

# Swale Transport Strategy 2006-11

## **Vision**

To deliver an efficient and integrated sustainable transport and communication network capable of supporting a growing population and increased economic opportunity

## **Foreword**

Swale is a focus for considerable investment from both the public and private sectors. Schemes such as the new Swale Crossing, the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road and the Queenborough/Rushenden Link Road are all going to bring further investment and opportunities to the Borough. Channel Tunnel Rail Link domestic services will be serving the Borough from 2009 onwards. All of this new infrastructure will provide a catalyst for major regeneration for the Borough. The further investigation of a new A2/M2 link must also be progressed to identify the benefits this could bring.

To facilitate the new housing, employment, retail and leisure facilities that are being planned for the Borough robust and sustainable transport infrastructure must be provided. To achieve this there must be a focus on improved pedestrian, cycle and public transport provision, as an endless increase in vehicular traffic is not sustainable and will result in increased congestion and pollution.

The needs of the existing population must also be addressed in terms of providing access to all sectors of the community. Swale has a number of areas that suffer deprivation and through providing better transport links this will increase the access opportunities to essential services, education and employment.

Cllr Andrew Bowles  
Leader of Swale Borough Council

## Introduction

The purpose of the Swale Transport Strategy is to identify the transportation issues facing the Borough and to provide a strategy to manage them. The Strategy will also provide a basis for the development of infrastructure across the Borough and will assist in identifying delivery mechanisms.

## Background

Centrally located on the North Kent coast and forming the eastern extremity of the Thames Gateway, the Borough covers an area of approximately 144 square miles and has a population of 133,000. Swale is predominantly rural with development centred on the three main urban areas of Sittingbourne, Faversham and Sheerness. The Borough enjoys a rich and varied landscape, important to agriculture and nature conservation. The marshland, bordering the Swale and Medway estuaries which separate the Isle of Sheppey from the mainland, carries both landscape and nature conservation designations.

Canterbury, Maidstone and the Medway Towns surround the Borough of Swale, and can all be reached in within a short journey time. These provide employment, leisure and retail opportunities that create a high level of travel demand from the Borough. The proximity to London also creates a high demand on all transport infrastructure for employment, leisure and retail uses.

The economy of Swale has been heavily influenced over the years by its strategic location and accessibility leading to employment in the fields of brick making, food processing, brewing, importing and exporting, warehousing and distribution uses. Current industrial uses include papermaking, steel manufacturing, pharmaceuticals and electrical engineering. The quality of the beaches and water around the Isle of Sheppey and its proximity to London has also made the island a traditional holiday area.

The Borough occupies an important strategic location between mainland Europe and London. The deep-water port of Sheerness enjoys free-port status and provides a gateway to mainland Europe for freight trade from both the UK and other global markets. The Borough is also close to international rail services that serve Ashford, and in the future, Ebbsfleet.

The Borough is well related to the motorway and trunk network providing access to the M2 and A249 (which leads to the M20, M26 and M25), other channel ports and the Channel Tunnel. Improvements to the A249 between the M2 motorway and Iwade, and improvements between Iwade and Queenborough Corner on the Isle of Sheppey including a fixed crossing of the Swale (due for completion in summer 2006) is boosting the area's accessibility.

Sittingbourne and Faversham have direct rail connections to London, Sheerness is located on a branch line from Sittingbourne. Gatwick, Stansted and Heathrow airports can be reached in around 60-90 minutes. There is also the potential for international flights from Kent International Airport.

With the location, accessibility and diversity of the Borough the demand for travel has been growing, aided by the use and availability of the private motorcar and decline of rural services. Cars have brought greater independence and opportunities to us, but the increase in use is damaging the quality of life with pollution and congestion. Awareness of these developing trends has been recognised and the issues surrounding them brought into focus in 1992 by The United Nations conference with Agenda 21. These issues are the basis on which the concept of sustainable development and integrated transport has been developed and with which policies and strategies have been built around.

The majority of the Borough consists of rural areas with small villages, so it is recognised that the car will be the primary mode of transport for these communities. The increasing decline of services in the rural areas is forcing people to travel more. A number of villages are comparatively remote and only accessible by narrow country lanes, which would make public transport provision difficult and commercially unviable limiting the choice of travel to the car. People who do not have a car or the use of one (especially young and older people, those with disabilities, those on low incomes) are being excluded from the opportunities and services available to them. This aspect of social exclusion needs to be addressed.

The best way forward is a greater choice of travel by providing reliable, good quality alternatives to the car. The aim is to encourage people to make informed choices about the way they travel and maybe use the car less especially for shorter journeys. This would contribute to increasing levels of fitness by walking or cycling and less congestion on the road network for longer journeys by bus or rail. Through the economic development of the Borough and development of higher quality employment opportunities locally, there is potential to reduce the distances travelled to work by the Borough residents.

