





# walking

strategy for kent

2001

a walking strategy for kent



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# Why Have a Walking Strategy?

Walking is a neglected form of transport when it comes to official statistics, collection of data and public expenditure. As a nation we are on average walking less often and over shorter distances than we used to. Between 1985 and 1995 the average distance walked has fallen by 18%. There are, however, many other people who consider walking to be a form of exercise or a pursuit which can be taken as part of leisure and this should be equally promoted as well as encouraging walking for utility purposes.

Encouraging walking can contribute towards:

- ❖ Reducing congestion and pollution and carbon dioxide emissions associated with transport, particularly in towns. Walking can replace a large number of the short car journeys, which contribute to urban congestion. It is a flexible way of transport and facilities for it need far less investment than for motorised transport. According to the document "Sustainability Counts", Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR, 1998):  
"Transport has been the fastest growing source in the UK of carbon dioxide emissions as a result of the sharp increase in road traffic, and accounts for about a quarter of carbon dioxide emissions which contribute to global warming and climate change".
- ❖ Improving the health of the nation. Walking is one way of taking regular exercise and hence reducing the incidence of strokes, one of the priority areas for health nationally as described in The Health Improvement Programme, which includes prescribed walking as part of patient referral by GPs across the country.
- ❖ Improving personal safety and security. Although pedestrians are more vulnerable to injury than motorists, a substantial increase in the number of people walking will contribute to making motorists attitudes and behaviour safer and reduce the fear of walking. Significant pedestrian volumes can also improve the

security of individual pedestrians and other people in the street environment.

- ❖ Promoting more independent lifestyles amongst children.  
Dealing with today's busy and complex street environment is not a naturally occurring skill. Developing pedestrian skills in children can encourage them to be less sedentary and commence the process of acquiring road sense.

Since 1996 the DETR has been investigating the promotion of walking. It has recently produced policy advice to local authorities to encourage walking. They have made it clear to local authorities that alternatives to the private car need to be promoted.

## 1.1 The Walking Strategy in Context

The Walking Strategy forms part of the County Council's Local Transport Plan bid for Government funding support for transport initiatives. The Kent Walking Strategy is consistent and compatible with advice to local authorities on encouraging walking. The County Council already has a Public Rights of Way Strategy, which is consistent with and additional to this document. The Walking Strategy is also closely linked with the Road Safety Plan and the Cycling Strategy.



A typical pedestrianised town centre.

## Aims of the Walking Strategy

The general aims of the Walking Strategy are to improve the safety, personal security and attractiveness of walking in Kent. The strategy aims to do this through achieving the following seven objectives:

- ❖ reduce the vulnerability of pedestrians and promote their safety and security;
- ❖ promote walking as a safer mode of transport to school;
- ❖ reduce peak period car journeys, including to work, and to reduce short distance car journeys in general in order to reduce congestion and pollution and to promote healthy living;
- ❖ ensure developments are 'pedestrian friendly';
- ❖ encourage walking as part of an integrated transport policy;
- ❖ promote the benefits of walking;
- ❖ develop recreational walking.

Some of the objectives are associated with targets. The targets include:

- ❖ a modal split target based on 1998 levels of walking;
- ❖ to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries to pedestrians per unit mile travelled by one fifth by 2005 compared to the annual average for 1994 - 1998;
- ❖ to reduce the number of slight injuries to pedestrians per unit mile travelled by 5% by 2005 compared to the annual average for 1994 - 1998;
- ❖ to improve the accessibility of major railway stations and bus stops to pedestrians (a list of the locations and action taken to be the basis of monitoring);
- ❖ to increase the number and quality of public rights of way signposted and waymarked.

## Key Kent Circumstances

There are seven key issues, which have been identified as having an impact on walking in the County. These give a useful background to the Walking Strategy and a context for identifying objectives and actions. In summary they are:

### 3.1 Kent has a lot of potential for walking for recreational and everyday travel.

Many people will always choose to use the car for most, if not all journeys, and some may have no alternative. However, it is always possible to encourage some people to make more of their short everyday journeys on foot. Kent has a lot of attractive countryside and recreational walking is a popular leisure activity across the County. Kent County Council continually organises festivals to encourage walking in Kent, such as the successful Kent Walking Festival 1999.

### 3.2 Pedestrians account for more than one in eight of the casualties on Kent's roads.

Pedestrians are among the most vulnerable road users, being injured six times as often as car occupants per unit distance travelled. The average severity of pedestrian injuries is higher than that of car occupants. As a result, walking can be perceived as an unsafe pastime and mode of transport. Statistically, the most vulnerable pedestrians are in the 5 to 19 age group. The Road Safety Plan proposes targeting educational, enforcement and engineering activity where it is most effective to reduce casualties, with a clear focus on vulnerable road users, especially pedestrians and drivers attitudes to them.

### 3.3 There is high car usage in Kent. Walking could help reduce traffic, parking demands and the pressure for more road space.

Most households in Kent now own at least one car, and the number

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of licensed cars has increased three-fold from the mid 1960's to the mid 1990's. However this does not mean that the vehicle is available for use by all members of households all of the time. If pedestrian facilities were improved more people could be encouraged to walk for short distances.

There are large flows of motor traffic travelling daily into urban centres across Kent, which require both road and parking space. In many towns the pressure on the road system is intense and it is not realistic to build more highway capacity. Encouraging walking can help alleviate this pressure.

## 3.4 The County has a settlement pattern with many medium sized towns and no major conurbations.

Although Kent has many busy urban areas it does not have one dominant conurbation. There are, however, twenty urban areas with more than 10,000 people. Kent has a number of substantial urban areas including Maidstone the county town, Canterbury, Sittingbourne, Ashford with its international railway station, Dartford and Gravesend in Kent Thames-side, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells and the Thanet towns of Ramsgate, Margate and Broadstairs.

