

Joint Transportation Board Update

A report by the Director of Kent Highway Services.

The Policy and Overview Scrutiny Committee (POSC) met on 14 September 2010 and the following are summaries of relevant reports discussed at the meeting.

1. Signs and Lines Policy and Technical Directive

The attached report informs members of the new policy for signs and road markings. To assist with the implementation of the policy a Technical Directive has been developed which provides further detailed information on signing and road marking. This has also been produced to assist in bridging the skills shortage Kent Highway Services (KHS) has with sign and road marking design.

2. Revision of the Scheme Prioritisation System

The attached report is presented in two parts. The first part outlines proposed changes to the mechanism by which the Integrated Transport budget is allocated during the period of Kent's third Local Transport Plan (2011-2016). The second part sets out proposals for replacing the existing Scheme Prioritisation System (SPS) with a formal value for money assessment of Integrated Transport Schemes, to be recommended for approval by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste.

3. Winter Service

Following the worst winter in over 30 years, a consultation exercise was carried out of the winter service delivered by Kent Highway Services. The final consultation report was produced by Ipsos MORI on 12 June. Additionally the views of Members of this committee and Joint Transportation Boards were sought and the results thereof have been added to the consultation report to produce a revised draft Winter Service Policy 2010/11.

Further to the POSC meeting on 29 July 2010, the attached report informs Members of the key points from the Consultation report and also includes the revised Winter Service Policy Document.

From: Nick Chard, Cabinet Member – Environment, Highways & Waste
John Burr – Director of Kent Highway Services

To: Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview & Scrutiny
Committee – 14th September 2010

Subject: Signs and Lines Policy & Technical Directive

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report informs members of the new policy for signs and road markings. To assist with the implementation of the policy a Technical Directive has been developed which provides further detailed information on signing and road marking. This has also been produced to assist in bridging the skills shortage Kent Highway Services (KHS) has with sign and road marking design.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent Highway Services (KHS) provides and maintains traffic signs, road markings and road studs to assist with road safety and provide guidance and information to road users on how to use the road network.
- 1.2 Signs and road markings have to be easily understood by all road users regardless of their age and nationality. Kent has a significant volume of non local traffic, especially foreign vehicles therefore it is essential that KHS bases its standards within the national framework and is consistent with its implementation of them.

2. Background

- 2.1 The existing signing policy has been reviewed as it is over five years old. It was developed when the districts and boroughs had their own highway units. As these highway units have been brought back into Kent County Council the policy needs to be able to manage public and Member expectations and be delivered in one consistent way.
- 2.2 There is no existing policy relating to road marking and road studs.

3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 This policy aims to contribute in achieving the highway related subjects of Kent County Council's Local Transport Plan 2006 - 2011 (LTP) by providing traffic signs and road markings using the most appropriate materials affordable, to assist improving road safety by making the signs and road markings more visible in all conditions.
- 3.2 A Technical Directive document has also been produced to ensure all involved in design of this asset group (internal and external) are able to consistently apply the policy. It provides further detailed information regarding why a policy statement has been formulated, background information detailing how the policy statement was generated and how the policy should be applied to our road network.
- 3.3 Adherence to the policy and Technical Directive will assist in enhancing the appearance of the urban and rural environment through removal of sign clutter and the use of innovative design and materials. It will enable KHS to contribute to environmental and climate control policies.

It will assist in enabling cost efficiencies to be gained through specification of materials and number of signs required to be kept to a minimum.

4. Consultation and Data

- 4.1 This policy reviews existing policy relating to signs and also includes new policy in relation to road marking and road studs.
- 4.2 Both the policy and the Technical Directive have used the KHS Document toolkit. This has been developed by KHS Business Performance team and clearly sets out how all KHS documents will be approved and published. Documents are often a legal requirement and may be used, for example, in insurance claims or other legal proceedings to show how we use our council powers to carry out approved tasks.
- 4.3 The document has been forwarded to KCC Finance for comment to ensure the Council is able to afford policies made. Internal consultation within KHS and also with Kent Police was undertaken on 14 June 2010. All responses and action taken is reported in Appendix 3. A further meeting relating specifically to illumination of traffic signs was undertaken on 24th August 2010 and the policy has been amended accordingly.
- 4.4 The Customer Impact Assessment has been completed and waiting on a decision from the CIA Group if further action is required. Initial findings suggest that this will not be required.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste:
 - a. **Support the Signs and Road Marking policy**
 - b. **Support the Technical Directive**
 - c. **Note the comments made during the internal consultation**

Appendices

Hard copy of the appendices will be available on the date of the meeting. Electronic versions are available on request from the reporting officer.

Appendix 1 – Signs and Road Marking policy

Appendix 2 – Technical Directive

Appendix 3 – Consultation Responses and Actions

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From: Nick Chard – Cabinet Member, Environment, Highways & Waste
Paul Crick - Interim Director of Integrated Strategy and Planning

To: Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 14 September 2010

Subject: Revision of the Scheme Prioritisation System

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report is presented in two parts. The first part outlines proposed changes to the mechanism by which the Integrated Transport budget is allocated during the period of Kent's third Local Transport Plan (2011-2016). The second part sets out proposals for replacing the existing Scheme Prioritisation System (SPS) with a formal value for money assessment of Integrated Transport Schemes, to be recommended for approval by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Transport Act 2008 places a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare a Local Transport Plan (LTP), which must be in place by 1st April 2011. The LTP should contain a 'strategy', setting out the authority's key transport objectives, and an 'implementation plan', containing details of the Integrated Transport schemes it intends to deliver in order to meet those objectives. The County Council's Transport Policy Team is currently in the process of preparing Kent's draft LTP, which will be issued for public consultation later this month.
- 1.2 The Department for Transport (DfT)'s 'Guidance on Local Transport Plans', published in July 2009, states that local authorities should prepare LTP implementation plans which will make a demonstrable contribution to the National Goals for Transport.¹ The Coalition Government has yet to endorse these Goals; however they align well with the strategic challenges facing Kent and hence the proposed LTP objectives, outlined below, are closely related to them:-
- Growth Without Gridlock;
 - A Safer and Healthier County;
 - Supporting Independence;

¹ The National Goals for Transport, as defined in the previous Government's Delivering a Sustainable Transport System (DaSTS) strategy, are to: Support Economic Growth, Tackle Climate Change, Promote Equality of Opportunity, Contribute to Better Safety, Security and Health, and Improve Quality of Life.

