EXECUTIVE DECISION NOTICE

SOUTH LAKELAND DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET

A record of the decisions made at the meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday, 30 June 2004, at 9.30 a.m.

REFERRALS TO COUNCIL

EX/012 KENDAL TRAFFIC SYSTEM

Summary

Members considered a summary of the Review of Kendal Traffic System which had been undertaken by the Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A scoping exercise had been undertaken and the following aims established:-

- to ensure that the right decisions had been made in altering the phasing of the scheme; and
- to seek to influence the implementation of phasing if/where appropriate.

Members of the Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee had raised a number of concerns, including:

- the economic impact for the town of pedestrianisation of Stricklandgate being introduced before suitable measures had been put in place for improving traffic flow;
- financial implications for South Lakeland District Council in respect of car parking provision; and
- perceived lack of public consultation.

A briefing paper and set of questions had been sent out to witnesses and consultees who had been invited to provide either written comments or to attend a meeting of the Committee to give their perspective on the issue. Evidence had been gathered from a number of documents and witnesses had been interviewed.

The Transport and Development Portfolio Holder raised the issue of Park and Ride Schemes which it was felt may help to alleviate problems in the area. The County Council had suggested that a group be established to look into appropriate schemes. He sought to appoint a Member to work with himself and the Assistant Director (Administration).

A lengthy discussion ensued.

Decision

RESOLVED – That

(1) the revised phasing of the proposed Kendal Traffic System be supported in principle, but that Cumbria County Council and South Lakeland District Council be requested to consider the following:-
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(a) that Cumbria County Council:-

(i) provides a dedicated “senior project manager” to co-ordinate the scheme for the benefit of all parties;

(ii) encourages more transparent co-operation between groups to enable joint working on initiatives;

(iii) provides better publicity to inform and respond to local residents about what is happening and seeks the views of the public, including the ability to e-mail comments to the Cumbria County Council; and

(iv) provides clear reporting on progress of the scheme to ensure developments are being carried out effectively;

(b) that the term pedestrianisation or pedestrian zone be referred to as a “pedestrian priority zone” for clarification and to avoid misconceptions by traders and members of the public as vehicles will still enter the pedestrianised area;

(c) that the County Council will provide up-to-date vehicle counts, provide revised forecasts/modelling and continued monitoring, on appropriate routes to ensure that proposals are still able to cope with traffic flows and to allow independent scrutiny and inform decision-making at the outset;

(d) that the County Council keeps the Police better informed of /seeks their views on:-

(i) proposed traffic flows to enable them to advise on potential accident hot spots, e.g. where different traffic zones merge, the phasing of traffic lights, and the implications for emergency vehicles; and

(ii) areas where increased pedestrian traffic flows are anticipated, e.g. Allhallows Lane and Lowther Street Junction, Highgate, and Stricklandgate;

(e) in terms of improving communication about proposals, the County Council:-

(i) ensures that disabled drivers and shop mobility groups are consulted, informed about decisions and adequately provided for;

(ii) continues dialogue with Stagecoach North West to ensure that a viable and efficient bus service is provided for the town;

(iii) invites the Civic Society to provide an advisory role on the street scene/landscaping elements; and

(iv) is strongly recommended to re-establish the Kendal Traffic Steering Group, or the provision of a consultative forum co-ordinated by the “senior project manager”, to provide a voice for various
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groups (taxis, road hauliers, disability groups, trade representatives and others);

(f) the County Council clarifies how the findings of the Rural Innovations Report are being addressed, and provides reassurance that they will continue to seek finance to complete the original plan;

(g) the County Council revisits the plans in the original traffic scheme for a distribution centre as a possible solution to delivery problems in the centre of Kendal; and

(h) that South Lakeland District Council:-

(i) considers Capital Bids for approved Park and Ride Schemes (subject to the normal financial controls);

(ii) raises awareness among SLDC vehicle drivers to minimise unnecessary obstructions along the main street;

(iii) reviews its enforcement procedures to assist those delivery vehicles trying to make essential/bulky deliveries to domestic properties off the high street;

(iv) consideration be given, as a matter of urgency, to proposals originally outlined in the Kendal Traffic Plan for a distribution centre to alleviate delivery problems in the town centre;

(v) where works have an impact on SLDC budgets (e.g. car park provision/enhancements) that there is regular dialogue with Cumbria County Council to ensure that tendering processes are integrated; and

(vi) the travel-to-work plan be promoted more widely throughout the District; and

(i) the SLDC Transport and Development Portfolio Holder provides a progress report to the Committee in six months’ time; and

(2) Councillor Paul Braithwaite be appointed to work with the Transport and Development Portfolio Holder and Assistant Director (Administration) to investigate Park and Ride schemes.