On a daily basis there are many short trips made by car as people travel in and around these centres to and from work, taking children to school and travelling for leisure purposes. Many of these trips could be made on foot.

## 3.5 The County has a mixture of urban and rural settings.

Every place is unique and Kent encompasses a widely varying topographical structure with many towns and a lot of rural countryside and settlements. Kent is unique in many respects. There are widely varying landscapes ranging from the marshes of North

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Kent, across the chalk ridge of the North Downs, running to the low coast line at Dungeness, to the broad estuaries of the Swale, Medway and the Thames. In this respect a walking strategy may need to be adapted to work to the best effect in each specific area of the County.

Urban and rural areas have different transport priorities. Walking has important roles in both types of area but the differences need to be reflected in the strategy.

## 3.6 There is considerable use of public transport to reach London from Kent. The Walking Strategy could encourage commuters to walk to public transport hubs.

There are major commuting routes between different parts of Kent, and there are 106 rail stations across the County, many of which are primarily commuter stations. More commuters could be persuaded to walk to their local station. Local bus networks also help to play an important and vital role in getting people to and from the rail station.

Such networks need to be continued and expanded to help reduce the volume of short distance car journeys. There are also many bus commuter services from Kent to central London.

Walking has a greater role for internal circulation in London than in Kent's built-up areas. However much of this may be a result of good public transport rather than walking journeys in their own right.

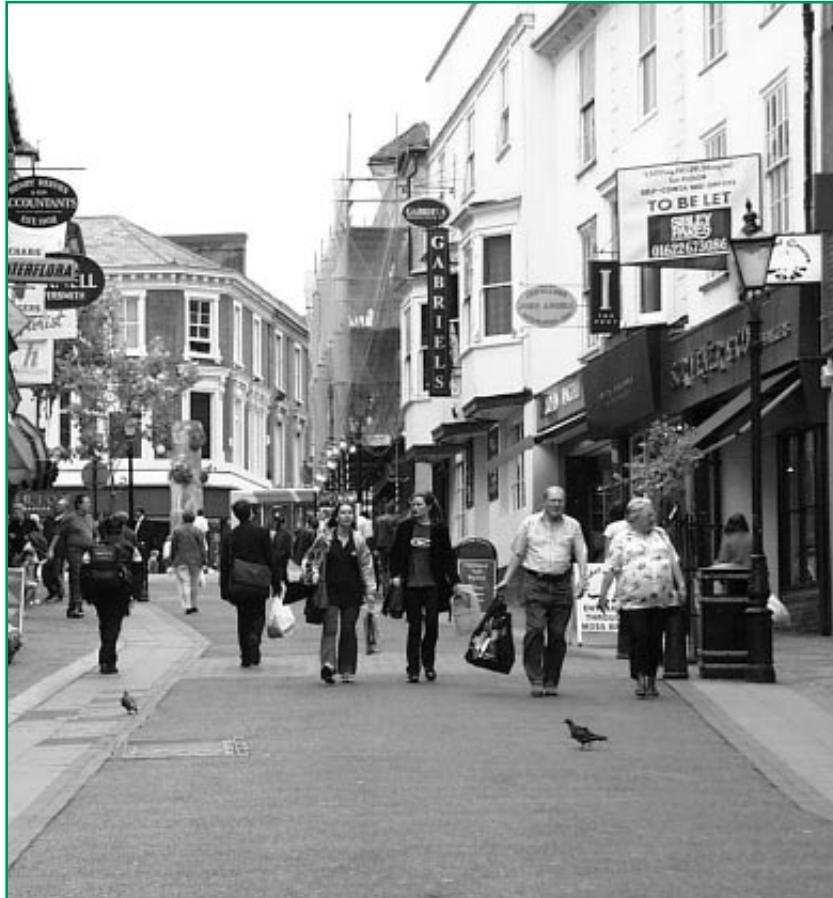
## 3.7 Kent is close to the rest of Europe and has a large number of visitors.

Kent is a key location for travelling to, or from, the rest of Europe. It has a major passenger port at Dover, as well as Eurotunnel at Folkestone, which serve both as tourist and business links to

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Europe. Similarly, Ashford is a terminal for high speed trains linking London to Paris and Brussels. Canterbury has been named the city of Europe and has a very large number of visiting tourists. Many towns have strong tourist trades and links with Europe and could benefit from developing sustainable tourism and the promotion of walking. Kent's attractive countryside is a major reason for tourism and is where sustainable tourism, such as walking, could also be fostered.

The County Council has already taken steps to promote walking and sustainable tourism. These include the promotion of recreational walking and walking tourism in the south east of England through the South East Walks Partnership. Interreg bids through European funding and projects will allow Kent to expand its current network of cycle routes. Kent County Council is also keen to explore the impact and effects of all types of activities on the countryside.



*Many towns have strong links with Europe and could benefit from the promotion of walking*

# Objective 1

Reduce the vulnerability of pedestrians and promote their safety and security.

With the increased use of cars there has been a decline in the number of people walking. Fewer people on the streets can increase the anxiety of those left walking, making them concerned about personal security.

A huge amount of publicity is given to street crimes involving women and elderly people. This has made these particular groups of society especially fearful of walking in the urban environment.

## ACTION 1a

KCC will develop and implement local engineering schemes to reduce road casualties.