- Tackling a Changing Climate; and,
- Enjoying Life in Kent.

- 1.3 Local Transport Plan Guidance makes clear that the overall quality and delivery of an authority's LTP will be taken into account by the DfT in decisions on bids for challenge funding and/or major projects. It is vital, therefore, that authorities have effective mechanisms in place for allocating Integrated Transport block funding to those schemes and areas which will make the greatest contribution to local and national objectives, and which represent the highest possible value for money.

2. Allocation of Integrated Transport block funding

- 2.1 The existing Scheme Prioritisation System (SPS) methodology has proved a useful guidance tool for apportioning the Integrated Transport block allocation from Government. SPS enables officers to assess every scheme proposed resulting in a score. This allows comparison between one scheme and another, with the highest scoring schemes being the ones that contribute the most to national and local transport objectives.
- 2.2 Whilst the SPS methodology generally produces a balanced Integrated Transport programme in terms of the geographical spread of schemes across the County, there are concerns that this 'jam-spreading' approach does not always focus investment in areas where the economic, social and/or environmental challenges are greatest. It also fails to incentivise the design and delivery of complementary packages of schemes which can collectively deliver greater benefits than the sum of their constituent projects (e.g. bus priority measures, together with improved bus stop infrastructure and information).
- 2.3 Given the significant reduction in capital funding for transport that is anticipated over the next five-year LTP period, it is proposed that the SPS methodology is revised to achieve better value for money from the limited Integrated Transport budget. The preferred option consists of a two-stage budget allocation process, combining the objectives-led approach of SPS with a spatial element. The first stage of the process would involve dividing the annual Integrated Transport block allocation according to the proposed weightings to be applied to the Kent LTP objectives (above). The proposed weightings are illustrated in Table 1 below:-

Table 1: Proposed weighting of LTP objectives

Kent LTP objectives	Weighting
Growth Without Gridlock	45%
A Safer and Healthier County	15%
Supporting Independence	15%
Tackling a Changing Climate	15%
Enjoying Life in Kent	10%

- 2.4 Growth Without Gridlock is given the highest weighting. This is primarily on account of the pressing economic challenges facing Kent, in common with the rest of the UK, as well as the local and sub-regional challenges

associated with substantial housing and employment growth in Thames Gateway Kent, Ashford, Dover and Maidstone. The low weighting for Enjoying Life in Kent reflects the fact that virtually all Integrated Transport schemes contribute to this quality of life objective.

- 2.5 The second stage of the budget allocation process would involve distributing the funding assigned to each of the Kent LTP objectives to different areas of the County, as proposed in Table 2 below:-

Table 2: Proposed spatial distribution of Integrated Transport block funding

Kent LTP objectives	Priority Area(s)
Growth Without Gridlock	Prioritise spending in the Growth Areas and Growth Points (Thames Gateway Kent, Ashford, Dover and Maidstone)
A Safer and Healthier County	Prioritise spending to tackle problem sites including Air Quality Management Areas, accident black spots, and areas with high levels of health deprivation
Supporting Independence	Prioritise spending in deprived areas (principally Dover, Gravesham, Shepway, Swale and Thanet)
Tackling a Changing Climate	Prioritise spending in the County's urban areas , particularly those with Air Quality Management Areas and congestion hotspots (principally Canterbury, Dartford, Gravesend, Maidstone, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells)
Enjoying Life in Kent	Mitigate the impact of motorised transport across the County in order to reduce the number of people exposed to high levels of pollution and noise and to enhance well-being and community cohesion

- 2.6 This budget allocation methodology would better enable KCC to prioritise investment in areas with the most acute transport challenges and where good value for money can be attained from the limited funding available. The methodology is presented graphically in Appendix 1.

3. Value for Money Assessment

- 3.1 As described in Paragraph 2.1 (above), SPS currently prioritises Integrated Transport schemes purely on the basis of their alignment with policy objectives. The cost of a scheme does not influence its SPS score. As a consequence, Members have expressed concern that high cost schemes which are able to deliver against a number of policy objectives are able to achieve higher scores than smaller, lower cost schemes which may have important local impacts and deliver better value for money. It is therefore proposed that Integrated Transport schemes are subjected to a Cost Benefit Analysis in place of the existing SPS assessment process.

- 3.2 Cost Benefit Analysis involves:

- Identifying the costs of a scheme (incorporating build cost, maintenance cost and external funding);
- Assessing the geographical extent of the scheme's impact, its distributional effects (i.e. which social groups are affected by the scheme), and its public acceptability; and,
- Assigning the scheme a score based on relative costs and benefits (Cost Score + Impact Score = Cost Benefit Analysis Score).

3.3 It is not feasible to calculate a fully Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) for Integrated Transport schemes due to the cost and complexity of assigning monetary values to their wide-ranging impacts. These include health and environmental impacts for which robust monetary values do not currently exist. Instead, DfT guidance on the prioritisation of small transport schemes recommends the use of proxy measures for scheme benefits and costs, which places greater emphasis on professional judgement and debate.