Reasons for Decision

The review contributes to the Community Plan in supporting a more sustainable approach to transport, in identifying strategic park and ride sites, better management of parking provision in towns and providing safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

To take no action and to allow the proposed revised phasing of Kendal Traffic System to proceed without the benefit of suggestions put forward by consultees.
DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the proceedings at a meeting of the Committee held in the Georgian Room, Kendal Town Hall, Kendal, on Monday, 10 May 2004, at 10.00 a.m.

Present

Councillors

Jennifer Borer (Chairman)
Simon Butterfield
Joss Curwen
Anne Hall
Janette Jenkinson
Sonia Lawson
Richard Rollins
Noel Spendlove
Peter Thornton

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jean Ewing, Heather Gardner, Gordon Jenkinson, Howard Martin, Paul Little and Tony Rothwell.

Officers

Georgina Livingstone
Chris Woods
For Policy Manager
for Committee Manager

1062 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

RESOLVED – That it be noted that Councillors Jennifer Borer (Chairman), Simon Butterfield and Peter Thornton declared an interest in Minute No. 1064.

1063 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 – EXCLUDED ITEMS

RESOLVED – That it be noted that there are no items in Part II of the Agenda.

Note – Councillor Jennifer Borer (Chairman) and Simon Butterfield declared a personal interest in this item of business by virtue of being disabled drivers. Councillor Peter Thornton also declared a personal interest in this item of business by virtue of being a shopkeeper in the centre of Kendal.

1064 REVIEW OF KENDAL TRAFFIC SYSTEM

The Committee considered a brief summary which related to the background of the review. Members were advised that the summary had been based on the Kendal Traffic Package bid which had been made some years ago and, although the County Council had provided updated information, this had been received after the agenda papers had been issued. As a consequence, supplementary papers, including plans, had been issued to the Committee.

RESOLVED – That the summary be noted.

1065 INTERVIEWS

The Committee interviewed a number of witnesses as follows as part of the review process:-

Councillor Bob Barker (SLDC Transportation Portfolio Holder);
County Councillor Jim Bland (Representative of the Local Area Committee);
Mike Brough (Kendal Civic Society);
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Peter Boyd (Chair of Kendal Retail Forum); and George Inchmore (Chair of Federation of Small Businesses).

1066 ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The Committee adjourned for lunch at 1.40 p.m. and reconvened at 2.10 p.m., when the same Members were present, with the addition of Councillor Jean Ewing.

1067 INTERVIEWS (CONTINUED)

The Committee continued with the interview of the following witnesses:-

Roger Mallet (Traffic Management Officer (South Cumbria) Cumbria Constabulary); Alan James (Consultant, former Transport Efficiency Best Practice Programme); and County Councillor David Clarke (Cumbria County Council) (Chair, former Kendal Traffic Steering Group).

Note – a synopsis of the witness statements are attached to the minutes.

RESOLVED – That the witness statements be noted.

The meeting ended at 5.00 p.m.
The following is a synopsis of the witness statements given to the Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 10 May 2004.

**Councillor Bob Barker (South Lakeland District Council – Transportation Portfolio Holder) and County Councillor Jim Bland (Representative of the Local Area Committee)**

Councillor Barker stated that, in his view, there was no complete solution to Kendal’s traffic system as it was a Victorian town coping with twenty-first century traffic. Therefore ‘perfection’ was not possible – only a part solution could be achieved.

He advised that there had originally been four phases to the scheme. Phase 1 had been completed. Phases 2 and 3 had mainly consisted of widening Miller Bridge and two-way traffic on Aynam Road. Phase 4 had been the pedestrianisation scheme. As a consequence of phases 2 and 3 being removed, it meant that the park and ride project would be later than the pedestrianisation scheme. This was one of the problems as commuting traffic and heavy goods vehicles needed to be moved out of the town. In addition, the new Booths store would shortly be up and running. However, he felt, that in order for the pedestrianisation scheme to work well it, would be necessary to improve the traffic flow in town.

Members were also advised that he was currently in discussion with two parties regarding the provision of mini park and ride sites (230 vehicles on both sites) for long term off-centre parking. These would be served, at important times, by a shuttle service, which would allow the town centre car parks to be dedicated to short stay parking. Discussions were still at the ‘embryo’ stage but the leaders of the two main business organisations were aware of progress and were contributing to discussions.