### Action:

For the last decade, the County Council in liaison with the emergency services has targeted resources to reduce patterns of road casualties through localised engineering works, spending some £1.5m to £2m per year on casualty reduction measures. These schemes include the use of speed cameras, road humps, gateway features, traffic islands, mini roundabouts, and many other devices. Most projects have a high rate of return and resources are targeted following the careful assessment of their effectiveness. Many casualty reduction measures benefit pedestrians, such as traffic islands that assist pedestrians crossing. Other techniques, including speed cameras and traffic calming, reduce vehicle speeds and hence improve pedestrian safety. Effective traffic calming measures can reduce pedestrian casualties by up to 80%.



An example of a mini-roundabout in Sarre

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## Current Situation:

In Kent there were 834 personal injury crashes recorded in 1998 involving pedestrians resulting in 18 deaths and 185 serious injuries.

## Monitoring:

The impact of casualty reduction measures will be monitored in terms of the numbers of injuries at treated sites, three years before and after implementation.

### ACTION 1b

KCC will improve driver and child pedestrian skills to reduce casualties by providing pedestrian training in schools and driver improvement courses.

Pedestrian skills do not occur naturally, they need to be learnt. Helping to train children can make their pedestrian journeys safer by raising awareness and improving skills. The largest rate of pedestrian casualties recorded in 1997 is in the 10 to 15 year old age group. In Kent there were 334 child pedestrian casualties in 1998, representing 40% of pedestrian injuries. Better child pedestrian skills help foster independent living and encourage more walking journeys and fewer short distance car journeys.

The 1997 Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution report "Transport & the Environment - Developments since 1994", page 60, stated:

"Road traffic accidents are the leading cause of death in 5 to 15 year olds. The danger is more than 50 times greater than the risk of being killed by a stranger."

Advanced training for drivers and training for drivers involved in driving offences or incidents helps improve their skills and hence reduces crashes.

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## Action:

The County Council is introducing pedestrian training into trial schools. Parent helpers will deliver much of the training. The training is to be made available to all schools who wish to participate, and may be offered in conjunction with Safer Routes to School initiatives.

The County Council runs advanced driving courses for drivers of its vehicles. It participates in the rehabilitation of drink drivers, organised by the Probation Service, and the National Driver Improvement Scheme, organised with the Police and Medway Council.

## Monitoring:

Monitoring of similar interventions elsewhere has indicated that they reduce hazardous child pedestrian behaviour. The Kent projects will be monitored to establish their effectiveness.

### ACTION 1c

KCC will work with the Police, District Councils and other partners to reduce the fear of walking along public streets including to or from public transport facilities.

The issues of road safety and personal security are closely linked. Many people do not feel safe walking, or will not let their children do so, because of fears about 'stranger danger'. In a recent survey by Crime Concern and Social Research Associates 54% of women said that they worried about being mugged or robbed when walking alone after dark. There are also cultural barriers relating to the lack of walking participation, including the perceived view that public transport is unreliable and unpleasant. Consequently a lot of children are driven to school, often alone, adding to the level of traffic, the perception of increased road danger, congestion and pollution. More car journeys may mean less pedestrian activity and quieter, less populated paths and footways, increasing the perception of isolation.

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This may result in the need to improve areas of highway, where funding allows, to provide pedestrian routes which are open and within public view, whilst maintaining an appropriate level of street lighting, and ensuring that bus stops are located at focal points to reduce pedestrian fear.

## **Current Situation:**

Concerns about the danger of attack have featured prominently in the public's responses to local strategies produced under the Crime and Disorder Act. This is the most prevalent reason given for using cars by parents who drive their children to school.

## **Action:**

- 1) The County Council will work with Kent Police and District Councils to implement local crime reduction strategies through its role as the local highway authority. The County Council is one of a number of public bodies responsible for local crime reduction strategies. This includes the County Council's Education and Social Services Departments as well as the Police and local District Councils.
  
- 2) The County Council will work in partnership with train and bus operators to improve security in vehicles and at public transport stops.

## **Monitoring:**

Monitoring will be incorporated within the Crime and Disorder Act strategies.

## **Overall Outcome:**

The strategy aims to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries to pedestrians per unit mile travelled by one fifth by 2005 compared to the annual average for 1994 - 1998. It also aims to reduce the number of slight injuries to pedestrians per unit mile travelled by 5% by 2005 compared to the annual average for 1994 - 1998.

The aim is also to improve people's confidence in walking Kent's streets and using public transport.

## Objective 2

To promote walking as a safer mode of transport to school.

Between the mid 1970's and early 1990's the proportion of 5-10 year olds being driven to school grew from 16 to 28%. As more children are being driven to school, fewer pupils are cycling and walking. This could have a dramatic effect on the development of their road safety awareness, as they are not learning how to deal with motor traffic. This is something which needs to be addressed as a priority to prevent further car dependence and to make safer drivers for the future. It is easier to influence the young than adults. For example, some 62% of 5-10 year olds still walk to school and can be encouraged to do so safely through education.

Road safety education is a necessity if children are to be encouraged to walk to school. Travelling to school often involves trips without adult supervision across busy highways at peak times. Walking is an integral part of school journeys that use public transport and so developing pedestrian skills is not solely relevant to the journeys of pupils living close to schools.

Many schoolchildren are keen to cycle or walk to school but are often afraid to because of the dangers and high levels of traffic on busy urban routes. The government has just launched the National Healthy School Standard to promote health within schools. Safety is one of the criteria that schools will have to address. Staff and pupils will be encouraged to consider cycling and walking to and from school and provide training in safety and security. Measures, such as school crossing patrols and pedestrian crossings can encourage more walking to school.

### ACTION 2a

KCC will develop Safer Routes to School initiatives, assist in establishing Walking Buses and work with schools on Travel Plans.