4. Calculating the Cost Score

4.1 Build Cost

It is proposed that schemes would be scored according to the magnitude of their total construction costs (including allowances for design work, contingency and, where necessary, land purchase) as follows:

Build Cost Magnitude		Score
Low	Less than 1% of total budget	3
Medium	1%-2% of total budget	2
High	More than 2% of total budget	1

4.2 Maintenance Cost

It is strongly recommended that a Whole Life Costing approach is taken to the calculation and appraisal of scheme maintenance costs. This would provide a realistic forecast of the scale of both revenue and capital commitments over a defined number of years. It is proposed that schemes would be scored according to the magnitude of their total maintenance costs over a ten-year period as follows:

Maintenance Cost Magnitude		Score
Low	Maintenance cost is zero	3
Medium	Maintenance cost is between 0% and 50% of build cost	2
High	Maintenance cost is more than 50% of build cost	1

4.3 External Funding

The part-funding of Integrated Transport schemes by third-parties, including developers and bus operators, can significantly improve their value for money.

The Members' Highway Fund may also qualify as external funding where appropriate in order to add value to schemes proposed by Kent Highway

Services. It is proposed that schemes would be scored according to the magnitude of any third-party contribution to their overall construction cost as follows:

Third-Party Contribution Magnitude		Score
High	Third-party contribution is 50% or more of build cost	3
Medium	Third-party contribution is between 25% and 49% of build cost	2
Low	Third-party contribution is less than 25% of build cost	1

- 4.4 The combined scores for build cost, maintenance and external funding will give the overall Cost Score.

5. Calculating the Impact Score

5.1 Geographical extent of impact

This measure relates to the broad number of people affected by a scheme. It is proposed that schemes would be scored according to the geographical extent of their impact as follows:

Geographical Extent of Impact		Score
High	District/Countywide impact (e.g. Urban Traffic Management and Control System, bus stop improvements along a strategic corridor)	3
Medium	Community level impact (e.g. provision of local cycle network, junction improvements)	2
Low	Street level impact (e.g. interactive speed sign, footway improvements)	1

5.2 Distributional impact

Distributional impacts describe the differential impact a scheme might have on individuals, according to their income, gender, ethnic group, age, geographical location, or disability. These impacts are often overlooked due to the tendency of scheme prioritisation methodologies to focus on national LTP objectives. However, they can be an important factor in delivering local and sub-regional objectives, including reducing disparities between districts and social groups. It is therefore proposed that schemes would be scored according to their impact on the County's most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation, as follows:

Distributional Impact		Score
High	Scheme has direct impacts in an area which falls within one or more of Kent's 20% most deprived LSOAs	3
Medium	Scheme has direct impacts in an area which falls within one or more of Kent's 20-60% most deprived LSOAs	2
Low	Scheme has no direct impacts in an area which falls within one or more of Kent's 60% most deprived LSOAs	1

5.3 Public acceptability

This measure captures the extent of public support for a scheme. It is proposed that Integrated Transport schemes would be scored according to the magnitude of their public acceptability as follows:

Public Acceptability		Score
High	Scheme has been proposed and/or endorsed by a Member of the County Council or District Council	3
Medium	Scheme has been proposed and/or endorsed by a Parish Council	2
Low	Scheme has been proposed and/or endorsed by Members of the Public	1

5.4 The combined scores for geographical extent of impact, distributional impact and public acceptability will give the overall Impact Score.

6. Calculating the Cost Benefit Analysis Score

6.1 The Cost Benefit Analysis Score is calculated by adding the Cost Score to the Impact Score. The maximum score achievable would be 18 (Cost Score of 9 added to an Impact Score of 9).

6.2 Appendix 2 provides a graphical representation of the proposed Integrated Transport budget allocation and scheme assessment process, along with its interaction with the County Council's existing scrutiny and approval procedures.

7. Recommendations

Members of the POSC are asked to:

1. Consider the proposed weightings to the Kent LTP objectives
2. Consider the proposed approach to allocating Integrated Transport block funding
3. Consider the proposed approach to assessing the value for money of Integrated Transport schemes

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Background Documents:

Department for Transport/Atkins, *Advice on the Prioritisation of Smaller Transport Schemes*, 2008

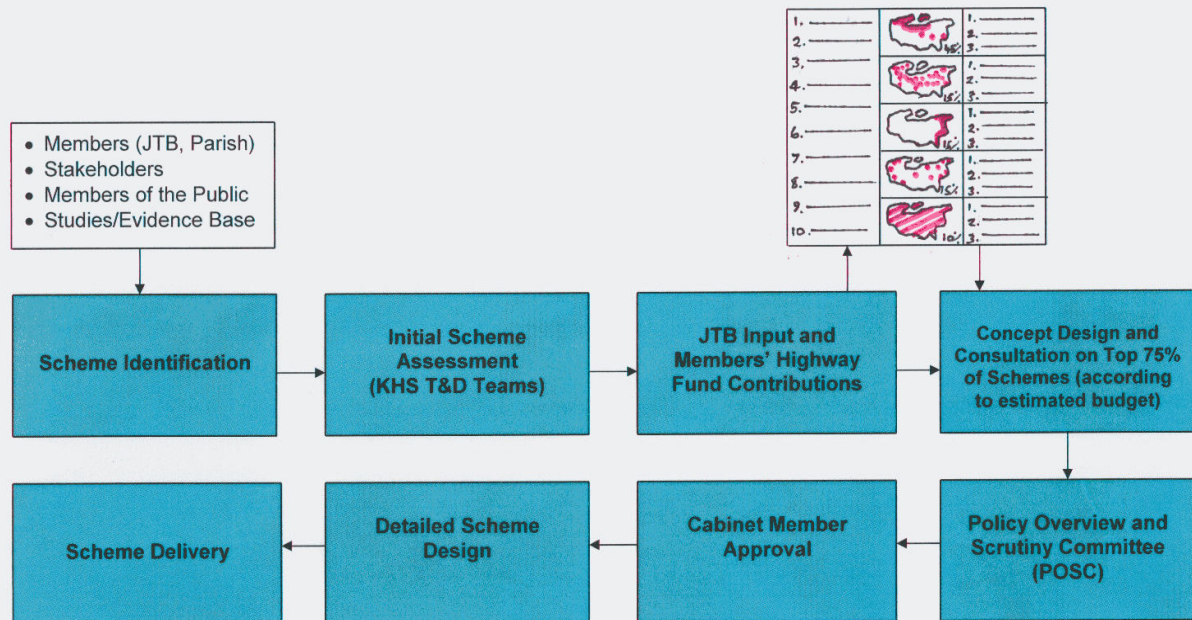
Department for Transport, *Guidance on Local Transport Plans*, 2009