Councillor Barker stated that he did not know why the Traffic Steering Group had not re-started.

He reminded the Committee that the three aims of the traffic improvement scheme had been to improve the traffic flow, effect a modular change of transport habits and produce a pedestrian friendly traffic centre. Green travel plans had been worked up with the town’s three main employers – the County and District Councils and the Hospital but had not all been activated.

Bus operators were in discussion with the County Council. Stagecoach wanted to have a bus priority lane through the town centre but there were problems with this suggestion (for example – the junction of Lowther Street at the Town Hall).

He hoped that the two Councils would be partners and advised that he had been asked to consider funding for VMS signing. He hoped that the District Council would be involved in the setting up costs of the two car parks.

There were implications for disabled drivers and specific provision for disabled drivers and commuters need to be made. He did not see that this would be a major problem although it had yet to be solved.
There would clearly be problems for delivery vehicles as Kendal was not big enough to cope with larger vehicles delivering in restricted periods. It was therefore difficult to use ‘narrow windows’ for times of deliveries.

The cost of the pedestrianisation scheme was £1m, which included all signing, and this funding was only available for this financial year. There was an increasing demand for a trial period to be used (possibly 6 – 9 months). However, he felt that even if the scheme failed it would not be possible to go back as there would be chaos. He was not aware of any fall-back plan.

Statistics showed that there had been an increase of 10,000 cars year on year over the past three years. Traders had said that business was still suffering and part of the reason was the traffic system. However, county-wide, trade figures had been affected and there was a general reduction in the number of high quality jobs locally and therefore less money available to spend in Kendal. People were commuting out of the area and therefore shopping elsewhere. He stated that it was clear that the town centre couldn’t lose many more retailers, therefore the traders’ concerns would need to be listened to.

On-street short term parking had been taken away on three sites for residents parking (particularly, the one-hour parking at Fellside which had been reduced to half an hour). This meant that there was not enough time for shoppers to walk down to the town and subsequently, this had an impact.

Councillor Bland advised that not all the money for the scheme was available this year and there would be some roll-over to the next financial year. However, if the money was not spent it would be lost.

He felt that the parking in the town needed to be sorted first and confirmed that the Portfolio Holder was to hold a meeting with traders on the 18 May to try to resolve the issue. It looked as if there was a problem with park and ride as the funding was not available for it yet. Therefore, the funding arrangements might have to be re-assessed.

The average salary for workers in Kendal had reduced and 40% of Kendal residents went outside the county to work taking spending power with them. He felt that it was inevitable that the traffic system was blamed and agreed that there were real problems with Windermere Road and Library Road.

The proposed scheme was a radical approach but it would work better, although the parking needed to be sorted out and the situation at Fellside did not help. The County and District Councils needed to work together and there was still a long way to go.

In response to a question, Councillor Bland confirmed that the funding could not be retained. The scheme was ambitious and the parking problem should have been resolved first. Councillor Barker also agreed that the scheme was ambitious but this was the nature of the scheme. He felt the problem had been with the withdrawal of phases 2 and 3, which had brought phase 4 (pedestrianisation) forward by two years.

When asked if park and ride could realistically be achieved, Councillor Barker stated that this would depend on what was wanted. There were too many vehicles in Kendal. Parking on New Road was always full and other long stay spaces were
fairly full of permit holders. He felt that if commuter parking was moved out of the
centre of town, to the fringes, it would help to solve the problem. Both sites being
investigated for mini park and ride schemes were within walking distance of the town
and parking would be priced attractively. Buses would be serve the sites at busy
times. When these sites were in use, it was proposed to increase parking charges in
the town centre. A larger park and ride site was still being considered for visitors. He
stressed that there was no intention to introduce park and ride schemes for
shoppers.

However, Councillor Barker advised that there was a financial problem, in that
funding for the mini sites was not in any budgets but that money would be found for
a capital bid. Also they could only be made viable alongside adequate bus systems
and had to be made financially viable for commuters to want to use them. He was
aware that there were a number of people who already used the ASDA car park for
parking and walked into town.

Councillor Barker also confirmed that there had been an overall increase in the
number of people making use of the Council’s car parks but did not know what
impact the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement had had on the
figures. He confirmed that it was his intention to re-introduce one-hour parking on
Fellside as half an hour was unpoliceable.