The health aspect of including physical activity as part of the daily routine is well documented. Cycling or walking to school would enhance health, reduce the risk of heart disease, and reduce car traffic and pollution. It is envisaged that if a routine of not relying on the private car is established at an early age it will be continued through later years and therefore reverse the trends that have been developed to date. It is hoped that by providing a wider choice of transport, those without access to a car will be able to consider jobs previously unavailable to them due to distance required to travel, access education facilities, other services and able to make social contact more easily.

### **Therefore, the key priorities of this strategy will be**

To provide infrastructure that enables **regeneration** in a sustainable manner

To increase use of **sustainable** modes of transport

To increase accessibility by all sectors of the **community**

## **Regeneration within Swale**

The western half of Swale and the Isle of Sheppey fall within the Thames gateway, which is one of the largest regeneration projects in Western Europe. This will bring significant new housing, employment, learning and environmental opportunities to the Borough.

The key development opportunities being promoted currently include:

- Queenborough and Rushenden – this will provide around 1500 new houses plus associated community facilities in the area as well as providing regeneration opportunities for the existing community
- Kemsley Fields – major new employment site to the north of Sittingbourne which includes housing and significant employment development
- East Hall Farm – new housing and employment area to the east of Sittingbourne
- Sittingbourne town centre – private sector interests in providing significant new retail and leisure facilities together with housing
- Sittingbourne Learning Hub – provides Swale with further and higher education facilities for the first time
- Sheppey Tourism – various initiatives being investigated that will help to rejuvenate the tourism economy on the Isle of Sheppey

A number of other sites are also being considered by private sector developers for further expansion. One such site is Kent Science Park to the south of Sittingbourne

Each of these sites presents challenges in terms of how best to connect them to the transport infrastructure within the Borough. In many cases there will be a need for new highway infrastructure. It will be essential that while providing good access by the private car, high quality and direct links for both pedestrians and cyclists are essential. However, it is vital that the public transport provision is considered from the outset of the development proposals and that services are established from the earliest occupation. This will allow new residents, employees and visitors to consider their travel choices at an early stage and allow early development of travel habits that make use of modes other than the private car.

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# PROPOSALS PLAN

## Highway Network

A number of key highway projects are due for completion within the next 5 years. They include:

- A249 Iwade to Queenborough Improvements incorporating the Second Swale Crossing – completion due in Summer 2006
- Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road (NRR) – first section between the A249 and the paper mill was opened to traffic in early 2005. The section between the Mill and East Hall Farm should commence construction in 2008 with completion in 2010.
- Rushenden Link Road – scheme is being progressed by SEEDA

The key projects for further development over the coming five-year period are:

### Eurolink Way/Church Road

Upon completion of the NRR, Eurolink Way/Church Road will need to be considered as this will now form a major route into Sittingbourne as well as serving the Eurolink employment area. Currently, this road is of poor appearance and condition. While it is adequate to serve the industrial estate, the quality of the carriageway and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists must be improved. The opportunity should also be taken to improve the visual appearance of the route. The volumes of traffic using this route will increase, so the operation of existing junctions must also be reviewed to make sure that they operate satisfactorily. Infrastructure to support the introduction of public transport routes must also be introduced to give the opportunity for the employees based on the Eurolink Estate to use bus services for the first time.

### A249 Grovehurst Interchange

Once the link to the A2 is made and development of the Kemsley Fields sites progresses the traffic model shows that in later years (2016 onwards) major congestion will start to develop at the A249 Grovehurst interchange. The solution to this problem is likely to be significant alteration to the current junction layout that may include new bridges over the A249 to accommodate a much larger roundabout. Work to investigate the issues and identify solutions commenced in Spring 2006.

### Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road (East Hall Farm to A2)

The completion of the NRR to connect to the A2 at Bapchild will need to be progressed to enable greater development opportunities in Sittingbourne town centre. Completion of the road will reduce the amount of traffic that currently uses the town centre as a through route. Upon completion of the NRR, projects that will capitalise upon the reduction of traffic flows within the town will be implemented to give better access for pedestrians, buses and cyclists. In addition to the construction of the new route, traffic reduction measures to deter through traffic on the A2 east of Bapchild will need to be introduced as modelling has shown that once the NRR is completed from the A249 to the A2 then there is likely to be an increase in the amount of traffic using this section of the A2.

### A2/M2 Link

To examine opportunities for the further development of Sittingbourne town centre, the A2/M2 link road will need to be considered in more detail. The current anticipated route will continue southwards from the A2/NRR interchange near Bapchild and connect with the M2 approximately 2 miles east of junction 5. However, this route is only indicative and will need to be further developed through traffic modelling and detailed design. This will provide Sittingbourne with a new access to the M2 and provide some relief to the A249/M2 interchange, which suffers from severe congestion and a high accident rate. The road would also facilitate opportunities identified within the Borough Councils Draft Economic Development Strategy regarding development around the Kent Science Park. Feasibility studies are being progressed by the Science Park. If the scheme were to progress beyond the feasibility stage then a full consultation processes would need to commence. At this time the County Council will then take a substantive lead role in the development of the scheme.