Appendix 1: Proposed Integrated Transport budget allocation methodology

Spatial and Budget Allocation	Value for Money Ranking by Kent LTP Objective
<div>45%</div> 	<i>Growth Without Gridlock</i>
	1 – Dartford UTM
	2 – Dover bus priority junction
	3 – Gravesend pontoon
<div>15%</div> 	<i>A Safer and Healthier County</i>
	1 – River Dour cycle route, Dover
	2 – Sutton at Hone footpath
<div>15%</div> 	<i>Supporting Independence</i>
	1 – Margate Station access
	2 – Folkestone West access
<div>15%</div> 	<i>Tackling a Changing Climate</i>
	1 – Canterbury QBP infrastructure
	2 – Tonbridge cycle network
<div>10%</div> 	<i>Enjoying Life in Kent</i>
	1 – Canterbury-Chartham cycleway
	2 – Dane Valley cycle routes
	3 – Dartford pedestrian crossings

Growth Without Gridlock	
<i>Value for Money Ranking</i>	
1 – Dartford UTM	£230,000
2 – Dover bus priority junction	£100,000
3 – Gravesend pontoon	£500,000
Non-funded schemes	
4 – Northfleet traffic calming	£172,500
5 – Sittingbourne bus stops	£100,000

Appendix 2: Proposed Integrated Transport budget allocation and scheme assessment process



By: Nick Chard, Cabinet Member – Environment, Highways and Waste

To: Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 29 July 2010

Subject: Winter Service Consultation 2010

Classification: Unrestricted

1. Background

Following the worst winter in over 30 years, a consultation exercise was carried out of the winter service delivered by Kent Highway Services. The final consultation report was produced by Ipsos MORI on 12 June. Additionally the views of Members of this committee and joint transportation boards were sought and the results thereof have been added to the consultation report to produce a revised draft Winter Service Policy 2010/11.

2. Key findings

The key findings of the MORI report were reported to the EHW POSC in May of this year and the recommendations of the report are attached as Appendix 1 to this report. A full version of the report has been sent to Members of this committee. Additional copies can be requested from KHS.

3. Proposed policy revisions

As a result of the comments received a number of changes are proposed to the existing Winter Service Policy Statement (Appendix 2). These are summarized below:

3.1 District arrangements – District councils have made it clear that they wish to be more involved in assisting with the provision of the winter service in their local areas. On a practical level this will include pre and post winter meetings with them and more formalised arrangements for snow and ice clearance in agreed areas. This is reflected in sections 2 and 6 of the policy. Community Delivery Team Leaders will review their local winter service plans in consultation with their district council colleagues.

3.2 Salt bins (Section 8.1)

The provision of salt bins is of concern to parish councils in particular. They are seen as a community resource and a considerable number of requests have been made to KHS for new salt bins to be placed for the next winter season. There are currently 1803 salt bins placed around the county.

The proposal in the revised policy is for the existing scoring system to continue and that from now on salt bins are filled with a mixture of sharp sand or grit and salt. The provision of bags of a sand/salt mix to be made available to parishes is also recommended to be trialled next winter. Additionally last year Members were able to use their Member Highway Fund money to purchase salt bins.

3.3 Footway clearance (Section 6.3)

Footway clearance was a key concern of most of the stakeholders consulted. The key to improvement in this area is utilising district council staff and having clear plans in

place to do so. This will be set out in the Winter Service Plan for 2010/11 and the local winter service plans. Work is also being done with other stakeholders such as the health service to explore how joint working with them could improve footway clearance across the county.

3.4 Communications (Section 10)

Communications will be improved for communities, businesses and the emergency services. Regular detailed briefings will be given to the contact centre and the website and traffic management centre will be updated regularly as needed. The existing leaflet will be revised and district councils will be included in daily briefings as necessary. Key KHS staff have received media training and media contact will be developed prior to and during the winter season. A snow desk arrangement will be put in place as soon as snow conditions are experienced. This will coordinate activities, including emergency service and district councils and other KCC departments, including education.

3.5 Salt (Section 3.3)

The supply of salt across the country is limited and KHS is continuing to secure stocks in the UK and from abroad. The use of pre wet salt is being extended next season to another two depots. Some district councils have requested stocks of salt for their own use to treat footways in their areas. Consideration needs to be given to these requests when drawing up agreements with them.

4. Other areas

Meetings have been held between KHS and the Children, Families and Education Department and discussions are ongoing to improve schools responses to snow and icy conditions. A meeting has also been held with the leading bus operators in the county in regard to gritting bus routes and increasing the communications between KHS and those companies during the winter.

6. SEASIG Winter Service Group

The inaugural meeting of the South East Authorities Winter Service Group was held at the Ashford Highway Depot in June. The group is chaired by KHS and is a useful forum for sharing ideas. Practical arrangements for mutual aid across the region in future and joint procurement arrangements are being considered and will be reported to this committee in due course.

5. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Environment Highways and Waste:

- a. Approve the policy changes recommended above**
- b. Develop formal agreements for winter service with District councils across the county, including the provision of salt**
- c. Approve the trial of salt bags in selected parish council areas**

Background documents:

Ipsos MORI 'The Winter Service Policy Consultation 2010 Final report for Kent Highway Services' June 2010
Joint Transportation Board notes

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Recommendations from Ipsos MORI report

Appendix 2 - Draft Winter Service Policy Statement 2010/11\

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Recommendations from Ipsos MORI report

Recommendations

Based on our analysis of the findings from the online survey and depth interviews, as set out in this report, we have developed the following recommendations for the development of the Winter Policy Statement 2010/11, and for KHS's relationship with district authorities more generally.

