

Canterbury City Council In-depth Scrutiny Review



Operation of the New Highways Arrangements Final Report

December 2007

Introduction

The Scrutiny Management and Review Sub-Committee approved the scope for the in-depth review into the operations of the new highways arrangements on 26 October 2006. The review panel consisted of Councillor Alex Perkins (Chairman), Councillor Mrs Harrison, Councillor Mrs Law, Councillor Took and Councillor Halfpenny, who was replaced by Councillor Wratten in January 2007.

Due to the local elections in May 2007, the review was halted in April 2007. Following the elections, the review panel was re-established with a different membership. Councillor Took did not stand for re-election and as Councillor Mrs Law was appointed to the Executive, she was prohibited from continuing to take part in the scrutiny process.

The panel was therefore re-established as follows: Councillor Alex Perkins (Chairman), Councillor Mrs Harrison, Councillor Mrs Ann Taylor, Councillor Staley and Councillor Wratten.

A small team of officers supported the review. They included the Head of Policy and Improvement, the Scrutiny and Research Officer, the Transportation Manager and a Senior Democratic Services Officer.

The review concern was: *That the ending of the Highways partnership may have led to changes in the level of service for our district, and that the current arrangements may mean that the service is not as responsive to the needs of the district and that this may impact on the council's strategic regeneration projects.*

Communications between the council and highways may have become more difficult, and the council's ability to influence highways decisions may have diminished.

The panel met on a total of eleven occasions. They interviewed a wide range of witnesses which included officers from Canterbury City Council (the Development Control Manager, the Heads of Environment and Street Scene and of Regeneration and Economic Development and of Transportation and Engineering), Matthew Sims, the former Head of East Kent Highways Services, KCC, and representatives from Parish Councils, from Canterbury 4 Business, SPOKES, the Police Authority and Stagecoach.

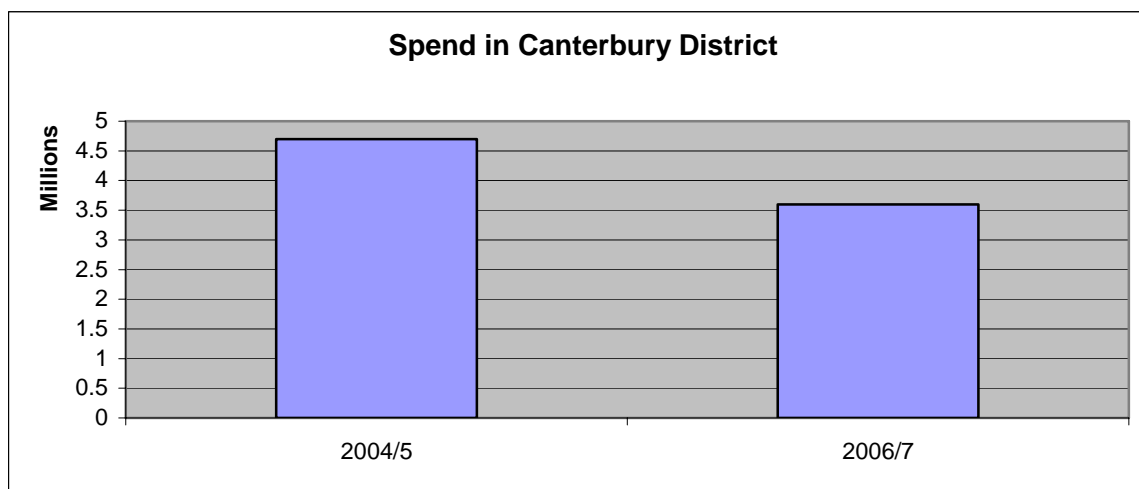
The panel also sent a survey to the members of the Community Panel (1,000 local residents) to gather their opinions on the highways operations. 544 responses were received, which is an above-average response.

Background Information

The responsibility for managing highways is usually with the upper tier of local government. In Canterbury's case this is the Kent County Council. However, until March 2005 the KCC operated a partnership arrangement with the district authorities. This meant each district council had joint responsibility for the highways in their area and hosted a Kent Highways Partnership team. The County Council decided to end these arrangements on the grounds of greater efficiency and took back sole control of Kent Highways Service (KHS) in April 2005.

During the witness session with Matthew Sims, he outlined the budget for highways for the whole county as £83 million for 2005/06 and £82 million in 2006/7.

Of this, the allocations to Canterbury were £4.7 million in 2004/05 and £3.6 million in 2006/07.



The Panel identified different areas and asked witness questions on these. The questions asked and the responses received form an appendix to this report.

The review panel have made its recommendations around the following headings which address issues deemed to be priorities:

- highways repairs;
- highway development projects;
- impact of 2005 reorganisation;
- promoting services and communications
- other issues.

Highways repairs

The review had concerns about the available funding for highways maintenance and repairs across East Kent. The monies available to Kent Highways appeared to be falling significantly year on year. This is despite there being strong evidence that the level of repairs that are defined as essential has increased steadily from year to year. While accepting that the prioritisation criteria used by Kent Highways in modelling its maintenance programme is objective, those repairs described as essential are being carried out, but the resources available for non essential highway repairs are not adequate for purpose.

In terms of the day to day management of highway services, several witnesses said management of repairs performed by statutory and non-statutory undertakers lacked co-ordination.

An article in the LGC in April 2007 highlighted figures from the “National road maintenance condition survey: 2006” which show the success in tackling deteriorating roads and pavements in the early part of the decade has stalled as funding increases ended. The shortage of funding for highways maintenance is not limited to East Kent, it is a national problem. Highways maintenance allocations were frozen at £2.05 billion a year in 2004 to Comprehensive Spending Review after five years of increases. This situation is compounded by the fact that road maintenance costs are increasing more than 5% a year driven by the rise in the price of crude oil used to manufacture surfacing materials.

There is a belief that non-essential work cannot be carried out in East Kent, as the available funding is not adequate. This was highlighted by several of the witnesses.

The Local Government Association has said that highways authorities need an extra £200 million a year just to maintain current work. Estimates of reinstating roads and pavements in our district has been estimated in the region of £50 million.

The Comprehensive Spending Review for 2007 has now been published. The one per cent real terms increase across local government means highways spending is likely to be further squeezed as most of this limited growth is likely to go to adult or children’s social services to meet rising demand.

The new highways arrangements survey through the Community Panel (see Appendix 1) gives some anecdotal evidence that suggests that standards around routine highways repairs have worsened over recent years. This has led to the criteria used for prioritising repairs being tightened up and resulted in greater delays in making routine repairs.

Recommendation 1: Mechanisms need to be found for more funding to be directed towards highways repairs.



The pictures above show the widespread practice of parking on pavements. This has the effect of inhibiting the flow of traffic, both pedestrian and vehicle, whilst causing damage to the pavement, thus accelerating the need for repair which further increases the burden on a limited budget

Recommendation 2: Consideration needs to be given to better policing of vehicles parking on pavements.