### Sittingbourne Town Centre Urban Traffic Control

Within Sittingbourne town centre development of an urban traffic control (UTC) system will need to be further developed because of the changing nature of flows in and around the town. UTC optimises the

operation of traffic signals across the town in order to bring overall benefits such as better journey times and improved journey time reliability. This will require a review of key junctions across the town, which may result in major junction remodelling, such as converting current roundabout junctions to signal control. This will allow control and distribution of traffic and incorporate measures that will improve the reliability of the bus service. Work to develop this further was started in Spring 2006.

#### B2231 Lower Road, Isle of Sheppey

On the Isle of Sheppey, B2231 Lower Road forms the major route across the island. The road is typically narrow and suffers from subsidence in a number of locations. The section that runs between the A249 and Thistle Hill will need to be improved because of increased traffic accessing the Thistle Hill development area. This will need to include the improvement of the Barton Hill Drive junction, as the current layout is not satisfactory. The improvement works must also provide pedestrian and cycle facilities as there is no link from Thistle Hill to the old A249, which will become a cycle route once the new A249 is completed. There are aspirations to provide enhanced and new visitor attractions on the Isle of Sheppey, the majority of which will be served by the B2231. During the feasibility and investigation processes for these new attractions, the ability of Lower Road to serve a large increase in visitors will need to be carefully considered.

Kent County Council commenced a route study in March 2006 to investigate the crash rate along the entire route, identify key interventions and develop a forward implementation programme with the aim of lowering the crash rate along the road. The implementation of this programme will be a key element of this strategy.

#### A251 Faversham to Ashford

A key strategic link within the Borough is the A251 that runs between Faversham and Ashford. As Ashford continues to develop the importance of this route will continue to increase; it is a key link between the M2 and the M20 that makes it a key link in the County road network. The A251 suffers from a high accident rate that can be attributed to inappropriate vehicle speeds and volumes. The alignment of the road is poor in places, and a number of small communities exist along the road. Kent Highway Services are currently progressing a study to consider the issues along this route. The works arising from the study will be implemented between 2006 and 2008.

#### A249 Sittingbourne to Maidstone

This dual carriageway link also provides a key route connecting the M2 and M20. Although this route provides a higher standard of road than the A251, the road is the primary destination for rat-running traffic to the south of Sittingbourne. A number of the junctions have restricted movements, however KCC are proposing to construct new roundabouts to reduce the number of access and gaps to improve safety. This link could provide the opportunity to develop an express bus link connecting the Isle of Sheppey and Sittingbourne to Maidstone.

#### M2 Junction 5 Improvements

This junction suffers from a high accident rate and severe congestion, particularly in the morning peak period. The heaviest demand in the morning peak is from the A249 southbound approaching the junction. The key development sites on the Isle of Sheppey and in the western half of Swale will each add to the traffic demand at this junction. The accumulative impact of these developments would exacerbate the congestion. Currently, the Highways Agency (HA) have no plans to improve the junction. The Borough Council will continue to lobby the HA to consider improvements.

### **Delivering a more sustainable transport network**

While this section primarily describes new highway infrastructure, the delivery of each of these projects will provide the opportunity to deliver much improved facilities for pedestrians, cyclists and introduce measures that make public transport more attractive. Each of these schemes will link into improvements described in the coming sections to join up and deliver a network of quality cycling, walking and public transport routes.

### **Community Impacts of road traffic**

A key objective of the Kent County Council Local Transport Plan is to reduce the adverse effect of transport and its infrastructure on local communities. The effect that road traffic has on communities

within Swale comes from two sources – traffic rat running through rural areas and the high volumes of traffic on the principal road network especially where it passes through villages.

As a result of traffic congestion on principal roads and the trunk road network, this creates circumstances where drivers will choose to avoid these congested areas and use narrow rural roads as a rat run. This is particularly prevalent to the south of Sittingbourne and through the villages between the Medway towns and the Swale Crossing.

The congestion that occurs on the principal routes increases pollution (noise and emissions) for communities that live next to these routes. The main examples of this are the villages along the A2 and Halfway on the Isle of Sheppey. When the traffic is flowing, this can make the road difficult to cross, which then introduces severance within a community. Measures to reduce the impact of traffic within these communities will be an area for further investigation.

### **Road Safety**

Each Year KCC undertakes a review of crash data across the county to identify locations that have a cluster of crashes. Once the data has been analysed the County Council will then assess the nature of crashes at each individual location and identify if remedial action can be undertaken that would reduce the possibility of crashes. This is then delivered as part of the annual Crash Reduction Measure (CRM) programme. Due to the ever-changing nature of accident patterns it is difficult to predict the schemes to be delivered by this process. However, the highway safety schemes that have been developed outside of this process have been identified on the proposals map.