It is clear from the online survey and the depth interviews that there were significant issues for KHS over the past winter. However, the depth interview respondents, in the main, felt that learning had taken place between the two phases of extreme weather, and the service provided by KHS had improved. Consequently, this experience must be used to improve the relationship between KHS and the districts, and to improve the future delivery of the winter service for Kent residents.

The wider impact for Kent County Council

Our recent NHT survey of Kent residents² found that 55% are satisfied with the work that the authority undertakes on cold weather gritting, this is comparable to an average for the residents of the 76 local authorities that took part of 54%, which is positive. However, it suggests that more can be done. Ipsos MORI's analysis of the data from the 76 authorities participating in the NHTS, in the report *from A to B*³, has found that there has been an upward trend in the proportion of the public who want to see extra investment in road and pavement maintenance at a time when the volume of traffic has increased in recent years and when, according to the Highway Condition Index, 11% of all 'B' and 'C' roads were not in 'good' condition before the harsh winter of 2009-10.

It is important to pause to consider resident satisfaction with road and pavement maintenance as there are wider implications for the Council. Our evidence from the NHTS shows that addressing road and pavement conditions, and perceptions of them, are vital pre-conditions to improving public views of transport and highway services. After aggregating the NHTS data collected in 76 local authority areas, we can see that the condition of highways is unlike most transport and highway services in attracting more resident dissatisfaction than satisfaction: half (49%) are critical against a third who are satisfied (36%). A quarter, (24%), are very dissatisfied.

Furthermore, we have found that half of residents wish to be more informed about transport issues. This has implications for the impact of improving communications to residents during periods of extreme weather, as in our

² National Highways Transport Survey <http://www.nhtsurvey.org/> Kent County Council was one of 76 authorities to conduct this postal survey in 2009.

³ March 2010, *From A to B*, Ipsos MORI, http://www.ipsos-mori.com/DownloadPublication/1342_sri-transport-from-a-to-b-2010.pdf

wider local government work we have found that more informed residents are more satisfied.

Involving stakeholders in the development of the Winter Policy Statement

To develop a more useful Winter Policy Statement and improve the delivery of the work of KHS during periods of extreme weather, it will not be necessary to restructure the service, or indeed return to pre-2003 ways of working. However, including the district authorities in the planning process and ensuring that they and residents are informed will be essential.

The depth interviews with districts identified very clearly that poor communications shaped the perception of the planning and management of the KHS response to extreme weather. It was felt that this was the case in the lead up to the winter period and during the extreme weather, where prior consultation would have been beneficial.

It is possible to identify a link between the poor communication among individual districts and KHS and the satisfactory clearance of roads and pavements. Those districts who lauded their contact for their responsiveness and flexibility were more understanding of the pressures faced by KHS.

The district authorities want to be involved in helping KHS designate the priority routes in their local area. Therefore it might be appropriate to consult the districts on district-specific sections of the Winter Service Policy Statement 2010/11. There is no desire to make this an unwieldy document that details the approach for every side-street, but the districts would like to be able to highlight essential junctions and services such as local crematoria, which might ordinarily be designated as a low priority.

County Councillors, who represent stakeholders such as schools, felt that in the future the needs of such local organisations should be considered more comprehensively than was the case in 2009/10. The County Councillors, themselves felt well informed of the work conducted by KHS, however a high proportion would prefer to receive information about the Policy via email, rather than in the current report document.

Improving the relationship between KHS and district authorities

Furthermore, during the extreme weather those authorities who had good access to a key contacts and information, and could feed into the local delivery of salting and snow clearance were much more understanding of the issues faced by KHS. Allowing and perhaps encouraging communication between key KHS contacts and district authorities, so that urgent, unexpected, problems can be treated is highly desired.

There is a need to be systematic in the relationships between individual districts and KHS key contacts. It is clear that at the moment there are some very good relationships and some less so. However, it appears that the better

relationships exist because of the personal relationships that existed from before the re-organisation. A minimum standard of contact could be outlined, perhaps in a Service Level Agreement, so that those with poorer relationships can benefit for renewed attention.

In terms of ongoing consultation, it may be useful to use current existing fora, such as the technical officers group or JTBs for prior consultation around priorities.

There are also lessons to be learned from working with staff employed by the district authorities to clear local pavements. A key issue for the councillors and parish councils was the clearing and salting of local pavements, which could be eased if there was more joint-working between the districts and KHS, employing district employees who are otherwise unable to work during extreme weather. Similarly, the interviews with county councillors indicate a desire to utilise local knowledge and resources, especially in the treatment of pavements and rural roads.

The online survey has shown that there is a desire from districts and parishes for residents to be more involved in helping their local areas cope with extreme weather. However, greater clarity around what help districts and parishes can give is desired by online respondents, district/borough councillors and county councillors alike. This might simply involve encouraging districts to involve their parishes in discussions over the prioritisation of local roads and footpaths, or might involve a greater provision of grit or salt for parishes.

Treating pavements

The online survey clearly identified a concern about the treatment and clearance of pavements, with a more positive perception of the work of KHS to clear main roads. This may be a reflection of the Winter Statement focusing on gritting rather than snow and ice clearance, as some interviewees perceived.

It is possible that improved relationships with districts and the delegation of cleansing staff could help here. However, the desire of local stakeholders for you to increase the priority placed on clearing pavements will present financial challenges. Therefore, if you do not already it may be worth developing partnerships with local businesses, LSP members – particular PCTs – and local public services across the county to identify whether the work of clearing pavements and footpaths may be made less onerous and costly for KHS. If, as the feedback from one depth interview suggests, there are cost savings to be made in the health sector if greater priority is given to pavements.