Recommendation 3: KHS to publicise more widely the criteria used to prioritise highways repairs. This review suggests many routine repairs have not been undertaken because they do not meet the criteria. However, the public are not clear what these criteria are and why repairs are delayed.

The survey evidence suggests most dissatisfaction with roads is found on residential or estate roads, (such as Grimthorpe Avenue in Whitstable, or Bishops Way in Canterbury),



However on A roads or roads in the centre of towns or the city, which are classed as high priority areas, where KHS are allocating funding (such as Whitstable Road, or the application of non-skid surfaces in the lead up to roundabouts and pedestrian crossing), there is net satisfaction.



Witnesses paid tribute to the work of individual officers while commenting strongly on their belief that the Kent Highways Service is under-resourced.

Road markings

The panel heard from witnesses that road markings were often not remarked in good time, and that they had been specifically advised that there was no budget for essential markings on a principal road. They had requested the reinstatement of these markings 18 months ago because of their safety concerns.

The picture shows the Yellow Box on the exit from St Georges Lane in Canterbury.



Recommendation 4: That where road markings are required for safety reasons or to ease the flow of traffic on a principal road, finance should be found in KHS to undertake the necessary work.

Standard of repair

These pictures were provided by one of the respondents to the survey. They show a pothole repair in Bekesbourne Lane, Littlebourne on the day that the repair was made on 24 February 2006, whilst the picture on the right shows the same piece of road less than one year later on 12 February 2007.



The panel discussed this issue, and felt that the situation could be best described as repairing (by simply top dressing holes) rather than properly reinstating the section of road (by excavating the surrounding area, then relaying that section).

Where highways are patched, evidence showed that they lasted for approximately six months. If the area was cut out and re-instated, it would last in excess of a year. If repairs were done to a sufficient standard, they could be regarded as permanent.

The Panel discussed this at length with witnesses and felt that, at present repairs were not undertaken to a high enough standard.

Recommendation 5: Highways should, wherever possible, be reinstated rather than repaired and an enhanced inspection regime should be introduced which could involve greater resources.

Monitoring of repairs

Some witnesses drew attention to the level of inspection of road repairs after works had been undertaken. There was a widely held belief that they were not carried out to a proper standard. While this must be seen as a management issue, if essential repairs were carried out to a higher standard, it could lead to an improvement in the condition of the road.

Recommendation 6: The monitoring of roadworks and temporary traffic lights should be established locally to reduce the effect on traffic congestion. A reporting system should be in place to ensure that roads are kept clear and there is not conflict between the programming of roadworks which leads to a gridlock, particularly in Canterbury. These roadworks should be rigorously enforced and monitored and temporary traffic lights removed as soon as possible.

Highway development projects

The panel received evidence from Officers of Canterbury City Council relating to the processes which are undergone relating to council development projects. Under the previous arrangements, the City Council were seen as development partners. Under the new arrangements, district councils are viewed as developers in their own right and as such are required to enter into a Section 278 agreement with the County Council. This agreement could, for example with the Palace Street project, have cost approximately £20,000 for a £200,000 project. In the case of this project, they were paid by the Regeneration Division of KCC, but this is exceptional.

Issues around Section 278 agreements between the Council and Kent Highways Service since the introduction of the new management arrangement are the following:

- Should the Council be treated like any other developer and pay the full commercial charge for highways service advice on major projects and is this affecting partnership working? The Panel believe strongly that for proper partnership working, each side should be treated as a partner rather than one side being treated as a developer.
- Is the bond levied on district councils as developers by KCC necessary, given the negligible risk of the Council not honouring its commitments and is the cost of the bond too high? Negotiations are under way on this issue between district officers and Kent Highways Service. The panel strongly support the district officer case that argues that the conditions placed on district councils are lessened where highway development schemes clearly benefit both authorities
- Is the application of the 278 agreement likely to hinder joint regeneration projects in the future? The panel believe, that clearly any additional cost to districts could threaten projects.



KCC are currently working on a Section 278 protocol to clarify the mutual responsibilities of the county and district councils and when a Section 278 agreement will be required. The Panel urges KCC and CCC Officers to finalise the protocol in an effort to overcome the payment of commuted sums.

Recommendation 7: That officers from both councils work together as a matter of urgency to develop an inclusive protocol which is applicable for all

highways projects. This protocol should satisfy all relevant and reasonable requests of the highway authority, but be able to facilitate the city carrying out agreed highway improvements (usually around public realm enhancements), and do so in a speedy and cost effective way within a shared framework of partnership and trust.



This picture shows a City Council development of a Pedestrian and Cycle crossing. Originally a Section 278 Agreement was asked for, although the development was finally agreed based on a Letter of Agreement. This was seen by the panel as example of work being done to an excellent standard .

Impact of 2005 reorganisation

The Panel asked witnesses what the impact of the 2005 reorganisation had been on the level of service provided. Some said that there was slightly less joined-up thinking and were concerned that it would become worse when the KHS office moved to Ashford next year. Where witnesses stated they were proactive organisations working across Kent, communications were better in east Kent than in mid or west Kent. It was clear that opportunities to interact had lessened. Members of the review have to conclude that this apparent fall in the level of highways maintenance has not been as a result of the reorganisation, but was a direct consequence of the budgetary constraints imposed on Kent Highways Service.

It was noted that KHS plans to move their local offices to Ashford within the coming year and the impact this would have on the level of service provided.

- Highways officers currently located at Beer Cart Lane will transfer to Ashford when three divisions are reduced to two (East Kent and West Kent divisions). If this means less direct support to CCC, it is a matter of concern to all witnesses as it may reduce further lines of communication and levels of contact between key officers.

Issues relating to further organisation

- The panel noted specialist teams will be kept together but they will be servicing six districts rather than the current four. Only two highway officers will be available to cover Canterbury and Thanet. The panel were keen to receive reassurance that the level of support available to individual districts would not be diminished.
- The panel noted the evidence of the Head of East Kent Highways Services. He explained that better mobile technology would be used to ensure a high level of highways maintenance would be achieved in future. It is hoped that this will be proved in future.

Planning applications

- Evidence available at the moment suggests Kent Highways ability to comment on planning applications where the input of the highways authority is needed has remained at a high level and not affected the speed of turnover of planning applications. The panel were concerned that following the latest reorganisation support will be reduced and be more remote. Consequently, speedy planning advice on highways matters might be more difficult to obtain in future.
- The panel expect the promised management cost savings achieved as a result of the reorganisation will be ploughed back into front line highways services and that real service improvements can be demonstrated

Overall the panel has concerns that with the decision to move from three to two divisions, the strong personal relationship between specialist highway officers and district based engineers and development control staff might be lost.