<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Next steps</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>When</b>
Completion of the NRR between East Hall Farm and the A2	Design and feasibility work needs to be undertaken	SBC and KCC have commenced detailed feasibility and design	Commenced Spring 2006
A249 Grovehurst Interchange	Assessment of requirements needed	KCC undertaking investigation and feasibility work	Commenced Spring 2006
A2/M2 Link	Further feasibility and development scenarios need to be developed	Work being undertaken by Kent Science Park	Ongoing
Sittingbourne Town Centre	Detailed modelling of the implications of different development scenarios	SBC and KCC to commission modelling and analysis work	Starting Spring 2006
B2231 Lower Road	Feasibility and design work needs to be progressed	KCC progressing safety improvement programme. Funding sources for larger improvement schemes needs to be investigated	Study starting work early 2006, with works programme to follow
A251 Faversham to Ashford	Study to consider safety improvements	KCC progressing	Works to be implemented 2006-8
M2 Junction 5	Undertake appraisal of options to improve safety and capacity	KCC/SBC to engage the Highways Agency to commence analysis of options	Ongoing
Rural Rat running	Identify key problem areas	Develop a programme for investigation	Ongoing
A2 Corridor	Identify problem areas	Develop a programme for investigation	Ongoing
A249	Junction Improvements and public transport services	KCC progressing junction improvements; bus services being developed	Ongoing

## Sustainable Travel

Development and promotion of sustainable travel options is the cornerstone of this strategy. Simply building more infrastructure to support the growth of car travel is no longer sustainable. It is therefore key that best use is made of the infrastructure we already have. Travel planning and promotion is a key area to make people aware of the options that are available to them. Kent County Council have established a travel planning team that looks specifically at this under the branding of Smarter Choices. The Borough Council will work with this team to promote the use of alternative forms of transport with schools, employers and key employment sites around the Borough. Recently launched websites for both Kent Car Share and Kent School Run provide a facility for people to share their journeys, and provide tangible benefits through reduced individual travel costs.

All of the other subject areas within this strategy culminate in the overall aim to reduce dependence upon the private car. If alternative methods were used to get to work or school this would result in less peak period congestion that in turn reduces the amount of pollution. If people were to cycle or walk more then this has positive health benefits by increasing the amount of exercise that people are doing – this will improve the overall health of the Borough. For example, the development and promotion of walking buses increases the number of pupils walking to school and reduce traffic congestion.

Safety and attractiveness of alternative modes can have an effect upon the take up. For example, if a walking or cycling route requires crossing of a busy road without the aid of a crossing then this would make the route less attractive. This type of project can be identified through the development of travel plans with both employers and schools.

In important element of reducing overall travel demand can be the use of technology to reduce the need to travel. Increased use of internet services, and in particular the greater availability of broadband, can make shopping or accessing other services easier and more convenient. By the same token, this technology can increase the opportunities for people to work from home so removing the need to travel.

### Action Plan

Challenge	Next Steps	How	When
Promote increase use of sustainable modes	Promotion using the Smarter Choices initiative	In partnership with KCC	Commence during 2006
Reduce Peak Hour congestion	Promotion of alternative transport modes to work/school	SBC in partnership with KCC, and other organisations such as the Kent and Medway Walking Bus	Ongoing
Increase attractiveness of alternative modes	Confirm projects within the LTP to deliver improved networks	Delivery of public transport, pedestrian improvements and the delivery of the cycle network	2006-11
Development of Communications technology	To assist development of technologies that reduce the need to travel	In conjunction with other strategies and partner organisations	Ongoing project

## Bus Services

The usage of the services in the rural areas of Swale is generally low as the car provides the most convenient form of transport. Patronage in urban areas is also low because distances tend to be short, parking is relatively easy and bus services do not operate at a frequency to make them attractive. In short, the bus service currently does not provide sufficient advantage over the private car.

As the Borough develops over the coming years the public transport system must evolve to meet the needs of both the existing population and the new communities that will be created. Public transport must be a viable travel choice to and from any new development from day one so that travel habits can be created from the start. However, this must not be detrimental to existing communities. As the Borough evolves over the coming years then planning must start sooner rather than later to anticipate changed demand patterns. This may be the subject of a business planning process involving local bus operators.

The whole experience of bus travel is an area for improvement. This needs to start with the stops themselves – are they in the right place, is there sufficient information, can the bus be accessed easily are some of the areas that need to be considered. Then there is the buses themselves – are they clean, comfortable and easily accessible. Once at the destination, is the bus stop ideally placed, are links to other modes of transport convenient, is the walking route to the final destination of a good quality all need examination. To address these issues it is clear that a structured improvement programme will need to be developed and rolled out, probably concentrating in routes with higher usage in the earlier stages.

An example of this approach is currently being rolled out on the Sittingbourne to Kemsley route that is receiving Department for Transport funding via the kick-start scheme.

A particular feature within Swale is the well-used coach commuter services to London. Various routes operate within the Borough with many pick up points available for passengers. However, there is a downside to this because there are parking problems created by people parking to certain pick up points. In partnership with the coach service operators, it would be useful to survey their passengers to get an idea of where people are travelling from to access the service.