Communicating with residents

Improving the provision of information for local residents on the roads that will be cleared and gritted is clearly required. Over the winter 2009/10, when district authorities and councillors were contacted they had to recommend that

residents speak to the county as they did not have enough information to answer questions. Perhaps if the districts were better informed this could relieve some of the pressure from the KHS Contact Centre.

Some of the depth interviewees identified that residents had had a poor experience of trying get through to the contact centre, with calls unanswered and messages left unanswered. This suggests that the contact centre was also not prepared for the extreme weather, whether because staff were unable to get to work, or the volume of calls was so great that staff could not cope. It is important that communications to residents are addressed, and perhaps minimum staff coverage should be agreed to ensure that residents are dealt with more effectively.

It may also be useful to review the information that you published on the KHS website over the Winter 2009/10. Improving the information made available online for districts and residents may reduce the volume of calls to the KHS contact centre. Perhaps a portal where districts could access the schedule for salting and snow clearing plans for there areas and the most up-to-date weather predictions, and a less detailed version made available on your main website would be a useful resource. Indeed, one county councillor interviewed by KHS suggested that methods of informing the public of KHS measures during extreme weather might be outlined in a future Winter Service policy statement.

Interviews with county councillors

The third phase of research, conducted by KHS, largely mirrors the findings from the interviews and discussions with parishes and districts. However, county councillors were more satisfied that KHS treated the main roads quickly and efficiently. The working relationship between KHS and the districts was thought to have improved over the two phases of extreme weather, and it was noted that this learning should be used to improve the future delivery of winter provision for Kent residents.

The, county councillors felt that greater collaboration between KHS and the district authorities would improve future winter service provision, especially the treatment of rural roads and pavements.

KENT HIGHWAY SERVICES

**WINTER SERVICE
POLICY STATEMENT**

2010/11

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Winter Service - Statutory Duty

- 1.1.1 The legal position relating to the highway authority's responsibility in respect of winter service is set out in an amendment to section 41(1) of the Highways Act 1980 (c.66) (duty of highway authority to maintain highway): -

“(1A) In particular, a highway authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.

- 1.1.2 The County Council recognises that the winter service is essential in aiding the safe movement of highway users, maintaining communications, reducing delays and enabling everyday life to continue. It is very important to both road safety and the local economy. The winter service that the County Council provides is believed to be sufficient so far as is reasonably practical to discharge the duty imposed by the legislation.

- 1.1.3 The County Council, as highway authority, takes its winter service responsibilities extremely seriously. However, it is important to recognise that the council has to prioritise its response to deal with winter weather due to the logistics and available resources.

- 1.1.4 The County Council provides the winter service through Kent Highway Services (KHS) which is currently an alliance between Kent County Council, Ringway Infrastructure Services and Jacobs Group and telent.

1.2 Winter Service Standards

- 1.2.1. In order to respond as quickly and efficiently as possible to its responsibilities KHS has adopted policies and standards for each of the winter service activities and these are detailed within this document. The operational details for the winter service activities in Kent are detailed in the Winter Service Plan *2010/11* that complements this Policy Statement.

- 1.2.2 KHS provides a winter service which, as far as reasonably possible will:

- Minimise the loss of life and injury to highway users, including pedestrians, and preventing damage to vehicles and other property
- Keep the highway free from obstruction and thereby avoiding unnecessary hindrance to passage

1.3 **County Council Maintained Highways**

- 1.3.1 Kent Highway Service (KHS) delivers the winter service on Kent County Council maintained highways.

1.4 **Motorways and Trunk Roads**

The Department for Transport (DfT) is the highway authority for motorways and all-purpose trunk roads in Kent and the Highways Agency acts for the DfT in this respect. Responsibility for the operational maintenance of motorways and trunk roads lies with the Highways Agency. KHS therefore has no responsibility for winter service activities on these roads. However, close liaison exists between the Highways Agency consultants over action taken during the winter service operational period within respective areas of responsibilities.

2. **WINTER SERVICE OBJECTIVES**

2.1 **Salting**

2.1.1 Objectives:

- To prevent the formation of ice on carriageways (precautionary salting)
- To facilitate the removal of ice and snow from carriageways and footways (post salting).

2.1.2 Roads to be Included within Primary Precautionary Salting Routes

Routine precautionary salting will be carried out on pre-determined primary precautionary salting routes covering the following roads:

- Class 'A' and 'B' roads
- Other roads included in the top three tiers of the maintenance hierarchy as defined in the Kent Highway Asset Maintenance Plan. These are termed Major Strategic, Other Strategic and Locally Important roads.
- Other roads identified by Community Delivery Managers (based on local knowledge and experience and input from relevant local stakeholders including district and parish councils), that are particularly hazardous in frosty/icy conditions

- 2.1.3 It would be impractical and financially draining to carry out precautionary salting of footways, pedestrian precincts or cycleways and therefore no provision has been made. However, there will be a certain amount of salt overspill onto footways and cycleways when precautionary salting is being carried out on adjacent carriageways.

Post salting of footways and cycleways will be carried out on a priority basis during severe winter weather, as resources permit.

2.2 Snow Clearance

2.2.1 Objectives:

- To prevent injury or damage caused by snow
- To remove obstructions caused by the accumulation of snow (section 150 of the Highways Act 1980)
- To reduce delays and inconvenience caused by snow

2.2.2 Snow clearance on carriageways will be carried out on a priority basis as detailed in paragraph 6.2.

2.2.3 Snow clearance on certain minor route carriageways will be carried out by local farmers and plant operators, who are under agreement to the County Council, using agricultural snow ploughs and snow throwers/blowers. Snow clearance on other minor route carriageways will be carried out as resources permit. Some minor routes and cul-de-sacs will inevitably have to be left to thaw naturally.