The regular contact between the City Council and Kent Highways officers has ensured quality advice and day-to-day involvement in projects, which has been maintained despite the new management arrangements that came into effect in April 2005. If dedicated highways specialists are not available to liaise with district

colleagues around detailed highways related planning applications or enhancement schemes, this will damage the highways partnership and the quality of local decision making around highways development.

Recommendation 8: The review would strongly recommend that a dedicated Kent Highways Service Officer presence remain for each district in order to provide specialist advice and support for highway improvement projects and highway developments that go through the planning process.

In the light of the recent floods in Whitstable, the panel raised concerns relating to the ability of KHS to react speedily to emergency situations. Canterbury City Council officers pointed out the change from when Kent Highways Service Officers were based at Military Road. Although Kent Highways Service Officers were dispatched speedily from Beer Cart Lane in the recent Whitstable incident, the panel expressed concern as to the level and speed of response were a similar event to happen in the future when Kent Highways Service Officers are based at Ashford.

Recommendation 9: That Kent Highways Service give a clear commitment that their ability to respond quickly and effectively to an emergency situation will not be diminished when the East Kent Service is concentrated in Ashford in 2008.

Promoting services and communications

The survey at Appendix 1 suggests the 24 hour phone number operated by Kent Highways for reporting a highways problem or requesting a service is not known about by a significant majority of potential users (75%), but those who do use it find it useful. A significant number are unaware of the 24 hour answerline, but when they use it, they do find it a good service.

The panel suggests that Kent Highways might use local radio to better promote awareness, and use by the public, of the 24 hour answerline number (08458 247800). This could also be a good medium to make local people aware of local traffic problems.

Kent Highways also provides information about scheduled roadworks and congestion hot spots, but to what extent is this information advertised and passed to stakeholders. More needs to be done to advertise the service, as 62% are unaware (two-thirds of the respondents), but 73% of survey respondents who use it are satisfied with the information provided.

Communication appears to be a major issue with parish, district Members and smaller stakeholders who gave evidence. There is a major issue as most calls are now routed through a central contact centre and logged, it is sometimes difficult to get the right person or someone with local knowledge to respond to enquiries. The panel noted the time it takes to answer calls has been drawn into question.

Recommendation 10: KHS should consider taking proactive steps to promote the single number more widely to increase awareness and encourage take up.

Evidence from the review shows that Kent Highways officers no longer attend Parish Council meetings or Area Member Panels, even when specifically asked to do so. KHS insist that all issues are referred through the Joint Transportation Board which meets on a two month cycle. The panel queried if this was sufficient to be able to communicate effectively and address concerns raised. Evidence from Parish Councils and stakeholders showed that they feel less involved in the highway process than they did previously.

Recommendation 11: The panel proposes that Kent Highways Service managers convene an annual meeting with representatives of the Parish Councils, which can be used as an opportunity to raise any particular highways related issues or concerns relevant to a particular Parish.

Recommendation 12: The panel would request that when specific highway issues relating to major projects are on the agenda, a KHS officer be requested to attend Area Member Panels.

Recommendation 13: The review highlighted that consultation with Parish Councils on highways repairs, maintenance, enhancements and management was uneven and there should be a published standard for consulting with Parish Councils. This should then be followed.

During the witness session with the representative from SPOKES, the panel were presented with two maps of cycle routes in Canterbury. The smaller one was passed for approval by both SPOKES and Canterbury City Council, the larger one was produced by KCC in isolation.



Recommendation 14: That the County Council consult fully with the City Council and SPOKES in providing cycle route maps and promoting their use

Other issues

Concurrent funding

The panel noted that there seems to be some confusion about whether Parish Councils can reclaim the cost of providing hedge and verge cutting services from the highways authority. In the witness sessions, several parish council representatives said their parishes had carried out routine maintenance around the highway at their own instigation.

Can parishes recharge KHS for related works undertaken, and what rate would be appropriate?

Is this duplication of what CCC funds are used for through the Concurrent Function Grant?

Recommendation 15: KHS should provide clear guidelines to Parish Councils on when a recharge for highways related work was appropriate and when it wasn't.

Some witnesses queried if the tough line the highways authority are taking on charging £115 licence per annum per retail business for A board adverts was unreasonable.

Is the enforcement policy right and does it encourage local businesses, or is reducing street obstacles to pedestrians the priority?

Recommendation 16: That the street furniture policy for A board advertising be reviewed by KHS and further customer research be undertaken with businesses and customers in consultation with City Council Regeneration and Economic Development officers. The evidence should be assessed as to any economic impact of this change on businesses. Does it improve, or have a negative impact on creating an attractive retail street scene.

CCC involvement in contracts affecting Canterbury district

The panel thought district councils should have a bigger say in the contract specification for county wide managed contracts where they have a clear interest. A recent example is Kent Highways decision to award their street lighting maintenance contract to a new contractor. It was questionable whether CCC get better value for money as a result of this change in contractor.

The horticultural works contract was let without any input from CCC. Consequently the specification was not as high as we would have liked. CCC were then forced to subsidise the contract to the value of an extra £60,000 to bring it to the required level.

Recommendation 17: Canterbury City Council should seek closer links between its department managers and KHS to ensure joint working to obtain best value in procurement and delivery of services.

Delivery of strategic aims

The panel wishes to question how the highways related strategic aims of the County Council can be achieved when there is no budget available for many policy areas.

The panel has learnt that there were many areas where laudable highways related strategic aims have been set by KCC, often with the support of CCC. There are clear examples where the achievement of these aims has been hampered by the inability to allocate sufficient funds. A specific example of this was from SPOKES, who stated that the KCC sustainable transport strategy includes the development of far-reaching cycling and walking plans, yet it is clear on the ground that highway officers are not able to complete or significantly advance works on the cycle routes because of the lack of funding.

Strategies are hindered by the deterioration of some footways and some pavements being difficult to walk on, meaning people are less likely to swap the car for walking.

More specifically, witnesses pointed out that KCC have announced a strategic aim to reduce journey times across Kent of 10 percent by 2010. However, monitoring of journey times showed an eight percent increase in single journeys. The aim of reducing journey times is predicated on the ability to reduce the number of vehicles using the roads, however looking at the figures for number of vehicles using key road locations, it can be seen that the level of vehicles using the roads are approximately the same, with small increases in some areas, and small decreases in others.

	2003	2006
A28 Wincheap	22731	22244
A2050 New Dover Road	14563	15544
A257 Bramling	9321	9720
A28 Upstreet	9720	9736
A291 Calcott Hill	12619	12093
C192 Tyler Hill	8088	7357
A28 Milton Bridge	13735	13431

The following set of figures are for the inner cordon and show the total traffic travelling across the cordon which is just outside the ring road and then goes up to Broad Oak Road and St Stephens Road:

2005	129263
2004	134035
2003	132656
2002	121890

Therefore there appears to be no correlation between strategic aims and the budget available to achieve them. Many witnesses reported the goodwill and excellent work of highways officers but drew attention to the significant lack of resources available.