### Action Plan

Challenge	Next Steps	How	When
Increase Patronage	Consider means of making bus services more attractive	Funding sources for improved buses and increased frequency need to be identified	Ongoing – identify investment opportunities
Improved access	A rolling programme of bus stop access improvements	KCC to implement as identified in the 5 year LTP programme	2006-11
Commuter Service parking	Assess travel patterns of passengers	SBC to undertake survey in partnership with operators	2006
Interchange facilities	SBC to promote interchange facilities at Stations	Working with partner organisations develop opportunities for improved facilities	Ongoing

## Rail Services

The Borough is well served by the rail network as the north Kent line runs across the Borough. This provides excellent links to the Medway towns, Canterbury and London. In addition to the north Kent line, a branch line provides a connection between Sittingbourne and Sheerness.

The forthcoming Integrated Kent Franchise document will bring about major changes with the delivery of rail services within the Borough. These changes include services between Sheerness and Sittingbourne being extended to run from Sheerness to Dover Priory, at a frequency of 2 per hour. These changes to the services will provide excellent links between the Isle of Sheppey and Canterbury, which will provide good access to further and higher education together with employment. This could also bring about a reduction in the number of car journeys from the Isle of Sheppey to East Kent.

The major changes will occur in 2009 when the CTRL domestic services are launched. This will provide a direct link between Faversham and Sittingbourne to St Pancras Station. As indicated within the SRA Service Specification for the new Integrated Kent Franchise this would be to the detriment of current services to Victoria and Cannon Street. From discussion with the bidders for the franchise they are indicating that they are pricing to deliver the prescribed services at this stage, but would be willing to discuss the final service patterns with stakeholders. SBC will be involved with these discussions to make sure that the best service is provided for the Borough.

### Action Plan

Challenge	Next Steps	How	When
Get the optimum service pattern for Swale	Commence discussion with successful franchisee	SBC to progress discussions with the new Franchisee	Following award of the Franchise
Access Improvements	To improve access to and within stations	SBC to progress improvements with KCC and Franchisee	Ongoing
Freight Development	Promote the increased use of rail to transport freight	Explore opportunities with local businesses	Ongoing
Interchange Facilities	Development of high quality interchange facilities at key stations	SBC to progress with partner organisations and developers	Ongoing, but dependant upon regeneration timetables

## Pedestrians

The Borough of Swale should provide good opportunities for walking. The Borough is predominantly flat, the urban areas are compact and the rural areas attractive. However, in the urban areas and in some villages the landscape is dominated by the car, which creates a poor environment for walking. This poor environment is created by a lack of pedestrian priority, poor crossing facilities, pollution from vehicles and a low quality streetscape. Each of these issues are amplified when use of pedestrian routes by disabled persons is considered. However, each of the towns is serviced by a good network of segregated pedestrian routes in the forms of alleyways that give good permeability that can offer journey times over short distances equal to the car. In the rural parts of the Borough walking can be considered unattractive because it would involve walking along rural lanes that may be afflicted by inappropriate vehicle speeds.

What this strategy needs to do is to bring about an improvement in the infrastructure for pedestrians. Through the identification of key walking routes within the town and a structured approach to their improvement for all users is key in delivering this. Priorities at signal controlled crossing points could be reviewed to give pedestrians an advantage over road traffic. The Borough and County Councils in conjunction with the Primary Care Trust could consider the development of joint initiatives to promote walking within the Borough.

Promotion of walking must cover both leisure and utility uses. Increased utility walking (to school, work etc) will reduce the number of vehicles on the road that will provide a benefit for the whole community through reduced emissions, noise and congestion. The benefits to health and reduced expenditure are tangible benefits to individuals.

### Action Plan

Challenge	Next Steps	How	When
Increase the number of people walking	Identify opportunities for improvements and promotion	In partnership with KCC and other partners such as PCT	2006 onwards
Pedestrian Priority	Review all crossing points and identify new locations	In conjunction with KCC and deliver through the LTP programme	2006-11
Provide higher quality walking routes	Develop a programme to audit and improve key walking routes	In partnership with KCC and access groups	2006 onwards
Increase number of pupils walking to school	Through the travel planning process and promotion identify any barriers that make walking unattractive	In partnership with KCC and schools	Ongoing

## Cycling

The three urban areas within the Borough are compact and are relatively flat which is an ideal environment to develop cycle use. For most trips within each of the towns the cycle would be an ideal alternative. However there is little in the way of supporting infrastructure, which would discourage many people from cycling.

The benefits of increased cycling would be wide ranging. From the obvious reduction of vehicles using the roads there would be a reduction in congestion, noise and emissions. The health benefits of cycling are also a major consideration as it would provide increased levels of exercise that would help to reduce the increasing health problems arising from obesity.

To increase cycling usage there would need to be a number of areas for development. In the first instance a network of cycle friendly routes would need to be identified and delivered. The core network has been identified and is shown in the plan included within this document. As well as providing the infrastructure, promotion of these routes would be essential to make people aware that they exist and to promote their use.

What is also required is promotion of the benefits of cycling. Quicker journey times, considerably lower cost and the health benefits are all tangible positive outcomes to the individual.

