

KCC Permit Scheme Application and Implementation

A report by the Permit Scheme Project Manager to the Highways Advisory Board on 11 November 2008

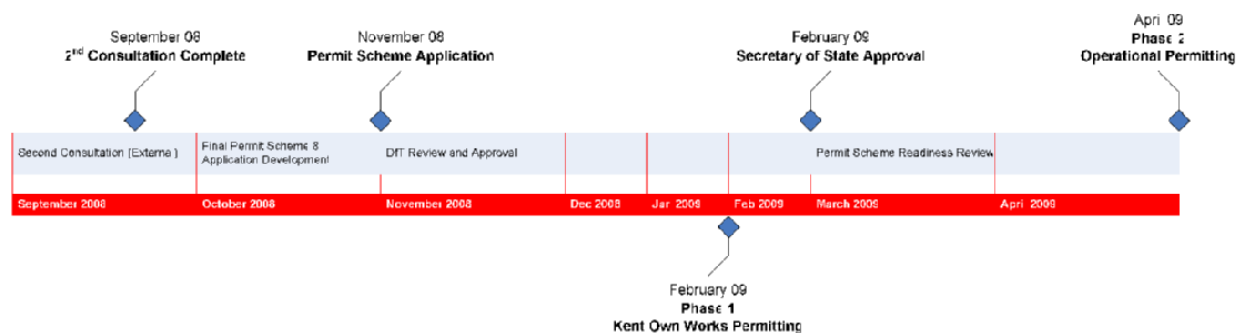
1. Members will recall previous presentations to Highways Advisory Board and this report seeks to update Members on progress in implementing the Permit Scheme.

Current Status

2. The second consultation with external stakeholders concluded on 19 September 2008. In total there were nearly 300 responses from 8 sources. The comments have been reviewed and assessed and the Permit Scheme and application are being developed in consideration to these.
3. To date, the Department for Transport (DfT) have only received one Permit Scheme application. This application is from the London Authorities under a common scheme named the "London Permit Scheme".
4. In discussions with the DfT it has become apparent that they require clear substantiation of any proposed permit scheme, including cost benefit analysis, how objectives will be realised, and detailed operational information. Kent has taken many of the comments from the DfT into consideration and the Permit Scheme application is being developed accordingly.

Implementation Timescales

5. The project is still on track to submit a Permit Scheme application to the Secretary of State (SoS) in early November. The DfT require up to 4 months to review the application, so it is estimated that, if KCC is successful, the legal order to operate the scheme will be received in February 2009. At this point Kent will issue a communication to all works promoters stating the intent to introduce operational permitting from April 2009.



6. Whilst we are waiting for approval by the SoS, KCC will be progressing with developing the resources for operational permitting, including recruiting and training staff, developing systems and engaging with external stakeholders.
7. Initially Kent will be operating permitting within the KHS Alliance for its own work. As there is no associated permit fee to this operation, Kent are not constrained by the SoS Permit Scheme approval to introduce this new way of working. Based on the current project schedule, permitting of KHS' own work should commence in February 2009.

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8. The period between own works permitting (Phase 1) and full Kent operational permitting (Phase 2) will provide an opportunity to review and embed permitting working practices; organisational capability and systems. This will ensure KHS is operationally stable to commence permitting with external works promoters and any initial operational issues are highlighted and resolved. In addition Kent will conduct a *readiness review* with external works promoters to ensure a successful transition into operational permitting is achieved.

Engagement with External Stakeholders

10. An operational permit scheme provides KHS with an increased level of control in relation to disruption within the network, but also represents the introduction of constraints to the works promoters whose primary concern is to maintain their supply of services. KHS currently has a positive relationship with works promoters and the National Joint Utility Group (NJUG). The works promoters acknowledge that KHS intend to apply and run a permit scheme and are in support of the open approach.
11. A communications strategy to maintain and build on the positive relationship with the works promoters is underway. As part of the implementation KHS will be developing working practices with the work promoters and sharing experiences and knowledge from the Phase 1 own works permitting. In addition, the Chair of NJUG is a member of the Project Board.

Objective Realisation

12. The business case and associated application for the Permit Scheme contains very clear strategic objectives to be realised from the implementation of operational permitting:
 - To ensure safety – for those, living or working in the street, including those engaged in activities controlled by the Scheme;
 - To minimise inconvenience and disruption caused by activities to people using the streets;
 - To protect the structure of the street and integrity of apparatus in it.

KHS has produced a detailed benefits matrix, including methods of measurement, to provide analysis and data to justify and validate the implementation and continued operation of a Permit Scheme. The high level method and measurements for realising the objectives are shown in Appendix 1.

Conclusion

13. This report has been produced to provide information in relation to the progress of the Permit Scheme application and associated implementation. No specific decisions are required from the HAB with the exception of feedback or questions.

Appendix 1