A question was asked about the use of Lowther Street by heavy goods vehicles and
Councillor Bland stated that there was now no problem with a weight restriction on
the road and that, with pedestrianisation and no northern link road, these vehicles
would have to use it. He felt that the Lowther Street junction could prove to be a
major problem which, he considered, meant that there was a need for some
connection to be made to the Kendal by-pass. He also clarified that with the
pedestrian priority, buses would still be able to access the town centre but not taxis
nor the disabled, although there would be organised provision for disabled parking.
This would make the town centre fairly traffic free and make the town attractive and
friendly. He reminded Members that Kendal had to compete with other town, such
as Ulverston and Penrith. Councillor Barker clarified that the intention was to create
park and ride for commuters and visitors staying for longer periods and not for short
term shoppers as there was a need to use the car parks in town for short stay
shoppers.

Mr Mike Brough (Kendal Civic Society)

Mr Brough started by stating that the Society’s aims were to preserve the best of the
past and promote the best of the present. He stated that his experience on the
Kendal Traffic Partnership Group had not been very happy although he
acknowledged that the original Group had served a useful role in driving things
forward. A positive reason to keep the Group running was to give a wide audience
the chance to have their say even though there had been a lot of negative talking in
the past. Kendal was a great place and should blow its own trumpet. The Civic
Society was trying its best in its own way to assist in this.

He wanted to make two points –

He urged all parties to draw a line under what had happened in the last decade and
start again from today. This was the last stage in the scheme and the Society had
had certain reservations about the proposed alterations to Miller Bridge in any case.
He fully supported the current proposals and was totally satisfied with the Area Committee’s decision.

Secondly, he lived on Fellside and advised that most people who parked there were commuters and the problems which had been caused were now improved. Many residents were pleased with the changes which had been made to the on-street parking. However, he stressed that the Society should not get involved with parking restrictions.

He acknowledged that there had been several false starts with park and ride and he was pleased that there was progress being made. He was aware that these schemes worked very well in other parts of the country.

When asked if there should be a trial period for the next phase, Mr Brough stated that he felt not, as trials allowed objectors to the scheme to continue with their objections. The scheme proposed was not pedestrianisation but pedestrian priority, as buses would need to be allowed through the town. There was no perfect solution but if the right hard landscaping was put in it would help a lot and the Society would be delighted to be involved in the street scene. He also felt that short stay parking should be as cheap as possible.

Mr Peter Boyd (Chair of Kendal Retail Forum and Mr George Inchmore (Chair of the Federation of Small Businesses)

Mr Inchmore advised that he represented about 450 business in the town, which included retailers and other small businesses. Between his organisation and the Retail Forum he felt that himself and Mr Boyd covered most of the towns’ businesses.

When the town’s traffic scheme was first discussed, park and ride was the basis for it. He said he was unable to understand why Capita had not been aware of the mining rights on the site which had been under consideration for so long.

One hundred and sixty businesses had objected when the trial for phase 1 had ended but their objections had not been put on the agenda for the appropriate meeting, even though it had been discovered at a later date that that the objections had been received. He had also asked to be given the criteria which would decided whether the traffic scheme was working or not but this had not been given. As a consequence, he had concerns that a trial pedestrianisation scheme would not be reversed.

Although the Council had been investigating parking on the edge of town and increased parking provision, it had not transpired. Nor had the removal of cars and new landscaping on New Road. There was now no on-street parking or extra parking – just bus routes closing down. Kendal and the South Lakes area had the lowest income and had been trying to get grants. He was also concerned that there had been no progress on introducing pay–on-exit as he felt it would make a big difference. Ninety-five percent of trade was from out of town but customers were hounded with parking restrictions and charges. This was killing business. Customers and tourists needed to be welcomed and he felt pay-on-exit was the answer. He also raised the issue that signage had been promised but not delivered.

Mr Inchmore felt that no-one paid attention to what the traders had to say. Six shops had closed down recently, some of which had traded in the town for a long time. He felt that the traders had to stand and fight.
Independent consultants had been commissioned by the traders and had advised that there were significant parts of the system which would not work. He felt that the figures produced by Capita could not be relied upon.

He was also concerned about the recent Booth’s store development in the centre of the town as this had not been taken into account in the calculations for the traffic scheme. This store would have to successfully compete with the out of town stores and, to do so, would need to generate a lot more traffic (estimated at an additional 1000 cars) into the town. This would result in a significant amount of traffic meeting at two points.

The large ‘multiple’ companies had not committed themselves to object to the scheme as, in most cases, it was against company policy to do so and Capita had therefore assumed they did not object. However, it was a fact that Marks and Spencer’s had lost a lot of trade and a Director had made a complaint about this being a result of the traffic system to Tim Collins MP.

Although K Shoes had closed, the number of residents in the town had not declined. Therefore, he felt that the reasons for the decline in business was due to the traffic system.

