

## A225 High Street - Sevenoaks

### Heavy Goods Vehicle Traffic Investigation

April 2010



*Client – Kent Highway Services - West Kent Transport and Development Team*

**Document control sheet** **BPP 04 F8**

Client: Kent Highway Services – West Kent  
Area Transport and Development Team

Project: A225 High Street Sevenoaks  
Document Title: Heavy Goods Vehicle  
Traffic Investigation

Job No: B1254000

	Originator	Checked by	Reviewed by	Approved by
<b>REVISION 1</b>	NAME <b>Graham Cox/Don Vann/Laura McGrillen</b>	NAME <b>Keith Butler</b>	NAME <b>Don Vann</b>	NAME <b>Tim Read</b>
DATE <b>9/4/10</b>	SIGNATURE <b>GC/DV/LM</b>	SIGNATURE <b>KB</b>	SIGNATURE <b>DMV</b>	SIGNATURE <b>TR</b>
<b>Document Status FINAL to client</b>				

REVISION	NAME	NAME	NAME	NAME
DATE	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE
<b>Document Status</b>				

REVISION	NAME	NAME	NAME	NAME
DATE	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE
<b>Document Status</b>				

REVISION	NAME	NAME	NAME	NAME
DATE	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE
<b>Document Status</b>				

*Jacobs Engineering U.K. Limited*

This document has been prepared by a division, subsidiary or affiliate of *Jacobs Engineering U.K. Limited* ("Jacobs") in its professional capacity as consultants in accordance with the terms and conditions of Jacobs' contract with the commissioning party (the "Client"). Regard should be had to those terms and conditions when considering and/or placing any reliance on this document. No part of this document may be copied or reproduced by any means without prior written permission from Jacobs. If you have received this document in error, please destroy all copies in your possession or control and notify Jacobs.

Any advice, opinions, or recommendations within this document (a) should be read and relied upon only in the context of the document as a whole; (b) do not, in any way, purport to include any manner of legal advice or opinion; (c) are based upon the information made available to Jacobs at the date of this document and on current UK standards, codes, technology and construction practices as at the date of this document. It should be noted and it is expressly stated that no independent verification of any of the documents or information supplied to Jacobs has been made. No liability is accepted by Jacobs for any use of this document, other than for the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided. Following final delivery of this document to the Client, Jacobs will have no further obligations or duty to advise the Client on any matters, including development affecting the information or advice provided in this document.

This document has been prepared for the exclusive use of the Client and unless otherwise agreed in writing by Jacobs, no other party may use, make use of or rely on the contents of this document. Should the Client wish to release this document to a third party, Jacobs may, at its discretion, agree to such release provided that (a) Jacobs' written agreement is obtained prior to such release; and (b) by release of the document to the third party, that third party does not acquire any rights, contractual or otherwise, whatsoever against Jacobs and Jacobs, accordingly, assume no duties, liabilities or obligations to that third party; and (c) Jacobs accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage incurred by the Client or for any conflict of Jacobs' interests arising out of the Client's release of this document to the third party.

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction 1</b>	
1.1	Request for Good Vehicle Restrictions	1
1.2	Relationship to Other Studies	1
1.3	Study Methodology	3
<b>2</b>	<b>The Location</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1	Background	4
2.2	Highway Network	4
<b>3</b>	<b>HGV Origin and Destination Study</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Site Study</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1	Properties with rear Servicing Access	10
4.2	Damage to Properties and Highway Caused by Vehicles	11
<b>5</b>	<b>Delivery and Servicing Questionnaire Study</b>	<b>13</b>
5.1	Study Analysis	13
<b>6</b>	<b>Heavy Goods Vehicle Operating Centres</b>	<b>15</b>
6.1	Background	<del>15</del> 15
6.2	Review of Licences in the Sevenoaks Area	<del>15</del> 15
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	<b>17</b>
7.1	Conclusions	17
7.2	Recommendations	18
7.2.1	Goods Vehicle Operation Management	18
7.2.2	Traffic Management Measures	19
	a) Restricting the Operation of Goods Vehicles	19
	b) Other Restrictions	20
	c) Local Highway Management Measures	21
	Appendix A Drawings	
	Appendix B Delivery Questionnaire and Letter	