The term "Safe Routes to Schools" was developed by Sustrans, an engineering charity organisation to help schoolchildren walk and

cycle to school independently in an aim to reduce car dependency. A pilot project, involving ten schools, has successfully developed initiatives to encourage local schoolchildren to alter their mode of travel to school, whilst improving their road safety skills. As a result of this success the Government has identified that Safer Routes to Schools should be developed to improve travel choice and personal safety.

Safer Routes to School and School Travel Plans are a key theme of the Kent Road Safety Plan. Road Safety Officers are working with local schools to assess the level of road safety knowledge to assist the development of initiatives. This may also include adapting highway facilities to an improved standard for use. The County Council is including a school travel strategy within its Local Transport Plan.

### **Current Situation:**

The proportion of children travelling to school, mainly unsupervised, has fallen dramatically. This may be partly due to such factors as parents having more choice as to where their children can be educated and they may not live within walking distance of their school. Those who do live close by can still be encouraged to walk to school.

### **Action:**

- 1) Pilot Safer Routes to School initiatives and progress the schemes already commenced in the County.
- 2) The opportunity to participate in Safer Routes to School initiatives will be offered to all schools in Kent by 2005. The pilot Safer Routes to School projects will form the basis of a county-wide initiative offered to all schools.
- 3) The County Council will offer advice and assistance in setting up escorted journeys to school ('Walking Bus' style operations).

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- 4) The County Council will request that all LEA schools produce travel plans and will take them into account in development planning decisions.

## Monitoring:

Monitoring of progress will be on the basis of:

- the number of Safer Routes to School initiatives in progress,
- the level of uptake from schools participating,
- the number of 'Walking Bus' style initiatives,
- shifts in mode of travel at schools where Safer Routes to School initiatives have been introduced,
- child casualties in road traffic crashes.



An example of a 'Walking Bus'

**ACTION 2b**

KCC will seek to reduce vehicle speeds, especially near schools, by introducing some 20 mph speed limits or zones and piloting a Home Zone.

The County Council can introduce speed zones and limits of 20mph, where they are likely to be generally observed. Compliance with speed limits can be encouraged through enforcement, driver education and the introduction of traffic calming measures. The latter are often expensive. Proposals to allow the introduction of lower speed limits of around 10 mph in 'Home Zones' have been suggested, but the legal prerequisites are not yet in place.

**Current Situation:**

At least twelve 20mph zones have been introduced on public roads in Kent and many more are planned. However, sample surveys indicate that in the absence of congestion, the majority of motorists break the speed limit on most main roads. This can contribute to pedestrians fear of walking near a highway.

**Action:**

- 1) 20mph zones will be introduced on lesser roads near schools, where the Police support them or where appropriate traffic calming can be implemented. Temporary 20mph limits outside schools may be introduced without traffic calming and their effects monitored prior to a decision being made on making them permanent.
- 2) The County Council will trial a 'Home Zone' in Kent to help establish an environment sympathetic to pedestrians,

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including children. Nine Home Zone sites were piloted throughout the country in September 1998.

## Monitoring:

Monitoring of progress will be on the basis of:

- the number of 20mph zones and limits and other slow speed zones implemented.
- traffic speeds and personal injury crashes before and after the implementation of the zones.

## Overall Outcome:

In five years time (2005), Safer Routes to School initiatives will have been developed for approximately 100 of Kent's schools. The proportion of children walking to school will be monitored against an objective of increasing it from the current 10% to a target of 15% for 7 to 8 year olds at participating schools. More school crossing patrols and escorted journeys in towns and villages will assist in achieving this target. Speed limits of less than 30mph will be commonplace in built-up areas.



*Local school children designed the road signs for the 20mph zone in Swanscombe.*

## Objective 3

To reduce peak period and short distance car journeys, so as to reduce congestion and pollution and to promote healthy living.

Work journeys are concentrated at peak periods. A reduction in the number of car borne work journeys can have a major impact on congestion. A reduction of peak period car traffic by 10% would reduce congestion and pollution levels by far more than 10%. Work journeys are the category of trip most associated with congestion, although journeys to school contribute.

Walking to work as an alternative to car travel can be promoted by using various measures including the provision of more pedestrian space, increasing rush hour public transport services, and encouraging companies to provide incentives to walkers.

Implementation of these 'green transport' measures may be easier in large urban areas, where there are large working populations and good public transport links.

### ACTION 3a

KCC will give greater priority to pedestrians in the allocation of street and road space.

Space on streets in towns is often limited. To keep motor traffic flowing or to allow buses to have priority or to provide facilities for cyclists, the space available for pedestrians has been squeezed in places. Both walking along and crossing many roads is difficult.

This may require improvements to existing facilities, where funding allows, including the provision of appropriate tactile paving, flush dropped kerbs at uncontrolled crossing points and other general improvements to the footway condition to ensure that access is maintained for all users.

#### Action:

- 1) New pedestrian crossings will be Zebra crossings (which allow pedestrians to cross almost immediately after arrival and can be used by school crossing patrols, unlike

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signalised crossings), except where the highest speeds exceed 35mph, where sites are within signal controlled areas, where pedestrian flows would delay traffic substantially or where visibility is limited. In these cases, signal controlled crossings (Pelicans, Puffins and Toucans) will be installed.

- 2) New sets of traffic lights will usually include a pedestrian phase or phases with facilities for the disabled.
- 3) Engineering to make walking more pleasant, increase the safety of pedestrians and make the journey direct, will be carried out, including work to reduce traffic speeds and increase the visibility of pedestrians.
- 4) Pedestrian priority on arrival will be considered for all new pedestrian crossings and existing facilities that are renewed.
- 5) New pavements will be given priority for funding based on how much they would reduce hazards for pedestrians.
- 6) Unsegregated pedestrian and cycle facilities will not be installed on existing pavements if pedestrian flows exceed 500 per day. The County Council will monitor those where flows are lower than 500 per day.