Recommendation 18: If any improvement in cycle routes is to be achieved a dedicated budget for cycle routes maintenance and enhancement programmes must be set up by KHS.

Overall conclusions of the review

- Whilst the separation of the highway function has affected lines of communication in some areas, this is not the most significant aspect of the management of highways.
- The principle cause for concern for local people, businesses and Councillors is the insufficient funding available to achieve the level and standard of highways repairs needed.
- Relocation of highway services: There is concern that the relocation to distant sites will hinder communication between Kent Highways officers and district officers. This has the potential to further weaken the current close partnership arrangements, especially over highways development projects that were such a strong feature of the relationship up until April 2005

The members of the review panel would like to thank everybody who has given evidence to the review, and also to the review team, Mark Bursnell, Lynda McDaid, and Wayne Gough.

Project Scope

Project Title:	Operation of the new Highway Arrangements Review
Project Category:	In Depth Scrutiny Review
Project Sponsor:	Scrutiny Management & Review Sub-Committee
Lead Member: (Project Champion)	Cllr Perkins
Lead Officer: (Project Manager)	Mark Bursnell
Member Scrutiny Review Panel: (Project team-core)	Cllrs Halfpenny, Harrison, Took and Mrs Law
Officer Group:	TBD
Project Team peripheral:	TBD
Project concern:	<p>That the ending of the Highways partnership may have led to changes in the level of service for our district, and that the current arrangements may mean that the service is not as responsive to the needs of the district and that this may impact on the council's strategic regeneration projects.</p> <p>That communication between the council and highways may have become more difficult, and that the council's ability to influence highways decisions may have become diminished.</p>
Project task:	To compare operation of the highways arrangements pre and post April 2005.

<p>Project purpose:</p>	<p>To assess the operation of the new highways arrangement by examining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the responsiveness of the service to district needs, - the approach to consultation, - the relationship between the service and the districts strategic regeneration projects. - spending levels in the district - street lighting - the joint transportation board (compare with other areas that do not have a JTB) - relevant BVPIs <p>then comparing current performance in these areas against performance under the previous arrangements.</p>
<p>Customer:</p>	<p>Scrutiny Management & Review Sub-committee</p>
<p>End Users:</p>	<p>Members of the public, transport stakeholders, officers of the council</p>
<p>End result:</p>	
<p>Success criteria:</p>	
<p>Project Information:</p>	<p>Relevant BVs: BV100 BV165 BV187 BV215a BV215b BV223 BV224a BV22b</p>

Appendix 1

Results of the 2007 Canterbury City Council Community Panel survey on highways

Levels of satisfaction

The council, as part of the scrutiny review, sent the Community Panel a highways (roads and pavements) survey in February 2007 to obtain public feedback of their views and priorities regarding the condition of the roads and pavements of the district. Most of the questions were taken from Kent Highways Services own bi-annual Tracker Survey. 544 respondents completed the survey. 63% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied when travelling on Kent's roads or pavements to 18% who said they were satisfied or very satisfied. When this overall figure is broken down into satisfied with the condition of roads, pavements and street lighting the results are different. With 22% satisfied with roads and 55% dissatisfied (33% net dissatisfaction), 14% satisfied with pavements and 66% dissatisfied (52% net dissatisfaction), alternatively 49% were satisfied with street lighting and 23% dissatisfied (26% net satisfaction). Clearly, pavements record the highest levels of dissatisfaction, with roads not far behind. Street lighting on the other hand receives a strong approved rating.

Regarding satisfaction with the condition of different types of road in their local area, there were significant variations based on which type of road was being considered. 26% were satisfied with residential or estate roads with 49% dissatisfied (23% net dissatisfaction). However, 48% were satisfied with main "A" roads with 26% dissatisfied (22% net dissatisfaction).

40% were satisfied with town centre roads, with 31% dissatisfied (9% net satisfaction). 25% were satisfied with country lanes with 43% dissatisfied (18% net dissatisfaction). Clearly the perceived problems are very much focussed on roads in residential areas and to a lesser extent country lanes.

When asked about satisfaction with the condition of pavements in their local area, comparing satisfaction with pavements on residential or estate roads with pavements in town centres, shopping areas or pedestrianised areas there was a significant variation. 21% were satisfied with the former compared to 62% who were dissatisfied (41% net dissatisfaction). 40% were satisfied with the latter with only 36% dissatisfied (4% net dissatisfaction). As with roads, dissatisfaction with pavements is far higher in residential areas.

Awareness of Kent Highways Service

When asked if they had heard of the Kent Highways Service before now, 74% of respondents said yes and 25% said no (1% didn't reply).

Respondents were asked if they were aware that there is now one phone number they can call if they have a problem on the roads, or if you want to find out about a highway service. Only 23% of respondents were aware of the single number with 75% not aware (2% didn't reply).

Respondents were asked if they had needed to contact Kent Highways Service over the past year to ask for information or report a problem with roads, pavements or street lighting. 27% of respondents said they had, while 70% said they hadn't (1% didn't know and 2% gave no reply).

Finally, when asked how satisfied they were with the response received when they asked for information or reported a problem, 71% didn't give a reply. 9% were satisfied. 12% were dissatisfied and 4% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied (3% didn't know).

When asked if they had ever used the Kent Highways Service, 19% of respondents said yes and 19% said no (1% didn't know and 5% didn't reply).

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the information provided by Kent Highways Service. 73% of respondents were satisfied, with only 5% dissatisfied (22% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied).

Appendix 2 – Responses from Parish Councils

A short survey was sent to the Parish Councils (PC) within the district to ascertain their views on the operations of the highways service over the past two years.

The survey asked the following questions:

1. What dealings do you have with the Highways service?
2. What is your experience of the service over the past two years?
3. Do you find the Highways service responsive to your needs/concerns?
4. Has this level of responsiveness changed in the last two years?
5. Does the highways service consult you on projects that may affect your company/organisation/members?
6. Has the level of consultation changed over the last two years?
7. Any other comments you would like to add?