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Request for Good Vehicle Restrictions

Kent Highway Services has received a request from the Kent County Council Cabinet Member for the Environment, Highways and Waste Portfolio, Nick Chard, to consider a ban of heavy goods vehicles from the Upper High Street, Sevenoaks. The request results from issues reported of damage to property which is thought to have occurred as a result of collisions with heavy goods vehicles.

The request results from lobbying by the Sevenoaks Society, which is concerned about the impact of heavy goods vehicle traffic in the Upper High Street.

Kent Highway Services (Jacobs) was asked by Kent Highway Services (Transportation and Development – Alan Ash) and Network Management (David Beaver) to review the request and to propose methodology for assessing the merits and report back to Mr Chard with recommendations, as appropriate. This has resulted in the commissioning of a study to review aspects of heavy goods vehicle usage and operation in High Street, Sevenoaks, with a view to making recommendations of any measures considered appropriate to manage such traffic. An interim briefing was provided when the results of a goods vehicle through movements study had been established, early in December 2009.

## 1.2 Relationship to Other Studies

Sevenoaks District Council has defined the parts of Sevenoaks Town Centre covered by A225 (High Street) between a point south of its junction with A224 and a location north of its junction with Pembroke Road as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) (AQMA10/NO2/2008). The area covered by the A224 between a location north of the Pembroke Road junction, and its junction with A225 has been defined as an extension of AQMA area 10 (AQMA10A/NO2/2007). The area of the AQMA is shown on figure 1.1.

SDC's Air Quality Action Plan notes that:-

*“a one-way system operated in Sevenoaks town centre for a short period of road works during 2006. The traffic travelled northwards up London Road and southwards down High Street with two-way traffic on Pembroke Road. The one-way system was effective at reducing congestion during the period it operated”.*

*“The District Council have considered the possibility of implementing a one-way system for the Sevenoaks town centre. Introducing a one-way system would not reduce overall traffic levels; however, the system might reduce congestion both at junctions and more generally throughout the town centre.”*