## Monitoring:

Progress will be monitored on the basis of:

- ❶ the number of pedestrian crossings and pavements installed,
- ❷ the number of people using new pedestrian crossings and pavements,
- ❸ the time saved by users of pedestrian crossings.

**ACTION 3b**

KCC will develop key pedestrian routes in towns and pedestrian priority in town centres.

Most of Kent's major towns have pedestrianised or pedestrian priority areas in their centres. However, major flows of motor traffic share the same streets as pedestrians at the edge of many pedestrianised areas. Walking between some town centres and adjacent residential areas is made difficult in many cases by indirect pedestrian routes.

**Current situation:**

A few of the major town centres in Kent, including Tonbridge, Broadstairs, Sevenoaks and Whitstable, contain only very limited pedestrian priority or pedestrianised streets. In other town centres substantial shopping streets also carry large volumes of traffic. District local plans identify where future pedestrian priority is projected. A number of local plans also identify key urban walking routes.

**Action:**

- 1) The County Council will, in conjunction with District Councils, complete the identification of key urban walking routes by the end of 2001.
- 2) Pedestrian priority will be extended where identified in local plans.
- 3) The County Council will examine the feasibility of introducing speed limits lower than 30mph for all vehicles (such as service vehicles) using pedestrianised zones.
- 4) The County Council will prioritise and seek to implement

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20mph zones and limits on non-principal roads within or adjacent to town centres, where there is a compelling safety and amenity case to do so.

## Monitoring:

Progress will be monitored on the basis of:

- ❶ numbers of pedestrian priority and 20mph schemes implemented and their effects on pedestrian volumes, traffic speeds and road casualties,
- ❷ the levels of use of key urban walking routes.



*A typical example of a segregated cycleway/footway linking public transport and local amenities.*

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## ACTION 3c

KCC will develop its own travel plan and develop travel plans for key employment areas.

Businesses and organisations can more effectively manage and reduce their environmental impact through the implementation of a travel plan. The plan comprises a strategy and a set of initiatives which generally focus upon providing good quality alternatives to a journey by car. For some journeys walking is, or can be made, an attractive alternative. Major companies in Kent such as Bluewater and Pfizer have introduced travel plans and many others are now following suit, including schools. The plans can allow land to be used more efficiently, enable more intensive development and contribute to environmental objectives.

The scope for encouraging people to walk to work will vary widely depending on the workplace location and the type of site. Staff may express concerns about road and personal safety, which need to be addressed as far as possible. Measures could be included within the organisation's physical activity strategy, to encourage employees to take exercise and reduce stress.

Key components of travel plans to encourage walking may include:

- ❶ Working with the local District Councils to ensure that routes from bus stops or rail stations are pedestrian friendly. This will involve the assessment of lighting, traffic levels and footway conditions. The local authority, police community safety officers and staff themselves will all be able to contribute ideas and expertise for improvements in this area.
- ❷ Making sure that walkways within the site are direct, well lit, well signed and do not force pedestrians to cross busy or congested areas of the site.

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- 为人 Providing staff with advice and recommended safer routes to and from work.
- 为人 Providing facilities so that staff need not feel untidy when they arrive at work. This might include places to change shoes, coat and umbrella stands, and places to dry hair or hang spare clothes.
- 为人 Encouraging staff to travel together.

Thorough and effective consultation with, and involvement of, employees are needed for travel plans to be successful.

## **Current Situation:**

Company travel plans have been implemented at some major employment and educational sites in Kent. They are also being encouraged in the planning stages of new developments.

## **Action:**

- 1) The County Council will lead by example, through the continuing phased implementation of travel plans for the principal County Council sites.
- 2) The County Council will promote the take up of company travel plans by liaising with local employers' groups across Kent.
- 3) The County Council will support the delivery of travel plans by integrating them with complementary investment programmes for public transport, cycle and pedestrian infrastructure wherever possible and monitor their progress.
- 4) The County Council will advise on planning conditions through the development control process.

## **Monitoring:**

Progress will be monitored on the basis of:

- 为人 the number and extent of travel plans introduced,
- 为人 modal shift related to sites where travel plans have been implemented.

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## Overall Outcome:

The County Council aims to reduce car commuting associated with its sites by 30% between 1999 and 2004. It also aims to reduce the pollution emitted by its employees commuting to work and on its business by a further 20% by this date. A similar contribution from other major employees is sought. Major pedestrian routes in towns will have been made more direct and pedestrian domination of town centres will spread. An increase in walking journeys on major urban routes is sought.



*Many commuters now regularly use public transport offered by the Park & Ride schemes*

## Objective 4

### To ensure developments are 'pedestrian friendly'

The new stock of homes and businesses can make a big contribution either towards making congestion and pollution worse or towards more sustainable transport patterns. The location and design of these developments are both critical. Developments need to be accessible for all sections of the population that use them.

#### ACTION 4a

KCC will encourage the location of new developments to maximise pedestrian volumes and implement concentric tests\*

\* Concentric tests are when developments are not generally permitted when they could be built on alternative sites closer to town centres.

The location of land for development in the near future has been outlined in the District and Borough Council Local Plans across Kent. The new Kent Structure Plan will set principles for the location of developments. Recent national and regional planning guidance has emphasised the importance of brownfield development and focusing development in or near town centres and other places accessible by a range of transport modes.