The responses to these questions were as follows:

Adisham PC

1. Reporting problems on behalf of the Parish Council.
2. Disappointed with repair service response re road signs. Pleased to have a liaison officer
3. Eventually when chased. The liaison officer is helpful in this respect.
4. Only in respect of being able to involve the liaison officer.
5. No
6. N/A
7. What happened to the County Lengthsman scheme? Does it still exist

Bekesbourne with Patrixbourne PC

1. Fault reporting online and by phone
2. Staff at KHS always very helpful
3. Mostly – most faults are dealt with, some need more chasing
4. Unsure as I've only been in this role for one year
5. Most of the time. However works carried out in Patrixbourne that we were not consulted on. Bollards and new SLOW signs on road.
6. Again unsure

Bridge PC

1. All highways issues for the village
2. Very few of the measures agreed with the Parish Council have been carried out. Other work has been undertaken which was not an agreed PC priority
3. Not really, they note our comments but work is not carried out
4. No
5. Yes but see above
6. No

7. We have a large number of outstanding issues, for important highways issues. We are not kept informed of current schedules. The priorities agreed with the highways seem to disappear or be altered without consultation

Further response from Bridge PC is included below

Joint response from Chartham PC and Denton with Wooton PC

1. Regular contact with KHS as Clerk to both Chartham and Denton with Wooton PCs to report road defects, signage problems, street lighting etc.
2. Both councils report issues to the service, but more often than not work does not place due to a lack of funds being available. Only small works ever seem to get undertaken.
3. No. as noted a lack of funds means that resurfacing of roads/pavements does not get undertaken as the rural parishes appear not to get the service they require.
4. No
5. Very really (sic) – we normally have to contact Highways – It is only the major projects that we are consulted about, and these often do not relate to local needs.
6. No
7. The parishes often request visits to the area to discuss problems and this takes an age to arrange and then the follow up action is poor. Response times to requests to undertake work is far too slow.

Chislet PC

1. Various
2. –
3. No
4. Yes – deteriorated (sic)
5. Yes
6. Not that we are aware of
7. Attention to resolving pot holes very poor.

Hackington PC

1. Providing information relating to maintenance needs for road surface and signs.
2. Poor
3. Slow to carry out repairs – even to essential road signs
4. There has been a deterioration since the Lengthsman scheme has stopped operating.
5. No
6. No

7. See attached.

A further response from Hackington PC is attached below.

Herne & Broomfield PC

1. Quite a lot covering pot holes to white lining.
2. There seems to be far less funding available
3. Yes
4. No
5. I don't know if consult is quite the right word. No not on our minor things and we haven't had any major works recently.
6. Not sure we had good consultation previous to the change but not much has gone on since then.
7. Lack of funding and the way contracts are written appear to be major problems.

Littlebourne PC

1. Negotiations regarding roads, footpaths, drainage.
2. Significant lack of response. No actions on traffic calming, drains, replacement of defective lights.
3. No. A simple safety enhancement to a road junction approved by JTB in February will be actioned in December. Numerous telephone calls.
4. Yes. Impression that changeover from CCC to KCC much information lost. Focus on local work has been removed in favour of county wide projects.
5. The reverse is true. One has to continually chase to find out what has happened.
6. Yes, impression is that we have to initiate everything.
7. –

Sturry PC

1. Report highways problems eg. Potholes, drains, street lighting etc
2. Improved – staff very helpful but the problem is a lack of resources.
3. Yes
4. Yes
5. No
6. No
7. –

Thannington Without PC

1. Reporting problems within our Parish
2. Bad responses, poor quality services
3. No
4. Got a lot worse.

5. Yes
6. Got much worse
7. Whilst I have to praise Jane Tarrant for her responses we only get “no money” as the answer to most of our problems.

Upper Hardres Pc

1. I am the councillor responsible for highways for our PC
2. Poor. Work reported in 2005 has still not been done.
3. No
4. No. Its always been bad.
5. No
6. No
7. Does the lengthsman service still exist. After a big launch it seems to have come to nothing. Can we get the flooding outside Stelling Minnis school sorted soon? And our yellow and white lines?

Waltham PC

1. Comments and complaints about the state of the roads and signage in Waltham.
2. Very bad. We have telephoned, emailed and faxed communication and have not received replies other than to be told they have lost our faxes and there is no money available for Waltham.
3. No, not at all.
4. No improvement.
5. No
6. No
7. New developments in the village have been asked to pay a development tax to improve roads etc in the Waltham area, yet we are told there is no money available to repair road surfaces and signage, which has been broken for more than two years.

The further responses from Parish Councils were as below:

Of the above, so far only priority 7 has been completed plus a traffic speed survey on Bridge Hill in March/April 2005.

In June 2005 Ruth Goudie told that parish clerk there was money in that year's budget for kerb extensions in the High St. and she would be consulting the PC on the positioning & materials nearer the time.

In November 2005 the Parish Clerk asked Ruth Goudie what progress was being made on the priorities.

Kerb extensions - Despite what was said in June, we were told a bid had been made for 2006 funding of kerb extensions on Bridge Hill & at the junctions off the High St. The likelihood would be that only one of these 2 options would be funded. *Nothing further has been heard.*

Angled parking Western Ave - Kent Highways advised that this was now a parking issue, not a safety issue & therefore no longer their responsibility. They referred us to Canterbury City Council.

Bekesbourne Rd - Kent Highways advised they had agreed with the Highways Agency that signs would be erected routing off the A2 at Coldharbour Lane for the Park & Ride, Cricket ground & city. *Nothing further has been heard of this.*

In November 2005 the clerk reported a drainage problem at Renville Farm Rd. A reference number was given (32416) but no action apparently followed and there was no follow up from Highways.

In January 2006 the PC wrote to Dennis Button asking why the agreed priority measures had not been undertaken but a non-priority measure (i.e. yellow lines at the school) had been completed. We were told there was a lack of funding.

Parking restrictions at allotment entrance & between chicanes

Following a request from the Allotment Society we asked for these in March 2006. In April 2006 we were advised these would have to wait until the Traffic Regulation review of 2007. This was in spite of the fact that the kerb to the allotments was dropped in 2005 as a pre-condition set by the Kent Highways to parking restrictions being imposed.

Road Signs

In February 2006 the Parish Clerk wrote to S Rivers of Kent Highways listing various signs in the village which were in a state of disrepair or needed cleaning/replacing etc. No reply received.

A2 sliproad balustrade

Parish have been in regular contact since December 2005 asking for action to be taken to replace the balustrade that has remained coned off for many months. We have been advised it would be repaired by June 2006 at the latest. Still no action and no explanation received.

Update on Highways Issues – October 2007

Since the 2006 minute regarding outstanding Highways issues the following have been resolved;

A2 Slip road balustrade – This has now been repaired. This involved frequent contact between the parish clerk & Inter route.

Yellow lines at Corner of Conyngham Lane and Keep Clear markings at school- These have been installed

Parking on pavement Western Avenue – Resolved by the parish council buying its own bollards and paying for them to be installed.

None of the other problems have been resolved.

In February 2007 Ruth Goudie showed councillors plans for the new chicane at Bridge Hill, this would include a speed sign and the village name sign would be moved up Bridge Hill to the entrance to Bridge Down. We are now told this will probably happen in the New Year.

The cycle lane to Canterbury is still under consideration.

The road signs reported in February 2006 as in need of replacement continue to deteriorate. No reply was received.

High Street parking continues to be a problem especially at the corner of Brewery Lane and by the bus stops. The long-promised D's have not appeared.