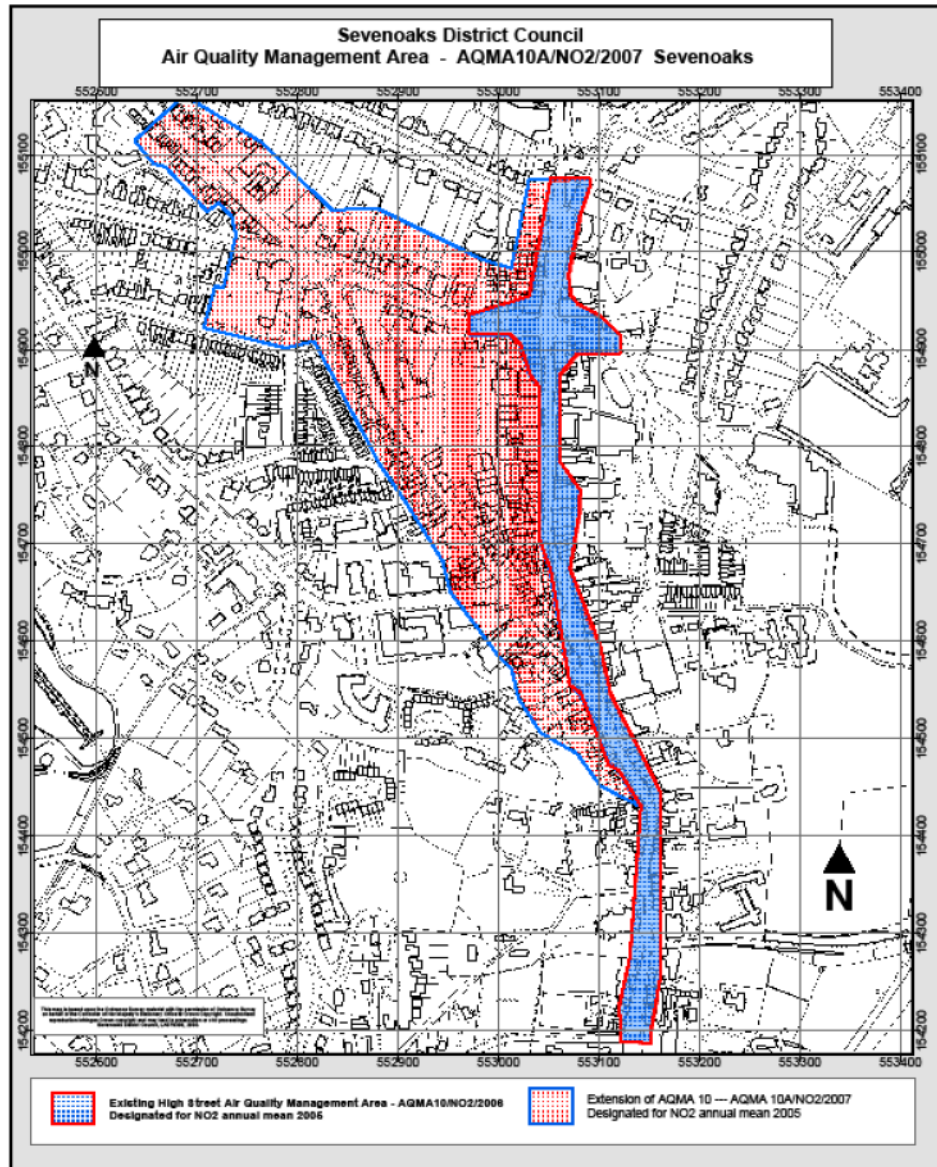


Figure 1.1 – Sevenoaks District Council Air Quality Management Area – Sevenoaks Town Centre

In order to address this, the Kent County Council/Sevenoaks District Council Joint Transportation Board has agreed to identify solutions to deal with these problems. SDC has funds from DEFRA for consultancy services to identify ideas to tackle air quality issues. Once a scheme is identified, it may be possible for DEFRA to be approached for funding to assist with scheme implementation.

It should be noted that delivery of a one-way traffic system might provide opportunities to rationalise highway space in the High Street, which in turn could allow more space to be allocated to pedestrians, and for enhancement of the streetscape in the area.

Jacobs (Kent Highway Services) was commissioned to scope options for a one-way system, and to develop proposals for defining, refining and testing of options for delivery of a one-way system. The scoping report was completed and delivered, but is on hold, currently. However, there are overlaps between the proposals in the

scoping study and the heavy goods vehicle traffic management study commission, and care is required to ensure that any work carried out can be used in any further studies required of the one-way system ideas.

### 1.3 Study Methodology

This study will investigate in detail a series of factors linked to the operation of heavy goods vehicles through the Upper High Street, Sevenoaks.

These will focus initially on the potential effects of any ban on goods vehicle traffic. Owing to the nature of the frontage use, much of which is retail premises, it is likely that some level of goods vehicle use is unavoidable in order to service the premises. Therefore, it follows that any prohibition of goods vehicle traffic can focus only on vehicles using it as a through route. It is proposed, therefore, to carry out the following processes to analyse goods vehicle traffic patterns in the High Street:-

- 1) A registration number origin and destination survey, recording also the time of passage, based on four points. This is intended to quantify the volume of through goods vehicle traffic, and the volume gaining access to the general area, on a week-day:-
  - A25/Seal Hollow Road (Seal Hollow Road arm)
  - A25/A225 Bat and Ball Junction (A225 St John's Hill arm)
  - A25/A224 Riverhead Square (A224 Amherst Hill arm)
  - A225/A21/B245 – Morley's Roundabout (Riverhill arm)
- 2) An on-site survey of servicing arrangements in the Upper High Street
- 3) Questionnaire survey of businesses in the Upper High Street to determine access arrangements, types of deliveries, types of vehicles used, frequencies and times (this work will form part of the AQMA study also)
- 4) A review of known information on HGV O licences within the local area
- 5) Review and analyse outcomes and develop recommendations for future actions

The study locations, and general highway provision in the area are shown in figure 2.1.

