

POPE of Major Schemes Summary Report

Scheme Title	A249 Iwade-Queenborough	Major Schemes No:	029
Opening Date	3 rd July 2006		
POPE Stage	One Year After Study		

Scheme Description

The scheme provides a 5 km dual carriageway between the end of the Iwade Bypass and Queenborough. The Highways Agency scheme comprised:

- ◆ A High level bridge over The Swale;
- ◆ Slip roads at the Kingsferry Interchange;
- ◆ Roundabouts at Cowstead and Neatscourt; and
- ◆ Two traffic signal controlled junctions at Queenborough.

Objectives of A249 Iwade-Queenborough Scheme:

- ◆ Reduce journey times for vehicles traveling to/from Sheppey
- ◆ Improve accessibility and reduce community severance
- ◆ Improve integration and promote regeneration

Objective Achieved?

Yes
Yes
To early to assess

Main Impacts

- Environment**
- Noise levels and local air quality improved and likely to be better than expected;
 - Landscape, heritage, and water impacts generally as predicted;
 - 8% decrease in carbon emissions following scheme opening;
 - Ditch and compensation pond vegetation slow to establish due to the requirements for natural recolonisation which has impacted upon water voles and great crested newts in the short term; and
 - The scheme has had a positive impact on physical fitness and journey ambiance.
- Safety**
- Accident reduction in first year of opening above that predicted;
 - Accident reduction not statistically significant;
 - Outturn accident benefits above forecast; and
 - Safety concerns raised by Police.
- Economy**
- Outturn BCR of 1.6-2.2 against a forecast of 4.26;
 - Outturn capital cost of the scheme is £69.9m compared to a prediction of £40.4m (2004 prices discounted to 2004);
 - Reliability improved; and
 - Journey time improvements for traffic on A249;
- Accessibility**
- Impacts on accessibility generally as predicted;
 - Improved links to mainland bring opportunity for regeneration; and
 - Reduced severance for non-motorised users.
- Integration**
- Impacts on Integration generally as predicted;
 - Bus services likely to benefit from more reliable journey times; and
 - Scheme integrates well and delivers objectives of local plans.

Detailed Traffic Impacts

- ◆ The new Sheppey Crossing is used by approximately 26,500 vehicles per day;
- ◆ The old route over the Kingsferry Bridge is used by around 3,000 vehicles per day;
- ◆ Prior to scheme opening traffic flow on Kingsferry Bridge was 31,700 vehicles per day. Therefore, around 90% of traffic has switched to the new bridge. However, there are around 8% less vehicles crossing The Swale in total;
- ◆ Despite some localised changes that are not believed to be due to the scheme, overall traffic elsewhere remains largely unchanged;
- ◆ Traffic flows are similar to forecasts;
- ◆ Journey times using both the new and old bridge have improved compared to the before situation; and
- ◆ The new bridge is around 1.5 to 2 minutes quicker than the old bridge.

Economic Summary

	Costs in £m 1994 prices discounted to 1994 at 3.5%		
	Forecast (Public Inquiry, 1999)	Outturn ¹	
		'Appraisal' Growth Rates	COBA Default Growth Rates
30 year benefits (1994 prices)	172.079	153.916	112.857
Costs (1994 prices)	40.440	69.859	69.859
Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR)	4.26	2.20	1.62

Key Findings

- ◆ The scheme has been well received by the local community and has won design awards;
- ◆ The scheme integrates well with the road network in Kent, particularly the M2 and A2 and provides a high quality route to and from the mainland;
- ◆ Forecast traffic flows are similar to observed levels, but it is too early for increased levels of traffic associated with anticipated regeneration to have developed;
- ◆ Although limited in its application, the use of a 'gate' in COBA to model the closures of the old bridge appears to have been effective.
- ◆ Observed accident figures are above forecasts, leading to safety benefits higher than forecast;
- ◆ A number of local safety concerns have been raised (before and after scheme opening), in particular by the police in relation to the Sheppey Crossing;
- ◆ Environmental impacts of the scheme were given due regard and environmental mitigation measures implemented;
- ◆ The establishment of vegetation in the compensation ditches has been slower than anticipated;
- ◆ The creation of compensatory land (prior to scheme construction) is considered a great success;
- ◆ The time lag between appraisal and evaluation has resulted in only limited information on scheme traffic and economic information being available; and
- ◆ The scheme has contributed to achievement of objectives in local plans and policies

¹ Two sets of results are displayed for the outturn economic impacts. One uses the traffic growth rates used at the time of the appraisal as development on the Isle of Sheppey was assumed. The second set of results assumes COBA default growth rates (i.e. no additional development assumed).