#### Current situation:

A considerable amount of housing development is at the edge of towns. Although bus services have connected these developments to town centres and in many cases good pedestrian facilities have been built, distances to local services are sufficiently long to predispose most residents to use their cars rather than walk. Many retail developments have been at the edge of or outside towns, although national planning guidance introduced in the early 1990s strongly prefers town centre developments.

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## Action:

- 1) The County Council will implement concentric tests for new developments as recommended in national planning guidance within its development planning decisions.
- 2) The location of intensive developments near to other major development, within town centres or close to major public transport facilities, will be encouraged.
- 3) Mixed-use development will be encouraged.

## Monitoring:

These actions will be monitored on the basis of:

- the proportion of development on brownfield sites,
- the amount of mixed use development,
- the modal split of traffic related to key developments.

### ACTION 4b:

KCC will incorporate the needs of pedestrians in the design of new developments.

The Kent Design Initiative has re-examined guidelines for layouts of new housing and other developments. Some current practice leads to motorists being the dominant users of the street environment and to a lot of land being used for estate roads. A new set of Kent Design guidelines has been issued. Kent Design plays an important role in influencing development and encourages walking.

### Current situation:

Concerns about child safety and personal security affect the volume of walking in and to new developments. Some layouts of estate roads and car parks discourage pedestrians.

### Action:

- 1) Kent Design includes guidelines about giving greater priority to pedestrians, along with cyclists, within housing developments to provide key routes to and from key locations.
- 2) Kent Design includes principles about pedestrian and vehicle interactions within commercial developments.
- 3) The pedestrian-accessibility of a development will be considered when the County Council, as local highway authority, comments on planning applications, including those made by the County.
- 4) The convenience, directness, attractiveness and safety of pedestrian routes will be considered in the safety audit and technical appraisal process associated with road layouts in planning applications.

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## Monitoring:

These actions will be monitored on the basis of:

- when guidelines and principles are put into effect,
- the modal split of traffic related to key developments.

### ACTION 4c

KCC will ensure that new highway developments are accessible to all and increase the proportion of pedestrian crossings accessible to people with mobility impairment.

The 1995 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) suggests that routes within, or to, new developments need to be accessible to all members of the public, unless to do so would make it impossible or impractical to provide them at all. Accessibility includes designing and building for the needs of people with mobility impairment: e.g. elderly, ambulant disabled, wheelchair users or able-bodied people with heavy loads. Accessibility includes getting to facilities like public transport.

## Current situation:

Many routes are impassable to wheelchair users or do not include tactile paving needed for people with limited sight. A code of practice 'Highways Suitable for the Mobility Impaired' has been published by the County Council outlining key features on streets that should be provided to enable accessibility for all.

### Action:

- 1) The code of practice 'Highways Suitable for the Mobility Impaired' will be implemented through the safety audit and technical appraisal of all proposed substantial highway alterations, including new roads, alterations to layouts and major maintenance, where funding allows.
- 2) 75% of formal pedestrian crossings will be equipped to be accessible to people with mobility impairment within the next 4 years. New crossings will be built to be accessible.

### Monitoring:

These actions will be monitored on the basis of:

- percentage of pedestrian crossings accessible to people with mobility impairment,
- perceptions of mobility impaired people as highway users.

### Overall Outcome:

Progress towards the objective of ensuring developments are 'pedestrian friendly' should lead to 80% of new housing being built on brownfield sites. Most pedestrian crossings will be suitable for people with mobility impairment. Within new developments there will be safe and secure pedestrian routes which, where necessary, will have priority over other traffic. There will be convenient pedestrian links between developments and other housing and businesses nearby.

## Objective 5

To encourage walking as part of an integrated transport policy.

Walking is an integral component of virtually all journeys involving public transport. Poor walking access to railway stations and bus stops deters people from using public transport. The Bus Strategy forms a statutory part of the County Council's Local Transport Plan bid for Government funding support for transport initiatives.

### ACTION 5a

KCC will improve the pedestrian environment and accessibility of public transport interchanges.

To provide an attractive alternative to the car, public transport must operate as a complete network. Good walking links are essential to effective public transport. Some major public transport interchanges have unattractive or difficult connections for pedestrians. Town centre bus stations or rail stations may be positioned away from where passengers would like to go. Relatively low cost improvements can be achieved. For example, West Malling and Tonbridge rail stations act as important bus/rail interchange points.

Regular bus services are provided to take passengers to destinations, which may not be covered by train, and are timetabled to coincide with connecting rail services.

#### Current Situation:

There is some co-ordination between the location of rail stations and bus stops. Links between rail stations and major passenger attractions have developed over a long period of time. Their quality in terms of their directness and condition is variable. The location of some bus stations and interchanges is also largely historical.

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## Action:

- 1) Where it is practical and the routes form part of the public highway, the County Council will make key routes between public transport terminals and main passenger attractions accessible to people with mobility impairment.
- 2) Where the routes are public highway, the County Council will aim to improve the quality and directness of key walking routes between public transport termini and main passenger attractors.

## Monitoring:

Progress will be monitored on the basis of the number of routes improved.



*Canterbury bus station is in easy walking distance of both local rail stations.*

**ACTION 5b**

KCC will improve the on-street environment of bus passengers.

The County Council has recently produced 'Highway Design for Buses'. The document provides guidance for the construction of bus stops, shelters and bus boarders. It also provides information about bus priority measures, integrating buses with traffic calming schemes and the 'Kent Bus Priority System'. District and Borough Councils, with the County Council, have been fulfilling their role by securing the provision of bus shelters for public transport users.