### Action Plan

Challenge	Next Steps	How	When
Infrastructure to support cycling	The core cycle network has been identified in this strategy  Build in features in all highway schemes and developments	Elements to be delivered by KCC using LTP funding and also through developments	Ongoing
Promotion of cycling	Identify opportunities	In conjunction with KCC and PCT	2007
Integration with other modes	Examine opportunities that promote access by cycle to stations	In conjunction with KCC and train/station operators	2006 onwards
Increase cycling to work/school	Identify opportunities and promote	Delivery of the cycle network	2006 onwards

## Parking

Car park provision within the Borough is concentrated within the urban centres of Faversham, Sheerness and Sittingbourne. In addition to SBC parking provision within town centres, each town has other significant parking available as a result of major supermarkets being located within each town. The opportunity is taken by visitors to park for free within these locations to visit the town centre, although in Sittingbourne and Faversham the supermarkets have taken steps to stop this happening by introducing charges. These charges are refunded if purchases are made in the supermarket.

Large car parks are provided at the two main stations within the Borough at Faversham and Sittingbourne. These car parks are frequently full as large numbers of the Borough residents commute to London each day.

Significant development is proposed within Sittingbourne town centre, which will involve the rationalisation of existing parking as well as the provision of new parking. It is important that the overall level of parking is looked at holistically; simply building more car parks is not a sustainable long-term solution to increased parking pressure. This is particularly important when some of the town centre car parks are prime development sites. A detailed parking strategy is under development to assess the implications of development, and to analyse the different development scenarios. The directional signage to the parking locations also needs to be reviewed to ensure good distribution of parking demand across all car parks. Facilities to improve access to town centres by public transport, walking and cycling must be promoted and developed ahead of introducing additional parking capacity

Commuter parking in residential streets is a common problem in all town centres. Schemes to restrict this type of parking must also be coupled with a review of off street parking provision. Any reduction in the off street provision or increases in parking fees must not be implemented prior to implementation of measures that aim to protect existing residential parking areas.

Increased car ownership is creating greater demand for residential on-street parking. This is becoming more acute in older areas near to town centres where high density terraced housing exists. In these instances, the provision of more space for parking is impossible. Other measures to preserve these locations for residents use will need to be considered, such as parking restriction or residential parking schemes.

### Action Plan

Challenge	Next Steps	How	When
Develop a parking strategy	Identify current and future demand, especially demand arising from redevelopment	Through the development of regeneration and redevelopment processes	Ongoing
Residential parking	Continued monitoring of residential areas	Investigate areas where problems exist with non-residents parking in residential areas	Ongoing
Reduce parking demand	Long term aspiration as a result of increased use of public transport, cycling and walking	Re-allocation of parking areas for other uses	Longer term, following development of alternatives

## **Delivery**

The delivery of this strategy will depend upon the development of effective partnerships. Swale Borough Council alone cannot deliver the strategy in isolation. Key partners that will be involved with the delivery of the strategy will include Kent County Council, developers, Highways Agency, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), South East England Development Agency (SEEDA), Primary Care Trust (PCT) and public transport operators.

SBC will promote the strategy amongst all of these organisations in order to secure delivery. In a number of instances there is a correlation with each individual organisations objectives; for example the PCT wish to improve the health of the Boroughs residents, while the transport strategy promotes walking and cycling – this is a clear opportunity for joint working.

### **Schemes**

A programme of specific projects to deliver the strategy is attached to the back of this document. These schemes will deliver the action plans and will be predominantly funded by Local Transport Plan funding and delivered by KCC.

Projects that will be supported or delivered through the development process have not been put into the programme, as it is not possible at this time to give certainty to when which developments come forward. It is also possible that some of the schemes listed could attract developer contributions therefore reducing the burden on LTP funding. The delivery of the programme will be subject to the level of funding allocated to projects within Swale by Kent County Council.

### **Reporting Progress**

Progress in the delivery of the strategy will be reported annually to the Joint Transport Board. This report will summarise the progress made during the year in delivering against the action plans and the 5 year programme. The progress report will be presented to the Board in March/April, at the end of the financial year.

The Strategy will be reviewed in the final year (2011) and a new document drafted. This will build upon the work done up to that date and will give the opportunity to develop a further work programme for the next 5 year period.