The consultant’s remit had been to look at the system for basic flaws which would cause a decline in business in the town. They had deduced that the figures being used were incorrect. Mr Inchmore queried whether the District Council had employed an expert to assess the accuracy of Capita’s figures.

The consultants had also been asked to look at the impact of the scheme and had advised that there were significant problems. Businesses in the town were concerned because they had seen a significant drop in numbers (22%) in the first 18 months that the new system had been introduced. Statistics showed that there was normally an increase of 15 – 20% in car park usage following the introduction of on-street enforcement. After examining the system, the consultants had stated that there were serious errors in the model used by Capita to justify their selection of options.

The consultants employed by Kendal’s businesses had been asked to attend a meeting with the County Council and had been asked to carry out some work by them for which he had subsequently received a bill.

The businesses in Kendal had been referred to as the ‘noisy minority’ but did not know what the Councils were trying to do. It looked as if they were heading for self-destruction. They needed to know that Capita’s figures were correct. He felt that because less people were coming into town it helped to show, incorrectly, that the system was working.

In an effort to find alternative park and ride sites, Mr Inchmore stated that he had introduced District Council officers to potential sites. One such site would, he felt, be significantly better that the original proposed site on Brigsteer Road.

He felt that how the traffic scheme had been decided upon was a very serious matter. He had answers to many questions and had been in contact with the Ombudsman. He complained that everytime Capita was asked a question about the system they charged a fee of £62.50 per hour to provide an answer. He queried whether competitive tendering had been used to select Capita for the work. Although he had been assured that the County’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee...
monitored the scheme he questioned if this was sufficient as the members were not engineers. He had asked Capita to provide a traffic model based on a roundabout at the top of Brigsteer Road to relieve pressure of traffic. However, he was told that this request had been refused.

Mr Inchmore stated that businesses would prefer to have a permit system in use with designated spaces for car sharers.

Mr Boyd reminded the Committee that commuters spent a lot of money in the town and there was a need to cater for them and not just push them out of the town. He pointed out that other cities were able to cater for out of town commuters but that Kendal did not have the infrastructure in place for it to work.

He made reference to the brochure, produced in 1998, which set out the proposal for a two way traffic flow in Aynam Road, using the original bridge, better bus routes and out of town parking, additional parking and signage. However, the current proposal was for partly blocking off the main thoroughfare and skewed lights at Sandes Avenue. This would achieve virtually nothing.

He also felt that there were problems with Capita. The consultants he had used had expressed concern about Capita’s proposed strategy and had outlined a number of serious errors which they considered the model contained.

Although he accepted that it was Government policy to decrease traffic, he felt that it could not be expected to work in every town. He made reference to an article which had been printed in the Daily Telegraph on 15 June 1996 about the detrimental effect of pedestrianisation on market towns.

In his opinion, Kendal would depend on the car for the foreseeable future. Shoppers in the town were drawn from a 35 mile radius. There was no infrastructure in place to bring them in to town by other means and therefore, allowances needed to be made for cars. This needed to include clear signage for direct and quick routes around the town, car parking sited at a reasonable distance from where money is to be spent (as he stated it was a known fact that shoppers would not normally park more than 600 metres away from the shop and would rather travel miles in the car to be able to do so) and charge for parking at reasonable rates.

Mr Boyd had asked Capita to give an example travel time using the current traffic system and he was told that it was estimated it would take 3.58 minutes to travel during peak traffic in the morning from Nether Bridge to the Windermere Road junction with Busher Walk. He had driven this route himself on a Sunday afternoon and had not been able to complete it in the time given by Capita. This was one of the reasons that they queried the figures quoted by Capita.

He also drew attention to the fact that the new Booths store needed a footfall of 40,000 to make it pay which equated to an extra 20,000 cars. He questioned if this had been taken into account by Capita.

Mr Boyd stated that he had visited Maryport which had introduced a pedestrian priority scheme despite the concerns of local residents and retailers. Traders had pointed out perceived problems to Capita but had been told that they were wrong. The system had failed dramatically; businesses had closed and moved to Workington and Whitehaven. Eventually, the pedestrian priority scheme was reversed. Mr Boyd was concerned that if Kendal got it wrong about the viability of the scheme, everyone would suffer.
He referred again to the brochure issued in 1998, which had proposed two way traffic on Aynam Road and a new bridge. He felt that if the traffic flow was changed to two way, a vast amount of traffic from Lakeland Business estates would avoid the bottleneck in town. A northern link road would alleviate the problems if it was completed as the high industrial sites depended on heavy goods vehicles and there was no benefit in re-directing them onto Windermere Road. However, this proposal had been taken out of the scheme because of the cost but Mr Boyd suggested that Capita had got it wrong and reminded the Committee that Capita had also got it wrong about the quarry site too. He reminded them that the consultants who he had employed said that Capita were not good enough to do the job.