**Current Situation:**

The County Council has contributed towards upgrading bus shelters in most of Kent's urban areas. Bus boarders have been installed on routes in Kent Thames-side and Folkestone, to improve accessibility to services. The quality of timetable information available to passengers at stops is variable. Quality partnerships are being developed with operators in Kent's main towns.

**Action:**

- 1) Alterations to roads will be designed in accordance with the guidelines contained in 'Highway Design for Buses'.
- 2) The County Council will continue its programme of upgrading bus shelters, and providing bus boarders to enable easy access to low floor buses, in partnership with operators and sponsors.
- 3) Real time bus passenger information will be introduced on busy routes in some major towns.

### Monitoring:

Progress will be monitored on the basis of the contributions of the measures to quality partnerships with operators. Numbers of bus shelters upgraded and numbers of stops with real time passenger information will be monitored. Subject to commercial confidentiality, effects on usage will be assessed.

### Overall Outcome:

By providing funding to services that are not economically viable the current level of public transport service can be maintained or improved. However, if new developer schemes, implemented through the Kent Design Initiative, can be persuaded to make provision for buses an improved level of service can be achieved. This should be developed with links to other forms of transport to maintain sustainability. Safety can be enhanced with the construction of bus boarders, bus stops, traffic calming designed with buses in mind, and better access to such services by improved pedestrian facilities. Progression towards an efficient level of service made more appealing to the public will therefore be the outcome.

## Objective 6

### To promote the benefits of walking

Walking in the urban environment has a low profile in data collection and transport planning fields. Promoting the benefits, such as improved health, and presenting positive images of walking can encourage more people to walk. The Government has included the promotion of walking in its national campaign 'Are you doing your bit?'

#### ACTION 6a

KCC will seek to increase the profile of walking.

The County Council carries out large numbers of counts of vehicles, but gathers little information about pedestrian movements. Walking is seen by some as unpleasant, slow and to be avoided if at all possible.

Walking can be promoted as a healthy form of exercise, and is often described as one of the best forms of aerobic exercise possible.

#### Current Situation:

The lack of data prevents realistic targets being set for walking levels. The Road Traffic Reduction Act (DETR, 1998) obliges local authorities to monitor traffic of all types and to plan to reduce levels or the growth of motor traffic in all or parts of their areas.

#### Action:

- 1) Traffic monitoring programmes from 1999 onwards will include the collection of information on walking levels in parts of Kent.
- 2) Targeted publicity, including in schools, will be developed to promote the health benefits of walking and the opportunities to make many journeys on foot.

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- 3) Road safety publicity will, in some cases, include issues related to pedestrian casualties.
- 4) The County Council will consider prioritising the needs of road users within transport packages for urban areas, with pedestrians being given a higher priority in the allocation of road space than other road users.
- 5) The promotion of "Health Walking Schemes" in conjunction with Health Authorities and voluntary groups will be encouraged. Health walks principally aim to improve the health gain of the community by encouraging them to progress from a sedentary lifestyle to moderate intensity walking, from which outcomes can be measured.

## Monitoring:

Progress will be monitored on the basis of the amount of information collected and publicity delivered. Monitoring of attitudes towards walking may also be undertaken.

## Overall Outcome:

The benefits of walking, including its health benefits and role in reducing congestion and pollution, will be better recognised amongst the general population in Kent in five years time. Trends in levels of walking will be monitored and the needs of pedestrians and walkers will be considered in all significant urban and rural transport planning decisions.



*North Downs Way is a popular recreational walk known for its beautiful scenery.*

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## Objective 7

### To develop recreational walking

Recreational walking takes place in both rural and urban areas.

Recreational walking is in itself a sustainable form of leisure, but some people drive to the start or ends of their walks.

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are very important when considering recreational walking as they provide legal routes which allow the public to access the countryside. Within Kent, the public rights of way network extends to a length of some 4,200 miles, which is more than any other English county.

The County Council's strategic statement includes a target (Target 10) to extend opportunities for walking, cycling, riding and recreation. Walking in the countryside accounts for 30% of all visits to the countryside and is increasing in popularity. For example, the 1996 UK Day Visits Survey has calculated that there are some 1.3 billion day visits to the countryside per year amounting to a national expenditure of £7 billion. There are, therefore, direct economic benefits from extending countryside recreational opportunities and having a well maintained, managed and publicised PRoW network. This provides an economic incentive to every County Council to maintain a suitable PRoW network throughout the countryside.

#### ACTION 7a

KCC will continue to improve the signing of all public rights of way.



*Walking in the countryside is increasing in popularity*

The PRoW Strategy (1994) includes a number of actions to define, map and maintain the network. The County Council is seeking an unobstructed network, properly maintained and effectively managed, which provides opportunities for recreation and utility use.

### **Current Situation:**

The County Council has a continuing programme of signposting and waymarking of its definitive PRoW network in both urban and rural areas. There are 14,800 PRoW 'ends' (where a PRoW requires a signpost) in Kent. 72% of the network is completed, leaving an estimated 4100 remaining to be done.

### **Action:**

To continue the programme of signposting and waymarking to ensure that the network is adequately signed to assist walkers unfamiliar with the locality.

### **Monitoring:**

Progress is being monitored annually in respect of the Public Rights of Way Milestones Statement.

### **ACTION 7b**

KCC will develop walking-based tourism.

The County Council's access and recreation policies promote responsible use of the PRoW network. The policies aim to encourage people to explore the countryside on foot using Kent's vast PRoW network in an aim to promote green tourism, including cycling, public transport and walking.

The County Council is developing a Sustainable Tourism Strategy to promote walking tourism. Walking tourism is a low cost, high value tourism platform that can be applied across the whole country. The County Council is committed to a partnership venture to promote recreational walking and walking tourism through the South East Walks Partnership. Partners include Surrey County Council, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and the Countryside Agency. Information is available in tourist information offices throughout Kent along with a comprehensive selection of bus timetables to encourage the use of public transport to and from walks.