## Swale Transport Strategy Schemes Programme

Year	Scheme Title	Scheme Location	Scheme Description	Desired Outcome(s)	Budget
2006-7	A2 Newington Traffic Management Measures Phase 2	A2 London Road, Newington	Traffic management measures, footway widening and improved signing, lining and lighting	Increased pedestrian and cycle safety. Reduced speed of through traffic. Enhance village centre.	
2006-7	A251	A251 between M2 and Challock	Improved signage and lining	Improved road safety	
2006-7	Bus Route, Facilities and Accessibility Improvements Phase 1	Kickstart Route - Kemsley to Sittingbourne	Implement improvements at bus stops to increase accessibility - including Bus Borders. Improvement of bus facilities on key routes	Improved accessibility, especially for mobility impaired. Improve Facilities to increase bus patronage	
2006-7	Eurolink Way Toucan Crossing	Eurolink Way (east), Sittingbourne	Toucan crossing (linking town centre cycle route to NCR1)	Increased pedestrian and cycle safety	
2006-7	Iwade Village Traffic Management Phase 1	Iwade Village	Traffic Management and additional cycling / pedestrian facilities	Increased pedestrian and cycle safety. Reduced speed of through traffic	
2006-7	Key Street Roundabout Improvements	A2 Key Street Roundabout, Sittingbourne	Alterations to approaches to roundabout and anti skid surfacing		
2007-8	A251 Faversham to Ashford	A251 between M2 and Challock	Improved signage and lining	Improved road safety	100000
2007-8	B2231 Lower Road, Isle of Sheppey	From Cowstead Corner (A249) to Leysdown	Various measures to improve safety	Reduced crash rates	100000
2007-8	Bus Route, Facilities and Accessibility Improvements	District wide - Along Key Bus Routes	Implement improvements at bus stops to increase accessibility - including Bus Borders	Improved accessibility, especially for mobility impaired. Improve Facilities to increase bus patronage	30000
2007-8	Chequers Road, Minster - footway	Chequers Road, Minster	New length of footway and improvements to bus stop / provision of bus border	Improved pedestrian safety and access to bus services	40000
2007-8	Cycle Network	North Sittingbourne and Iwade	Delivery of the cycle route network	Increased cycle usage	90000
2007-8	Homewood Avenue Cycle Route	Homewood Avenue, Sittingbourne	Traffic calming and off carriageway cycle route.	Increased pedestrian and cycle safety	50000
2007-8	Iwade Village Traffic Management Phase 2	Iwade Village	Measures to rationalise traffic calming and introduce cycle facilities	Increased pedestrian and cycle safety. Reduced speed of through traffic	50000
2007-8	Rodmersham Village Gateways	Rodmersham Village	Gateways with priority working	Increased pedestrian and cycle safety. Reduced speed of through traffic	35000
2007-8	Trinity Road Pedestrian Crossing	Trinity Road, Sheerness	Zebra crossing and footway works to complete missing link to Strode Crescent	Improved pedestrian safety	40000
2007-8	Pedestrian Routes	Key town centre access routes and school access	Programme of walking route audits and implementation of works arising	Improved walking routes and increased walking	15000
2007-8	Borden Lane Traffic Calming	Borden Lane, Sittingbourne	Traffic calming (narrowings with cycle by-pass's)	Increased pedestrian and cycle safety	40000
2008-9	B2008 Minster Road and A250 Halfway Road	Eastchurch to Queenborough corridor	Implementation of schemes derived from corridor study	Improved safety, cycle access and pedestrian facilities	60000
2008-9	B2231 Lower Road, Isle of Sheppey	From Cowstead Corner (A249) to Leysdown	Various measures to improve safety	Reduced crash rates	80000
2008-9	Boughton Street highway improvements	Boughton Street Village	Gateways, new length of footway and speed limit extents review	Increased pedestrian and cycle safety. Reduced speed of through traffic	68000
2008-9	Bus Route, Facilities and Accessibility Improvements	District wide - Along Key Bus Routes	Implement improvements at bus stops to increase accessibility - including Bus Borders	Improved accessibility and patronage, especially for mobility impaired	40000