Mr Boyd also referred to the Rural Innovation Report (published in 2002) which had been commissioned by the County Council. The report had recommended that there should be free on-street short-stay parking as this would generate a high turnover of vehicles and help the vitality of the town. It had also looked at car park patronage and discovered that the number of tickets purchased during the phase I experimental period had increased by 15%. However, this was not indicative of a increase in shoppers figures as, in other towns where Decriminalised Parking Enforcement had been introduced, car park usage had increased by 15-20%. Mr Boyd felt that the report’s findings supported the financial evidence of traders that there had been very little growth. Capita, however, said that this was evidence of an increase in traffic and car park use (even though a report which they had commissioned said this was not the case).

With regard to the bus service, the Report had recommended that a high proportion of buses should be used for shoppers so that the effect on trade could be minimised. Originally there had been six bus routes in the Town centre used by a high number of passengers for shopping. These routes did not exist now and Capita’s view was that it did not matter if Stagecoach left Kendal. However, it was obvious that unless buses were given priority, the services would not be able to make a profit and the company would pull out. There was also a risk that the multiples might relocate and this would have a knock-on effect.

He also distributed information about the footfall figures for the Shopping Centre. He advised that it was very difficult for a town to attract a ‘multiple’ company and it took a lot of effort and money to do so. However, should a multiple decide to leave a town, the decision was implemented very quickly and usually had a ‘pack of cards’ effect on other retailers.

Mr Boyd stated that he was not against pedestrian priority as long as it was implemented properly. He did not feel that one part could be implemented and another postponed; rather he felt it was like a jigsaw, with each part being dependent on another. The Council had to keep to its promises, not play a political game which would could put businesses at risk. It was part of South Lakeland District Council’s Overview and Scrutiny role to ensure it was done correctly.

In response to a query, Mr Boyd stated that it made a lot of sense for commuters to use mini park and ride sites. He advised that Mr Inchmore had himself done a lot of work on trying to identify potential sites but had been told by the County Council, just recently, that there was no money for this sort of proposal.

Mr Inchmore felt that one of the problems was that there was no ‘supremo’, and therefore no-one person was running the scheme. It was not being managed properly and there was no cohesion.
Mr Boyd also explained that Capita had advised that it would be possible to have a trial period of 6 months. This would mean that money would not need to be spent on permanent features, although it would be needed for car parking and signage. He also advised that he was prepared to submit audited daily figures of percentage turnover during the trial period. If this showed either no change or an increase then there would be no objections to the scheme being made permanent, however, if there was a down turn they would want to see the scheme reversed. Mr Inchmore confirmed that the businesses he represented would also be willing for a trial period, but Capita had refused to give the criteria which would be used to determine whether or not the scheme should be reversed.

They also pointed out that loading restrictions lead to lost business but that this had not been looked at in depth. Also, Mr Boyd stressed that commuters were very important to the town’s economy; several thousand came to town everyday and as they were ‘earners’ they had money to spend.

When Mr Boyd was asked whether or not traders would exaggerate their trading figures in order to influence the result of rent reviews, he responded by saying that he dealt with the retailers on a daily basis and knew himself, from experience, what affected turnover. There was a direct correlation between the traffic scheme and turnover, with many people losing business, and he felt the cause was very evident.

Mr Roger Mallett (Traffic Management Officer (South Cumbria) Cumbria Constabulary)

Mr Mallett explained that the Police were statutory consultees and were therefore not fully conversant with what was going on. He, himself, had sat as a non-voting member on the Steering Group and had always had the impression that there would be some delay in implementing the scheme. However, he felt that the new system was safer and better for pedestrians and that the reverse flow of traffic on Lowther Street was a big plus, as there had been no accidents on the street since the traffic change.

He outlined the Police comments which had been made about the new scheme, which were: Pedestrian priority between Lowther Street and Library Road – Because of the proposed number of exemptions, it would be harder to enforce. It had been suggested that only buses and vehicles (for loading/unloading purposes) between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. should be permitted because if it was a pedestrian priority area then people would not expect traffic in this area and he was keen to avoid conflict between pedestrians and vehicles;

Turning left only into Sandes Avenue from Windermere Road – As it was intended that this should only be designated through the use of a Traffic Order it would mean that motorists would only take notice of it when the police were present at the junction; and

Buses turning left into Lowther Street – The police felt that there could be a priority problem if buses were given priority at this junction.