There has been no reply to our letter of 23/2/06 asking for action to be taken over the slippery footbridge at the ford on Mill Lane. (Ref; 54119)

The request for parking restrictions by the allotment gates and between the chicanes at the north end of the village has not been met. Not approved at Traffic Regulation Review in 2007 .

A new sign to Canterbury for the A2 slip road at the top of Town Hill was requested in Feb 2006. Nothing further heard.

Bridge Parish Council
Kent Highways Outstanding Issues

In January 2005 Kent Highways sent the parish council a list of priorities for the Bridge Traffic Plan which were to be finalised in March 2005. These were as follows;

Problem	Parish Council request
1. Speeding vehicles on Bridge Hill –	Speed surveys to be carried out Kerb extensions to north bound side of carriageway, reinforced with interactive sign.
2. Lack of visibility at side road junctions with High St. –	Kerb build outs at Aunt Betsy's Hill, Union Rd, Western Ave, Brewery Lane plus bring Give Way/Stop lines further forward.
3. Parking Problems Western Ave-	Re-design footway/lay out in front of shops and mark into end –on parking spaces on land adjacent to 12-28 Western Ave.
4. Parking in bus stops outside butchers shop and near Nailbourne Bridge-	- Construct kerb extension to bridge. Mark out bus stops as enforceable bus stop clearways.
5. Speed of vehicles on Patrixbourne Rd approaching village-	Relocate speed limit with gateway effect to edge of built up length of road near doctors' surgery.
6. Volume of traffic using Bekesbourne Rd as slip road to Canterbury-	-Investigate junction improvements at Town Hill/Station rd/High St so that traffic can use this route & the Bekesbourne Rd could be closed. the long term aim is for construction of the full interchange on/off the A2 <i>Bridge PC do not approve of this proposal.</i>
7. Request from school to provide 'School Keep Clear' markings & waiting restrictions in school access road-	Conyngham Lane congested at school collection & drop off times., Problems with school bus access. This can be alleviated with School Keep Clear lines in Conyngham Lane & yellow lines on the school approach road.

Hackington Parish Council

From The Vice Chairman

Robin Whiting

61, Hackington Road

Tyler Hill,

Canterbury

CT2 9NE

Wayne Gough,
Policy and Improvements,
Canterbury City Council,
Military Road,
Canterbury,
CT1 1YW

26 October 2007,

Dear Wayne,
Re Highways.

I am sorry for the delay in returning your questionnaire, however it only recently came into my possession and I did not initially notice the completion date. The completed questionnaire is attached but I thought it might be useful to expand a little.

A few years ago the KCC introduced their "lengthsman" scheme and for a while we did enjoy a prompt response to any requests for infilling potholes and other minor repairs. However without any formal notification, this scheme seemed to be wound up and we noticed that our requests for repairs were being ignored until we applied considerable pressure. One of the roads in the village, - Link Road is in a very poor state of repair.

We are particularly concerned about the condition and legality of the road signs through Tyler Hill. KCC continually ignore information that speed limit signs are obscured by vegetation. One 30mph sign on Tyler Hill Road is regularly hit by commercial vehicles. Usually it is only knocked around so it faces into the hedge, but recently it was completely demolished.. It took KCC over a month to replace it and almost immediately it was hit again and is back facing into the hedge.

Some two months ago, we wrote formally to KCC asking them to inspect our speed restriction signs and to confirm that they conform to legal standards. We have had no reply.

We are also concerned about the lack of notice given by the county council relating to road works. Recently, for about one month, temporary traffic lights were positioned in Hackington Road, by a contractor building new houses. The only advance notice given, was apparently on the KCC web site, which is not going to be viewed on a daily basis by local residents or motorists.

I am not sure whether these aspects might be within the scope of the District Council, because, as far as I can recall, KCC has taken responsibility for them for many years. However, there is considerable scope for improvement!

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Whiting', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robin Whiting
Vice Chairman.

Minutes from Canterbury Area Member Panel 5th November 2007

12 IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO THE OPERATION OF THE NEW HIGHWAY ARRANGEMENTS

The Panel received a report by the Head of Policy and Improvement which advised upon the conclusions and a series of recommendations by the Scrutiny Review Panel to improve the operation of the new highway arrangements.

The Panel Members commented on various issues arising. The main points related to the following:-

- the impact of the restructuring of the service on local relationships, including the impact on the Development Control function, and knowledge about the highway network;
- whether significant savings had been achieved;
- the proposed relocation to Ashford may lead to a diminution of the level of service and its responsiveness.
- there had been some communication issues arising from the new arrangements;
- the Panel supported a suggestion that the **Executive** should be urged to lobby the Government to see if toll charges could be introduced for very large lorries using the roads. Although the Panel acknowledged that this issue was outside the remit of the Scrutiny Review Panel;

(Councillor Cragg and Mrs Pickersgill did not vote on this recommendation because of their position as members of the Executive)

- one of the conclusions indicated that the principal cause for concern for local people, businesses and members is in fact the insufficient funding to achieve the level and standard of highways repairs needed. The Panel supported a suggestion that additional text should be included at the end of the paragraph ending "... to achieve the level of standard of highway repairs needed", namely -

“, particularly in residential and estate roads.”

- the Panel noted that the residual unit of the former Highways Department was overstretched and recommended to the **Executive** that a way should be found to reinforce the Unit in order to allow it cope adequately with the workload.
- the Panel also supported the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Panel as set out in the report to this meeting.

Minutes from Whitstable Area Member Panel 12th November 2007

13 IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO THE OPERATION OF THE NEW HIGHWAYS ARRANGEMENTS

The Scrutiny and Research Officer introduced a report that set out the draft final report for the Operation of the New Highways Arrangements Scrutiny Review.

Members discussed the report and the recommendations contained within it. Points made included:

- (i) Central government did not give KCC adequate funds to carry out the highways works required.
- (ii) The Panel had produced a fair and balanced report but pressure should be put on central government to provide sufficient funding.
- (iii) Gridlock was not something confined to Canterbury, it also occurred in Whitstable and was often due to roadworks. A system should be put in place to manage and co-ordinate roadworks and so lessen the impact of road closures.
- (iv) Parking on pavements was an issue that needed to be addressed. The Scrutiny and Research Officer explained that this would be included in the report and he would be taking photographs of offending vehicles.

AGREED –

- (a) That the views of this Panel be incorporated into the report on the operation of the new highways arrangements.
- (b) That the report be noted.

Minutes from Rural Area Member Panel 19th November 2007

10 IN-DEPTH SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO THE OPERATION OF THE NEW HIGHWAYS ARRANGEMENTS

The Panels considered the report of the Head of Policy and Improvement which set out the draft final report for the Operation of the New Highways Arrangements Scrutiny Review.

