanding of costs and inflation is critical because DfT funding is on a cash basis and the County Council is obliged to make judgements about inflation over the development and construction period of the project.

## **2. Progress**

- 2.1 A progress or status report on East Kent Access Phase 2, Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road, Rushenden Relief Road, A2 Slips, Canterbury, Borough Green & Platt Bypass, Operation Stack Lorry Park, other schemes and land matters is given in the Appendix to this report.
- 2.2. For brevity, only some of the background provided in previous reports is provided with the focus given to activity in the last half year and in the coming months. A number of acronyms are used and a glossary is given at the start.

## **3. Conclusion**

- 3.1 Some of the issues referred to in this report are live issues and at the time of the Board meeting matters may have progressed. Where appropriate a verbal update will be given at the Board meeting.
- 3.2 This report is for Members' information.

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Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road – John Turner

Borough Green & Platt Bypass – John Turner

Maidstone Schemes - John Turner

Operation Stack Lorry Park – John Farmer

Rushenden Relief Road – Richard Shelton (Jacobs seconded Project Manager)

Ashford Ring Road – Jamie Watson

Victoria Way, Ashford – Jamie Watson

M20J9 – Drivers Roundabout – Jamie Watson

Land and Property – Isla Britchford

Background Documents: None