In response to a question, Mr Mallett advised that, when asked to comment on the proposed park and ride site at the quarry, the response had been that any access/egress onto the bypass would need to be via a proper slip road. He also advised that he had not monitored any vehicle numbers as this was a job for engineers and the police were not qualified to do it. Nor did he have the knowledge.
to question the traffic flow figures which had been produced. However, he commented that it would help if all traffic lights were phased properly. He also stated that the town had not been built for a lot of traffic; there was now a slower response time by emergency vehicles than 20 years ago, but that was how things were. Mr Mallett also stated that he thought that there would be some motorists who would try to make a U-turn from Sandes Avenue to access the Marks and Spencer's car park. He also advised that he was aware that other places seemed to manage with loading restrictions and re-emphasised that people who loaded/unloaded at peak times caused chaos.

In response to a question on the cycling lanes, he stated that they were only used by people who were less confident cyclists. The Police had now more funds for cycle safety training courses in schools, etc.

Members commented that having a central depot for storage and distribution for goods to reduce delivery vehicles and revising South Lakeland District Council's enforcement procedures to assist with deliveries quickly to domestic properties would be helpful.

Mr Alan James (Consultant, former Transport Efficiency Best Practice Programme)

Mr James explained that he was both a landscape architect and a transportation consultant. He had been involved in discussions of the three options by the Steering Group seven or eight years ago and had been advising the Kendal Travel Plan Group for the past 2 to 3 years. He explained that the DETR had set up a group to look at demand management using a network approach. He had advised all group members and the group itself. This had mostly been on the demand management side – reducing traffic, congestion and pollution.

In principle, he supported the scheme proceeding as proposed provided that the other aspects still came onboard. He appreciated that it was very difficult to have all the strands happen at once and that it would only be fully effective when everything was in place as part of an integrated package. The pedestrianisation of Stricklandgate could work up to an initial point but the other strands proposed would also need to come onboard; otherwise you could wait forever for everything to come into place at the one time.

He also pointed out that travel behaviour was a collection of individual decisions and choices. He emphasised that car users weren’t all the same, nor had the same motivation – roughly 20% wanted to use their cars less; 20% would not use their car less no matter what incentives were provided; and 60% were somewhere in between. Therefore, if the proposal could achieve a 4% reduction in traffic over a four-year period, it would mean that 20% of car users would have used a different means of transport. Pedestrianisation was part of the whole scene of travel behaviour and would influence choice. Phase I had taken a lot of traffic off Stricklandgate, therefore the fears of congestion had not been held up numerically. However, the level of cycling was disappointing and needed to be improved.

He re-iterated that waiting for all the other strands to come together would delay implementing the scheme. By going ahead with the pedestrian priority phase, the County Council would be committed to carrying out the other strands.
Mr James also felt that there would always be concerns from the business community about the economic effects. However, evidence since the mid 1960’s had invariably shown it had benefited retailers and he had never heard of a Pedestrian Order being rescinded. In his experience, pedestrianisation increases the number of people, which increases footfall which increases the number of shoppers and this was what helps trade. Although cars were important to shoppers, it was the number of shoppers which helped trade. The quality of the environment was very important too in attracting people and it was a known fact that people would always find a way to get to an attraction if it was good enough. Implementing a pedestrianisation scheme in Kendal was an opportunity to increase the quality of the town centre. Mr James also stated that he considered that Kendal had all the necessary qualities in place to deal with pedestrianisation, and that it had the potential to be a town which was second to none.

With regard to the park and ride scheme, Mr James emphasised that this was only one piece of the jigsaw. The effect of a 700 space park and ride car park on a junction of the M6 had been estimated to reduce the traffic by a fraction of 0.1%, which was a drop in the ocean. However, Mr James stated that he did not know the exact figures for the park and ride scheme in Kendal but that he was almost certain that it would be a relatively low percentage and, in any case, this was only one of the ingredients. There had been a lot of monitoring of demand management which had shown that it worked.