#### Action:

The County Council will market walking-based tourism in Kent. Where appropriate this will be carried out in partnership with other organisations.

#### Monitoring:

Progress will be monitored on the basis of the level of walking-based tourism and the coverage of marketing. Progress will also be monitored through the evaluation of demonstration projects, domestic and foreign enquiries about Kent's walking infrastructure, sales of recreational walking publications, feedback from events such as the 1999 Kent Walking Festival and foreign tourism exhibitions.

#### Overall Outcome:

Over the life of this strategy, Kent's PRoW network will be managed using an appropriate management regime to ensure that it will be accessible to its domestic users and visitors. Walking will continue to be a major type of recreational activity utilising long distance paths and shorter circular routes.

# Policies Relating to the Objectives

## Policy 1

The County Council will encourage walking.

## Policy 2

The County Council will, in appropriate places, seek to improve the amenity of the environment and the safety of pedestrians through building crossings and other facilities.

## Policy 3

Full account will be taken of the needs of pedestrians in the formulation and implementation of urban transport strategies, the rural transport programme and in the planning and design of changes to roads and associated developments.

## Policy 4

The County Council will extend opportunities for walking, cycling, riding and recreation.

(Some road safety policies are also relevant to the strategy)

## Improvement of Public Transport Interchanges

This section includes examples of proposals to improve the accessibility of key public transport interchanges in Kent.

1. Tonbridge rail station has been the subject of a site meeting between County Council Members and Connex/Railtrack officials. Enhancements to the interchange, in line with the recent agreed closer working principles, were discussed. Redevelopment of Tonbridge Station from developer contributions would provide opportunities to improve interchange facilities.
2. Tunbridge Wells Central; High Brooms and Paddock Wood rail stations have recently been the subject of access audits. Modifications have been made by Connex/Railtrack, which have not, and are not expected to, require Council funding. In Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks a project is being developed which will provide bus priority and real-time information but no direct enhancement to interchange facilities.
3. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has proposals to implement a traffic management scheme in Commercial Road, Paddock Wood. This would provide an enhanced public transport interchange at the station and better pedestrian access across Station Road to and from the rail station.
4. As far as interchanges within Maidstone are concerned, the County Council is looking at the possibility of improving the high level linkage between Maidstone East and Maidstone Barracks rail stations.
5. Within Ashford a strategy is being developed which will include measures to encourage people to walk, particularly in the town centre.
6. Greenhithe rail station is due to have improvements, including a lift between the platform and station entrance. Since the development of the nearby Bluewater shopping complex all passing train services now stop at Greenhithe with regular bus services provided to connect passengers to the shops.

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7. Connex South Eastern is also currently undertaking a full station review of all its rail stations in Kent. This could result in a number of improvements including the installation of tactile paving on platforms where not already provided and the construction of lifts in stations where ground floor access is not provided. This is dependent on costs and funding available.



*A typical railway station platform*

# Funding and Priorities

## Local Transport Plan Funding (2000-2005)

Bids for funding some of the facilities in Ashford, Canterbury, Kent Thames-side, Maidstone, Thanet and Tunbridge Wells have been made through packages, within the predecessor of the Local Transport Plan for Kent; the last Transport Policies and Programme submission. Elsewhere, bids for projects were included in developing new packages within the Local Transport Plan for Kent.

Funding for schemes has been allowed by the Government in the form of credit approval, which allows the County Council to borrow money to fund works such as:

- a) Casualty reduction measures (Action 1a) - priorities are set on the basis of the number of casualties saved per unit of expenditure.
- b) On-highway infrastructure associated with crime and disorder (Action 1c).
- c) Infrastructure for Safer Routes to School initiatives (Action 2a) - priorities are set on the basis of casualty reduction, the projected level of modal split and pedestrian volumes.
- d) 20mph zones near schools and other slow speed zones (Action 2b) and (Action 3a) - priorities are set on the basis of casualty reduction, pedestrian perceptions, motor traffic speeds and pedestrian volumes.
- e) Development of key urban walking routes (Action 3b) - priorities are set on the basis of the numbers of pedestrians in areas and the perceived impact of remaining motor vehicles.
- f) On-highway infrastructure associated with company travel plans (Action 3c) - priorities are set on the basis of the role of the infrastructure in the overall plan and the progressed modal shift.
- g) The adaptation of pedestrian crossings to be accessible for the disabled (Action 4c) - priorities are set on the basis of cost effectiveness of work.
- h) Improvement of key routes between public transport terminals and major passenger attractors (Action 5a) - priorities are set on the basis of the importance of the attractors and the volume of pedestrian flows.

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## Monitoring:

Monitoring of specific measures will be based on the criteria used to set priorities and on how they contribute to objectives.

## Developer contributions

Developers would be expected to provide or contribute towards appropriate pedestrian facilities linked to proposed developments to help promote walking as a prime means of access.

# Maintenance and Parking

## Maintenance

The County Council recognises the importance of routine maintenance to provide a safe environment and prevent barriers to walking. Maintenance issues are dealt with in the Maintenance Plan which forms part of the County Council's Local Transport Plan bid for Government funding support for transport initiatives.

## Parking

Pavement parking can be a barrier to safe walking. It needs to be considered within local parking plans and needs to be set in the context of the enforcement of parking contraventions as a whole. Kent has pursued a policy of securing decriminalised parking powers in partnership with District Councils which is leading to better enforcement of waiting restrictions, resulting in safer and less congested environments for pedestrians and motorists.

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