## Swale Transport Strategy Schemes Programme

Year	Scheme Title	Scheme Location	Scheme Description	Desired Outcome(s)	Budget
2008-9	Halfway Road/Queenborough Road Traffic Signal improvements	Junction between Halfway Road and Queenborough Road, Halfway	Junction alterations to improve congestion and make junction safer for pedestrians and cycles	Provide pedestrian crossing facilities	100000
2008-9	Hawthorn Road Traffic Calming	Hawthorn Road, Sittingbourne	Traffic Calming and new cycle facilities	Increased pedestrian and cycle safety. Reduced 'short cut' traffic flow.	27000
2008-9	Iwade to Swale Crossing	Iwade to Swale Crossing	Cycle facilities	Improved cycle route contributing to cycle network	20000
2008-9	Promotion	District wide	Public Awareness Campaign	Improved public awareness and increased use of sustainable modes	2500
2008-9	Medway Towns to Sheppey Crossing/Iwade	Upchurch, Lower Halstow and Iwade	Measures to reduce vehicle speeds and discourage use of rat run.	Reduced rural rat running and vehicle speeds	60000
2008-9	Rail Station accessibility improvements	District wide	Measures to improve accessibility to stations for cyclists, pedestrians and the mobility impaired.	Improved Accessibility for Pedestrians, cyclists and mobility impaired.	5000
2008-9	Real time Bus Information	Key Bus Stops	Roll out real-time bus information at key bus stops and Busnet system	Implement Real Time information. Improve service and increase patronage	50000
2008-9	Cycle Network	Sheerness/West Sheppey	Delivery of the cycle route network	Increased cycle usage	70000
2008-9	Sheppey Way	Sheppey Way	Cycle Facilities	Safer cycling route	15000
2008-9	Walking Route Audit Derived Schemes	Town Centre access and key routes in residential areas, incl. School access	Programme of walking route audits and implementation of works arising	Improve walking routes to encourage more walking	25000
2009-10	Bus Route, Facilities and Accessibility Improvements	District wide - Along Key Bus Routes	Implement improvements at bus stops to increase accessibility - including Bus Borders	Improved accessibility, especially for mobility impaired	20000
2009-10	Cycle Network	South Sittingbourne	Implementation of the cycle network	Increased cycle usage	60000
2009-10	Cycle Network	Minster and Eastern Sheppey	Introduction of the cycle network across an area	Increased cycle usage	60000
2009-10	Eurolink / Mill Way Roundabout Improvements	Eurolink / Mill Way Roundabout, Sittingbourne	Scheme to improve safety and pedestrian access	Improved pedestrian links and reduction in crash rates. May be supported by developer contribution	150000
2009-10	Faversham Road, Syndale - highway improvements	Faversham Road, Syndale	Signing, Lining and street scene improvements	Increased pedestrian and cycle safety. Reduced speed of through traffic	20000
2009-10	Junction Improvements: A2 / A251 The Mall	Junction between A2 / A251/ The Mall, Faversham	Improvements to junction to junction to ease congestion and give bus priority	Reduced congestion and improved pedestrian/cycle facilities	175000
2009-10	Promotion	District wide	Public Awareness Campaign	Improved public awareness and increased use of sustainable modes	2500
2009-10	B2008 Minster Road and A250 Halfway Road	Eastchurch to Queenborough corridor	Implementation of schemes derived from corridor study	Improved safety, cycle access and pedestrian facilities	30000
2009-10	Newnham Village Gateways and reduced speed limit.	Newnham Village	New speed limit, village gateways and improvements to street scene	Increased pedestrian and cycle safety. Reduced speed of through traffic	20000
2009-10	Rail Station accessibility improvements	District wide	Measures to improve accessibility to stations for cyclists, pedestrians and the mobility impaired.	Increase in Sustainable Travel	10000

## Swale Transport Strategy Schemes Programme

Year	Scheme Title	Scheme Location	Scheme Description	Desired Outcome(s)	Budget
2009-10	New signals and improved pedestrian facilities	Ospringe Road	Improvements to pedestrian routes, introduce cycle facilities and reduce traffic speeds	Improved access around the village centre for pedestrians and cyclists	150000
2009-10	Walking Route Audit Derived Schemes	District wide, incl. Schools	Programme of walking route audits and implementation of works arising	Improve walking routes to encourage more walking	10000
2010-11	Bus Route, Facilities and Accessibility Improvements	District wide - Along Key Bus Routes	Implement improvements at bus stops to increase accessibility - including Bus Borders	Improved accessibility, especially for mobility impaired	20000
2010-11	Sittingbourne enhanced bus cycle and pedestrian measures	Sittingbourne Town Centre	Measures to provide enhanced bus cycle and pedestrian facilities within Sittingbourne Town Centre. (Post completion of NRR to East Hall Farm).	Increased levels of walking and cycling and bus usage	80000
2010-11	Cycle Network	Faversham	Introduction of the cycle network across an area	Increased cycle usage	80000
2010-11	HGV Management	District Wide	Identify and implement schemes to reduce instances of goods vehicles using inappropriate roads	Safer and more appropriate routing of HGV's to avoid sensitive areas	40000
2010-11	Oare Village Gateways	Oare Village, Faversham	Gateways with priority working	Increased pedestrian and cycle safety. Reduced speed of through traffic	25000
2010-11	Resigning of town centre post development	Sittingbourne and other urban centres	To assist in directing traffic to all the town centre car parks	Identify the location of car parks to drivers	25000
2010-11	Real time Bus Information	Key Bus Stops	Roll out real-time bus information at key bus stops and Busnet system	Implement Real Time information	60000
2010-11	Station Road, Teynham	Station Road, Teynham	Carriageway narrowing and speed reduction measures	Increased pedestrian and cycle safety. Reduced speed of through traffic	30000
2010-11	Cycle, Public Transport access and pedestrian imp's to improve village centre	Teynham	Carriageway narrowing and improved pedestrian facilities to reduce the impact of transport upon the community	Improved environment for pedestrians, cyclists and a reduction of traffic speed	150000
2010-11	Signal Controlled Crossing Improvements.	District wide	Improvement of layouts at signal controlled crossings and junctions to facilitate / improve pedestrian priority - incorporate microwave detection	Improved Pedestrian Priority at Signal Controlled Junctions	50000
2010-11	Speed Management	District wide	Implementation of schemes derived from speed management plan	Improved Safety	50000
2010-11	SRTS schemes	District Wide	Measures to support STP's and SRTS		30000
2010-11	Promotion	District wide	Public Awareness Campaign	Improved public awareness and increased use of sustainable modes	2500
2010-11	Walking Route Audit Derived Schemes	District wide	Programme of walking route audits and implementation of works arising	Improve walking routes to encourage more walking	40000