2.2.4 Snow clearance on footways and cycleways will be carried out on a priority basis as detailed in paragraph 6.3. utilizing KHS staff and district council staff where agreements exist.

- 2.3

2.4 Roadside Salt Bins

2.4.1 Objective:

- To provide motorists and pedestrians with the means of salting small areas of carriageway or footway, where ice is causing difficulty, on roads not covered by primary precautionary salting routes.

3. WINTER SERVICE GENERAL

3.1 Winter Service Contracts

3.1.1 Winter service in Kent is included within the Term Maintenance Contract awarded to Ringway Infrastructure Services. This contract was awarded in 2006 and is currently in place until 2011.

3.2 Winter Service Season

3.2.1 In Kent the weather can be unpredictable and the occurrence and severity of winter conditions varies considerably through the season, and from year to year. Severe winter weather is most likely to be experienced in December, January and February but ice and snow can occur earlier or later. To take account of all possible winter weather the County Council's Operational Winter Service Period runs from

mid October to mid April. Exact dates for the coming winter are given in the Winter Service Plan.

3.3 Salt usage and **alternatives to Salt**

Pre wetted salt and dry rock salt is used across the county for precautionary and post salting. In cases of severe snowfall, alternatives to salt will be used including sharp sand and other forms of grit.

- 3.3.1 A number of alternative materials to salt are now available which can be used for the precautionary and post treatment of ice and snow. The cost of these is extremely high and there are also environmental disadvantages associated with most of them. Salt will therefore, for the time being, remain in use throughout Kent for the precautionary and post treatment of snow and ice.

4. **WEATHER INFORMATION**

4.1 **Weather Information Systems**

- 4.1.1 An effective and efficient winter service is only possible with reliable and accurate information about weather conditions, at the appropriate times in the decision making progress. KHS utilises the best weather forecast information currently available allied to the latest computer technology to ensure that decisions are based on the most accurate data available at the time.

4.2 **Weather Reports**

- 4.2.1 During the operational winter service period Kent Highway Services will procure detailed daily weather forecasts and reports specifically dedicated to roads within Kent.

4.3 ***Winter Duty Officers***

- 4.3.1 Experienced members of staff from Kent Highway Services will act as *Winter Duty Officers*, throughout the operational winter service period, on a rota basis. The Officer on duty is responsible for the following: -

- Receiving forecast information from the forecasting agency
- Monitoring current weather conditions
- Issuing countywide salting instructions for primary and secondary routes
- Issuing the Kent Road Weather Forecast

- 4.3.2 The Kent Road Weather Forecast will be issued daily containing information about expected weather conditions together with any salting instructions. The *Winter Duty Officer* will also be responsible for issuing forecast updates and any revised salting instructions when necessary. The Kent Road Weather Forecast will be sent to alliance members, contractors, neighbouring highway authorities, and other relevant agencies.

5. SALTING

5.1 Planning of Precautionary Salting Routes

- 5.1.1 Primary precautionary salting routes will be developed from those lengths of highway that qualify for treatment, whenever ice, frost or snowfall is expected. Each primary precautionary salting route will have a vehicle assigned which is capable of having a snowplough fixed to it, when required. In times of severe snowfall and/or extreme ice formation, dedicated vehicles will be assigned to patrol key strategic routes. Secondary precautionary salting routes will also be developed from other important highways for treatment during severe winter weather conditions.

5.2 Precautionary Salting

- 5.2.1 Precautionary salting will take place on scheduled precautionary salting routes on a pre-planned basis to help prevent formation of ice, frost, and/or the accumulation of snow on carriageway surfaces.

5.3 Post Salting

- 5.3.1 Post salting will normally take place on scheduled precautionary salting routes to treat frost, ice and snow that has already formed on carriageway or footway surfaces. Post salting may also be carried out on roads or sections of road beyond the scheduled precautionary salting routes.

5.4 Spot Salting

- 5.4.1 Spot salting will normally take place on parts or sections of scheduled precautionary salting routes either to help prevent formation of ice, frost and/or the accumulation of snow or as treatment to ice, frost and the accumulation of snow that has already formed on carriageway or footway surfaces. Spot salting may also be required on roads and footways, or sections thereof, beyond the scheduled precautionary salting routes.

5.5 Instructions for Salting of Primary Routes

- 5.5.1 Instructions for precautionary salting of primary routes will be issued if road surface temperatures are expected to fall below freezing unless:
- Road surfaces are expected to be dry and frost is not expected to form on the road surface
 - Residual salt on the road surface is expected to provide adequate protection against ice or frost forming
- 5.5.2 Instructions for precautionary salting of primary routes will also be issued if snowfall is expected.
- 5.5.3 The *Winter Duty Officer* will issue routine instructions for precautionary salting of primary routes, for the whole of Kent, by means of the Kent Road Weather Forecast.
- 5.5.4 The *Winter Duty Officer* or Community Delivery Manager may issue instructions for post salting and spot salting.

5.6 Instructions for Salting of Secondary Routes

- 5.6.1 The *Winter Duty Officer* will issue instructions for precautionary salting of secondary routes if heavy frost, widespread ice, or snow, is expected.

6. SNOW CLEARANCE

6.1 Instructions for Snow Clearance

- 6.1.1 The *Winter Duty Officer* and/or the Community Delivery Manager nominated representatives are responsible for issuing snow clearance instructions. Snow clearance will initially take place on scheduled primary precautionary salting routes, based on the priorities given in para. 6.2.1. Subsequently, snow clearance will take place on secondary salting routes and other roads, and footways, on a priority basis.

- 6.1.2 Snow ploughing shall not take place on carriageways where there are physical restrictions due to traffic calming measures, unless it has been deemed safe to do so following a formal risk assessment and a safe method of operation documented.