Members discussed the report and the recommendations contained within it. Points were made including the following:

- (i) Recommendations 10 and 12 were welcomed as parish councils were not adequately consulted on highways issues.
- (ii) Kent County Council did not receive adequate funding from central government to undertake the highways works required. The lack of funding rather than the restructuring of Kent Highways Services was responsible for the lack of repairs undertaken.
- (iii) It was unfortunate that the portfolio holder for transport had not been consulted as part of the review.
- (iv) Kent Highways Officers did not demonstrate the same local knowledge in relation to planning applications since moving to Beer Cart Lane.
- (v) The time taken for simple works to be carried out.
- (vi) The need for a dedicated Highways Officer for the district.
- (vii) There were errors in the maps contained within the report.
- (viii) The additional cycle routes that were being implemented across the district created increased maintenance costs.

It was agreed that:

- (a) The Operation of the New Highways Arrangements Scrutiny Review Panel be informed of the points made above.
- (b) The report be noted.

Minutes from Herne Bay Area Member Panel 20th November 2007

14 HIGHWAYS SCRUTINY REVIEW

Richard Moore requested comments on the draft report of the Scrutiny Review Panel on the operation of the new highways arrangements.

The Panel made points, including the following:

- i) It was pleasing to note that, in some cases, the City Council had already been treated as a partner so had not had to pay the County Council for Highways advice on projects or for Section 278 Agreements.
- ii) It would be welcomed if, when appropriate, a Kent Highways Service Officer attended Area Member Panels.

Extracts from The Kent Highway Asset Maintenance Plan 2004

Section 2 ROADS

2.6 Response Times

If an inspector identifies a defect that, owing to its severity and location could result in an accident, repairs will be organised quickly. If the defect is so dangerous that it could result in serious injury or fatality at any moment, 'emergency' repairs are started, or the hazard made safe, within two hours of notifying the contractor. With such a defect, the inspector would be expected to remain at the location to warn highway users until the contractor arrived. Such a defect could be a large manhole cover missing in a busy thoroughfare, an area of collapsed carriageway or a road blocked by a fallen tree. Hazardous defects that could lead to an accident occurring such as a pothole in the road or a damaged and leaning sign post will be repaired 'urgently', within three days of notifying the contractor. All other non-hazardous defects identified on the safety inspection record that would not be expected to lead to an accident are programmed for repair, normally before the next safety inspection unless the road in question is to be included in a major works programme.

Defect Category	Emergency	Urgent	Non-Urgent
Response Time	2 Hours	3 Days	Programmed

The response times outlined above contribute to Kent's commitment to the public to "put right hazardous faults on roads and pavements within five days of being reported and if we can't we'll let you know why."

2.8 Highway Condition Surveys

To meet the second objective of 'maintaining the asset', the condition of the road network is monitored using a range of regular condition surveys carried out at certain frequencies depending on the road classification and hierarchy category.

2.8.1 TRACS

Traffic-speed condition surveys (TRACS) are used to measure a range of defects including cracking, rutting, ride quality and surface texture. TRACS are machined-based computerised surveys that are carried out rapidly without disrupting traffic. TRACS are carried out on the county's A, B and C roads once a year to provide data for BVPI 96 (A roads) and BVPI 97a (B&C roads).

2.8.2 Driven Visual Inspections

Driven Visual Inspections (DVI) are manual visual inspections carried out by a surveyor from a slow moving vehicle. The survey identifies and records a range of defects apparent at the road surface. These surveys are carried out on the unclassified network once every two years to provide BVPI 97b.

2.8.3 SCRIM

Sideways-force Coefficient Routine Investigation Machine (SCRIM) surveys measure the skidding resistance of the A and B road network and the two strategic hierarchy categories every year.

2.8.4 Deflectograph

Deflectograph surveys measure the structural strength of a road to predict its ability to support heavy goods vehicle traffic in the future. These surveys are only carried out on specific A road sites identified by the TRACS survey to assist in designing repairs for major maintenance schemes. Deflectograph surveys are not, therefore, carried out at regular intervals.

2.8.5 Summary of Inspections and Survey Frequencies

The frequencies of safety inspections and condition surveys are summarised in table 12:

Table 12 – Regime of Road Inspections and Surveys					
Regime of Safety Inspections and Condition Surveys by Classification and Hierarchy		Major Strategic	Other Strategic	Locally Important	Minor Roads
A Roads	Safety Inspections	Monthly	Monthly	6 Monthly	6 Monthly
	TRACS Type Surveys	Annually	Annually	Annually	Annually
	SCRIM Surveys	Annually	Annually	Annually	Annually
B Roads	Safety Inspections	Monthly	Monthly	6 Monthly	6 Monthly
	TRACS Type Surveys	Annually	Annually	Annually	Annually
	SCRIM Surveys	Annually	Annually	Annually	Annually
C Roads	Safety Inspections	Monthly	Monthly	6 Monthly	6 Monthly
	TRACS Type Surveys	Annually	Annually	Annually	Annually
	SCRIM Surveys	Annually	Annually	N/A	N/A
Unc. Roads	Safety Inspections	Monthly	Monthly	6 Monthly	6 Monthly
	TRACS Type Surveys	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	SCRIM Surveys	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	DVI Surveys	Every 2 Years	Every 2 Years	Every 2 Years	Every 2 Years

High speed dual carriageways such as the A249 between the M2 and M20, the A299 Thanet Way, A256 Whitfield and A229 Blue Bell Hill are inspected weekly.

2.9 Standards and Priorities

A set of standards has been determined for each of the road classifications. These standards are the intervention levels that a road must meet before maintenance is considered and prioritised. The structural condition of the road is measured through BVPIs.

2.9.1 Intervention Standards

Using Kent's computerised highways information management system (Kent HIMS), the condition of each road classifications is expressed through a range of defects: structural, surface, edge, rutting, riding quality, skidding resistance and surface texture. A range of national standards for each defect type has been set against road classification through the United Kingdom Pavement Management System (UKPMS). Kent adopts these national intervention standards to ensure that lengths of road identified for repair will improve the BVPI once remedial works have been completed. Once an intervention standard has been exceeded for any type of defect, then that section of road is prioritised for repair.

2.9.2 Prioritising Works Programmes

The priority ranking for that section of road takes account of the likely treatment, its cost and life expectancy. The highest priority is given to treatments that correct the most defects at the lowest cost, and that last the longest. This is the economic prioritisation that ranks schemes in the works programmes and ensures cost-effective treatments are used. Survey results are used to develop countywide programmes of both full-width (surfacing) treatments and edge repairs (haunching and patching). It is necessary to develop both programmes in order to improve the results of BVPIs 96, 97a and 97b. Prioritising works to ensure cost-effective

treatments are used will improve Kent efficiency indicators BVPIs 186a and 186b for principal and non-principal roads respectively. These indicators compare the condition of the roads with the expenditure incurred in maintaining them.