When asked about the benefit of introducing the next stage on a temporary basis, Mr James stated that it was essential that a high quality environment was created to ratch up the quality of the townscape, even if this was only on a temporary basis. However, he felt that it would take at least 12 months to find out the effects. He also felt that once an 18% reduction in the commuter traffic of the six main employers in the town had been achieved, a difference would soon be felt in the traffic flow. Work he had carried out with employers on their travel plans had indicated that it would take three years to achieve proposed targets. Although weather also played a part, Mr James felt that it was a cultural thing. He also stated that he felt it would be feasible to achieve a reduction in the traffic without changes to Miller Bridge and the two-way traffic flow on Aynam Road but that the one essential thing was to apply an integrated approach. Going ahead with the pedestrianisation scheme would act as a catalyst for change in behaviour and if people experienced delays in traffic flows it would create a modal shift. In order to encourage greater cycle use an integrated cycle provision was need which would involve user groups, maintenance courses, partnering schemes, cycle to schools, cycle proficiency programmes, cycle awareness trips to show people where cycle lanes were.

County Councillor David Clarke (Chair, former Kendal Traffic Steering Group)

Councillor Clarke informed the Committee that he had been Chair of the Steering Group while the Labour group had been in control of the County Council. Since then, his influence on the Group had not been so strong. He noted that most of the questions which had been listed were about the viewpoint of the County Council which were not necessarily his own, therefore, he felt he would not be able to comment on these points.
He had always envisaged that the main challenge was to reduce the amount of traffic in the town. Most traders recognised the financial advantages. He, himself, had always known that the issue of a modal change had to be addressed by aiming park and ride at commuters for peak flow times; providing safe routes to schools (which had had limited success); improving the bus service (which had proved to be very difficult) and cycling. Although there was a commitment to park and ride a mixed message was being sent out as there was nothing happening on the ground.

A lot of surveys had been carried out which had shown that the public would cycle more if facilities were improved and an infrastructure was in place. However, it was disappointing to note that, in this respect, things had slipped backwards.

He did not know why the Steering Group had been ‘sidelined’ in the process although the last Group meeting had appeared to show that there was some opposition to the views put forward by officers.

He hoped that the plans for years 2 and 3 had not been abandoned. Although he felt that there had been a lot of criticism about the park and ride proposal, this now appeared to have changed, with a number of people asking where the scheme was. He thought that there was no reality on the ground but that this was a fundamental part of what the town does.

Councillor Clarke felt that he was unable to advise what was being done to improve the bus service but he knew that efforts were being made. However, he felt that officers had only agreed to it because Stagecoach had threatened to move out.

He considered that the District Council had always been involved and engaged and, although he accepted that there were difficulties for the District Council, there needed to be a shift away from long stay to short stay parking for a park and ride scheme to work. He also felt that the long stay charges were very cheap compared to bus fares.

He pointed out to the Committee that although the Group had included a representative from the disabled drivers, there was no representative on the working groups which had replaced the Group. He did not feel that there would be any problems for delivery vehicles and also understood that a trial period to test the implications was being considered. However, he felt that the system would work better with a bus lane and pointed out that the highways engineers’ model had shown that there would be no queuing.

Councillor Clarke also stated that the figures and models which had been used had been based on the number of cars at that time, which was a lot lower than today. He expected that the system would work but that there could be queuing into Highgate which could in turn lead to increased pollution levels in Lowther Street. He also acknowledged that Windermere and Burneside Roads had both been made worse by the traffic changes so far.

When questioned about available funding, Councillor Clarke stated that, in his view, the funding which had been earmarked so far was provisional but that it should remain available provided that Kendal remained a priority. However, he felt that there was a danger that if the scheme did not keep moving forward, other authorities might take precedence.
Councillor Clarke was also asked whether the County Council was confident with the figures produced by Capita, he stated that there was a spectrum of views amongst Councillors. Personally, though, he had found them to be very professional and the information provided accurate. He reminded the Committee that there had been a massive consultation exercise and an experimental scheme introduced. As a result over 50% of respondents had said that it should be retained. He did not feel that there would be a problem with loading or disabled parking because there would be a pedestrian priority and traffic would not be held up as a result.

On a personal basis, he felt that there would be advantages for a Northern Relief Road, particularly for heavy goods vehicles. However, he did not feel that it would solve the problem of traffic volume in time although it would have some effect and he accepted that there were environmental concerns.

He confirmed that the County Council had made it a priority but that it was a difficult political issue. Government Office North West would be looking at the proposal and might decide that it could get more benefit for its money by doing other projects.

With regard to Stagecoach, he stated that it had to be remembered that their aim was to maximise profit and not that of providing a public service. It was therefore up to the County Council to subsidise it but he felt that there needed to be a fundamental review of the subsidised bus routes.

He also felt that it would be a benefit to re-instate the Traffic Steering Group so that all interested parties could be involved, however, he felt it would have a finite life span.