6.2 Snow Clearance Priorities on Carriageways

- 6.2.1 Snow clearance on carriageways should be based on the priorities given below: -

- A229 between M20 and M2, A249 between M20 and M2, A299 and A289;
- Other “A” class roads;
- All other roads included within primary precautionary salting routes;
- One link to other urban centres, villages and hamlets with priority given to bus routes;
- Links to hospitals and police, fire and ambulance stations;
- Links to schools (in term time), stations, medical centres, doctor’s surgeries, old people’s homes, cemeteries, crematoria and industrial, commercial and shopping centres;
- With the approval of Community Delivery Manager, other routes as resources permit.

6.3 Snow Clearance Priorities on Footways

- 6.3.1 Snow clearance on footways should be based on the priorities given below:

- One footway in and around shopping centres, and on routes to schools (in term time), stations, bus stops, hospitals, medical centres, doctor’s surgeries, old people’s homes, industrial and commercial centres and on steep gradients elsewhere;
 - One footway on main arteries in residential areas and the second footway in and around local shopping centres;
 - With the approval of Community Delivery Managers, other footways, walking bus routes and cycleways as resources permit.
- District council staff will be commissioned to clear agreed priority footways in their local areas. Formalized arrangements will be put in place between the Director of Kent Highway Services and district council Chief Executive Officers.

6.4 Agricultural Snowploughs for Snow Clearance

- 6.4.1 Agreements will be entered into by whereby snowploughs provided and maintained by KHS are assigned to local farmers and plant

operators for snow clearance operations, generally on the more rural parts of the highway.

6.5 Snow Throwers/Blowers for Snow Clearance

- 6.5.1 KHS also has a number of snow throwers/blowers, which are allocated to operators on a similar basis to the arrangements for agricultural snowploughs.

7. SEVERE WEATHER CONDITIONS

7.1 Persistent Ice on Minor Roads

- 7.1.1 During longer periods of cold weather Community Delivery Managers may instruct salting action to deal with persistent ice on minor roads which are not included within the precautionary salting routes and invoke arrangements with district and parish councils to take action in their local area.

7.2 Ice and Snow Emergencies

- 7.2.1 During prolonged periods of severe and persistent icing, or significant snow fall, delegated officers may declare an ice or snow emergency covering all or part of the County. In this event Community Delivery Managers will establish a snow desk and implement a course of action to manage the situation in either of these events.

8.1 Provision of Roadside Salt Bins

- 8.1.1 Roadside salt bins can be sited at potentially hazardous locations for use by the public, to treat ice and snow on small areas of the carriageway or footway.
- 8.1.2 Salt bins will be filled using a mixture of sharp sand or other grit material and salt and will be refilled twice during the winter season. In the event of severe weather further refills will be carried out as time and resources permit.
- 8.1.3 *An assessment criteria for installing a new salt bin has been devised and is shown at Annex 1. The form will be used by Community Operations staff to assess requests.*

8.2 *Payment for salt bins*

- 8.2.1 *Once a salt bin has been approved by the assessment criteria, the cost of installation, filling and maintenance will be borne by KHS.*

- 8.2.2 *Additionally there will be a trial of bagged salt/sand mix provided to a selection of parish council at the start of the winter season for use in their local area.*
- 8.2.3 *Member Highway Fund*
- 8.2.3.1 *Members are able to purchase salt bins using their Member Highway Fund in line with the usual application process. All requests will be subject to the assessment criteria in section 8.1.3*

9. BUDGETS

9.1 Winter Service Budget

- 9.1.1 The budget for the annual operational winter service period is based on salting the primary precautionary salting routes on 55 occasions. The main budget is managed by the Head of Community Operations as a countywide budget.

9.2 Ice and Snow Emergencies

- 9.2.1 There is no specific budget allocation within KHS for ice or snow emergencies. The cost of dealing with periods of icy conditions or significant snowfalls will be met by virement from other planned programmes of work on the highway or from special contingency funds for emergencies.

10. PUBLIC AND MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

10.1 Neighbouring Authorities and other Agencies

- 10.1.1 The Kent Road Weather Forecast containing details of the winter service action for Kent will be transmitted daily to neighbouring highway authorities and other agencies so that activities can be co-ordinated regionally.

10.2 The Media

- 10.2.1 Communicating to communities, businesses and emergency services during winter is essential to delivering an effective service. Local media organisations will be informed when instructions for salting of primary precautionary salting are issued. The Kent County Council Internet site will be updated regularly and the Traffic Management Centre will issue road updates.

10.3 Pre-Season Publicity

- 10.3.1 It is important that the public are aware of and understand the KHS approach to winter service. An updated leaflet for drivers and other

road users relating to winter service is available in local libraries and on the Kent County Council website. Advice will be provided on self help for communities, including encouraging local action where appropriate e.g use of salt bins.

10.4. Publicity during Ice or Snow Emergencies

- 10.4.1 Liaison with the news media, particularly local radio stations, is of the utmost importance and links will be established and maintained particularly during ice or snow emergencies.

Annex 1**SALT BIN ASSESSMENT FORM**

Location of Salt Bin	Assessment Date	Assessed by
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Characteristic	Severity	Standard Score	Actual Score
(i) Gradient	Greater than 1 in 15 1 in 15 to 1 in 29 Less than 1 in 30	75 40 Nil	
(ii) Severe Bend	Yes No	60 Nil	
(iii) Close proximity to and falling towards	Heavy trafficked road Moderately trafficked road Lightly trafficked road	90 75 30	
(iv) Assessed traffic density at peak times	Moderate (traffic group 5) Light (traffic group 6)	40 Nil	
(v) * Number of premises for which only access	Over 50 20 - 50 0 - 20	30 20 Nil	
(vi) Is there a substantial population of either disabled or elderly people	Yes No	20 Nil	
TOTAL			

* N.B. Any industrial or shop premises for which this is the only access is to be automatically promoted to the next higher category within characteristic (V).

Any site for which the summation of the weighing factors equals or exceeds 120 would warrant the siting of a salt bin.