2.9.3 Prioritising by Hierarchy Category

Setting priorities in compiling works programmes must assess maintenance needs over the whole network, taking account of overall condition of roads within the hierarchy categories. Thus the need for maintenance on major strategic roads is compared with the need for repairs on minor roads. In the past works have automatically been prioritised towards maintaining the strategic parts of the network, since these carry the highest levels of traffic and have the greatest need for maintenance. However, regard must be given to the needs of the locally-important and minor networks. Assessing their needs using BVPI results broken down by hierarchy category allows backlogs of work to be determined for each of the hierarchy categories for comparison purposes. This approach enables the need for maintenance to be assessed over the whole network with the overall aim to improve Kent's BVPIs for road condition for all classes of roads. Therefore, setting priorities for works takes account of the road classification and its place in the maintenance hierarchy, individual scheme rankings and the backlogs of different work types. A comprehensive set of results and analysis from Kent HiMS is provided to the highway units in a computerised map based system at the beginning of each financial year. The system is used to identify and compile works programmes and a hence a bid for funding for the following financial year. It is the use of the outputs from Kent HiMS that ensures proper targeting of funds to reduce the BVPIs that measure the condition of the road network and the efficiency of our expenditure.

Section 3 PAVEMENTS AND CYCLE TRACKS

3.3 Pavement and Cycle Track Hierarchy

A hierarchy is necessary to ensure that the right maintenance is carried out in the right places by targeting resources at those locations demonstrating the greatest need. A simple two-part hierarchy is applied to the pavement network: 'heavy-use' and 'other' pavements. Heavy-use pavements are those that attract large numbers of pedestrians and represent the greatest need for maintenance. Examples of heavy-use pavements are shopping streets, shopping parades, prime seafront areas, routes to schools where walking buses operate, pedestrian routes to hospitals and residential homes for the elderly.

Maintenance is targeted at heavy-use pavements to maximise the benefits of maintenance to the majority of people. It is not practical to create a strategic countywide pavement hierarchy because they do not form cross-county transportation corridors. Their importance is at a local level and therefore the local highway unit develops the pavement hierarchy. Definitions of cycle routes, lanes and tracks are as follows:

Cycle routes are not necessarily delineated on the ground but are usually accompanied by direction signing and/or marked on a map or leaflet. Routes can be made up of many types of cycle facility. Facilities include quiet roads, a cycle lane marked on the road surface, a cycle track alongside the road either shared with or segregated from the pavement and a cycle track away from the highway such as an alley or through a park.

Cycle lanes are situated on the road surface and marked by a white line with signing. A red surface and a continuous white line means that the lane is mandatory and vehicles cannot enter to park or unload. An advisory lane is not coloured and is

marked by a broken line except where there is a side road junction and the broken white line marking the lane is discontinued. Vehicles can enter advisory cycle lanes. A cycle track can be located next to the road or away from the highway. The track can be segregated from the pavement by a raised white line and is surfaced red or it can be shared with pedestrians where there is no segregation and the use of signing indicates that the road is shared.

The cycle route network can be located on road, as part of the pavement or built remote from the highway. The cycle track network includes a national network of cycle tracks promoted by the charity Sustrans to link urban areas with the countryside for leisure and utility journeys.

3.4 Safety Inspections

To meet the first objective of “safeguarding the user” a system of safety inspections is needed to identify and repair defects in the highway to prevent accidents occurring. In setting the frequency of safety inspections, reference is made to the risk to safety of the user. It is reasonable to assume that the risk is greater on heavily-used pavements and cycle tracks.

3.4.1 Inspection Frequencies

To address the variation in risk to the user, heavy-use pavements receive monthly safety inspections, while all other pavements are inspected once every year.

	Pavements	
Hierarchy	Heavy-use	Other
Safety inspections	Monthly	Yearly

The frequency of safety inspections is increased if a pavement is deteriorating rapidly with trips occurring frequently, where the pavement is breaking up or suffering from repeated pavement parking. It is Kent’s regime of safety inspection that contributes to our commitment to the public to “routinely inspect the condition of pavements.” Cycle tracks within the highway are inspected at the same frequency as the road or pavement. Otherwise off highway cycle tracks are inspected annually.

	Cycle Tracks		
Hierarchy	On road	On pavement	Off highway
Safety inspections	As for roads	As for pavements	Yearly

3.5 Inspecting For All Users

The list of attributes to be checked during a safety inspection is included in the Highway Inspectors’ Manual. In carrying out regular safety inspections the inspector also considers the usability of the pavement for all users including those with impaired mobility.

3.5.1 Inspecting Pavements

Of particular importance to users with impaired mobility are obstructions that could either lead to insufficient available width for wheelchair users or that could interfere with the progress of walkers with impaired vision. Also, careful checking is needed of potential obstructions that are off the ground such as low branches, overhanging hedges and signs with insufficient headroom. A minimum clear width of 1m is required to allow a wheelchair to pass between obstructions.

Pavement crossfalls are important to wheelchair users. Crossfalls exceeding 10% even over the shortest of distances will prevent a wheelchair user getting onto the pavement having crossed the road. Care must be taken during road and pavement repairs to ensure dropped kerbs do not exceed 6mm in height so those wheelchair

users may negotiate them. Covers and gratings must be flush with the pavement surface and the width of openings in gratings should not exceed 13mm.

In overseeing roadworks, care is taken to ensure an alternative pavement is provided that is properly signed and guarded with kick boards or tap rails for 'white stick' users and kerbs are ramped appropriately if temporary pavements are provided in the road.

It is the inspectors' appreciation of the needs of users of the network with impaired mobility, which contribute Kent's commitment to the public to "take into account the needs of people with mobility difficulties when building or altering roads and pavements."

3.7 Response Times

If an inspector identifies a defect that, owing to its severity and location, could result in an accident, repairs will be organised. If the defect is so dangerous that it could result in serious injury or fatality at any moment, 'emergency' repairs should commence or be made safe within two hours of notifying the contractor. With such a defect, the inspector would be expected to remain at the location to prevent an accident occurring until the contractor arrived. Such a defect could be a large manhole cover missing, an area of collapsed pavement or a fallen tree. Hazardous defects that could lead to an accident occurring, such as a trip in the pavement or a damaged and leaning sign post, are repaired 'urgently', within three days of notifying the contractor.

All other non-hazardous defects identified on the safety inspection record are programmed for repair, normally before the next safety inspection unless the pavement or cycle track in question is to be included in a major works programme. Appropriate response times for non-urgent works are agreed with the contractor at regular progress meetings.

Defect Category	Emergency	Urgent	Non-urgent
Response Time	2 Hours	3 days	Programmed

The response times outlined above contribute to Kent's commitment to the public to "make sure hazardous faults on roads and pavements are put right within 5 days of being reported to us; if we can't, we will let you know why."