**2.1 Background**

Sevenoaks Town Centre is designated as a secondary retail centre in the *South East Plan*. The main retail provision is in the High Street, and in the Bligh’s Meadow Shopping Complex, the latter opening in the last ten years. However, the town centre is an historic area, and immediately to the south is located the Knole Park tourist attraction, which is a National Trust property, and the Sevenoaks School.

There are two food retail outlets, namely a Waitrose store and a Tesco Express, each situated on the east side of High Street. A large Sainsburys store is located two or three miles to the north of the town centre, at Otford, located north of the junction of the A25 and A225.

The High Street consists largely of mixed retail premises, restaurants and public houses, many with off-street loading facilities, and this aspect is covered in more detail in section 4 of this report.

Bligh’s Meadow is situated to the west of High Street, and is a modern open-air development with pedestrian-only areas, which is linked to the High Street and London Road by footpaths.

There are 8 car parks in the town centre area, providing a total of over 1000 car parking spaces, the majority of which are designated as short stay.

There is a main line railway station, which is situated adjacent to A224, around a mile north of the town centre, whilst a local bus station is located off the High Street, and is served by a number of local bus services of varying frequencies which link with adjoining towns, villages and local facilities.

**2.2 Highway Network**

The Upper High Street in Sevenoaks forms part of the A225, which is classified as a part of the principal route network by Kent County Council. The A225 extends from its junction with A21, south of Sevenoaks, through Sevenoaks town centre to its junction with the A25 primary route at Bat and Ball junction, to the north. The route continues northwards to the A20 near Farningham. Within Sevenoaks town centre, there is a junction with the principal route, A224. The A224 extends northwards from this point to the A25 primary route at Riverhead junction, and beyond that through Dunton Green and Orpington to join the A21, M25 and ultimately, A20 primary route at Crittall’s Corner.

The A225 and A224 routes form main accesses for traffic to reach Sevenoaks town centre from the primary route network, including deliveries to the commercial premises in that area, which include a range of retail outlets. The purpose of these routes is for access to the range of premises and towns/villages which are near it, and they are not intended for use by inter-urban and long distance traffic.

There are restrictions on the A25 primary route near to the location. In particular, the low bridge on A225 at Sunny Bank near Riverhead has a restricted height of 14ft 9in (4.5 metres), but this is adequate for most vehicles including double deck buses. However, the highest heavy goods vehicles will need to take an alternative route. The County Council's designated high load route, to avoid this obstruction is via A224 and A225, through Sevenoaks town centre. There is another bridge on A25, near Platt, which has a height restriction of 15ft 0in which also results in the need for some high vehicles to divert from the A25 route.

The junction of M25 with A21 (Junction 5 – Sevenoaks) has restricted access, and in particular, does not have slip roads for traffic to travel from south to east (A21 to M26) and vice versa. This results in A25 being classified as a primary route between Wrotham Heath (M26/A20/A25 junction) and Bessell's Green (A25/A21 junction) and forms the signed route for inter-urban/long distance traffic travelling to Sevenoaks from the east.

These network restrictions, combined with the purpose of A224 and A225 as access routes to Sevenoaks town centre dictate that a level of heavy goods vehicle traffic will need to use these routes. The level of use of the routes by through heavy goods vehicle traffic can only be assessed by traffic surveys, and the likely level of such traffic gaining access for delivery purposes will need to be assessed by carrying out a survey of premises and determining frequencies, patterns and the nature of deliveries.

As a result of this work, recommendations can be developed to mitigate the effects of HGV traffic in the High Street, and the studies used to inform decision-making.

The road network and general area around the town centre is shown in figure 2.1.



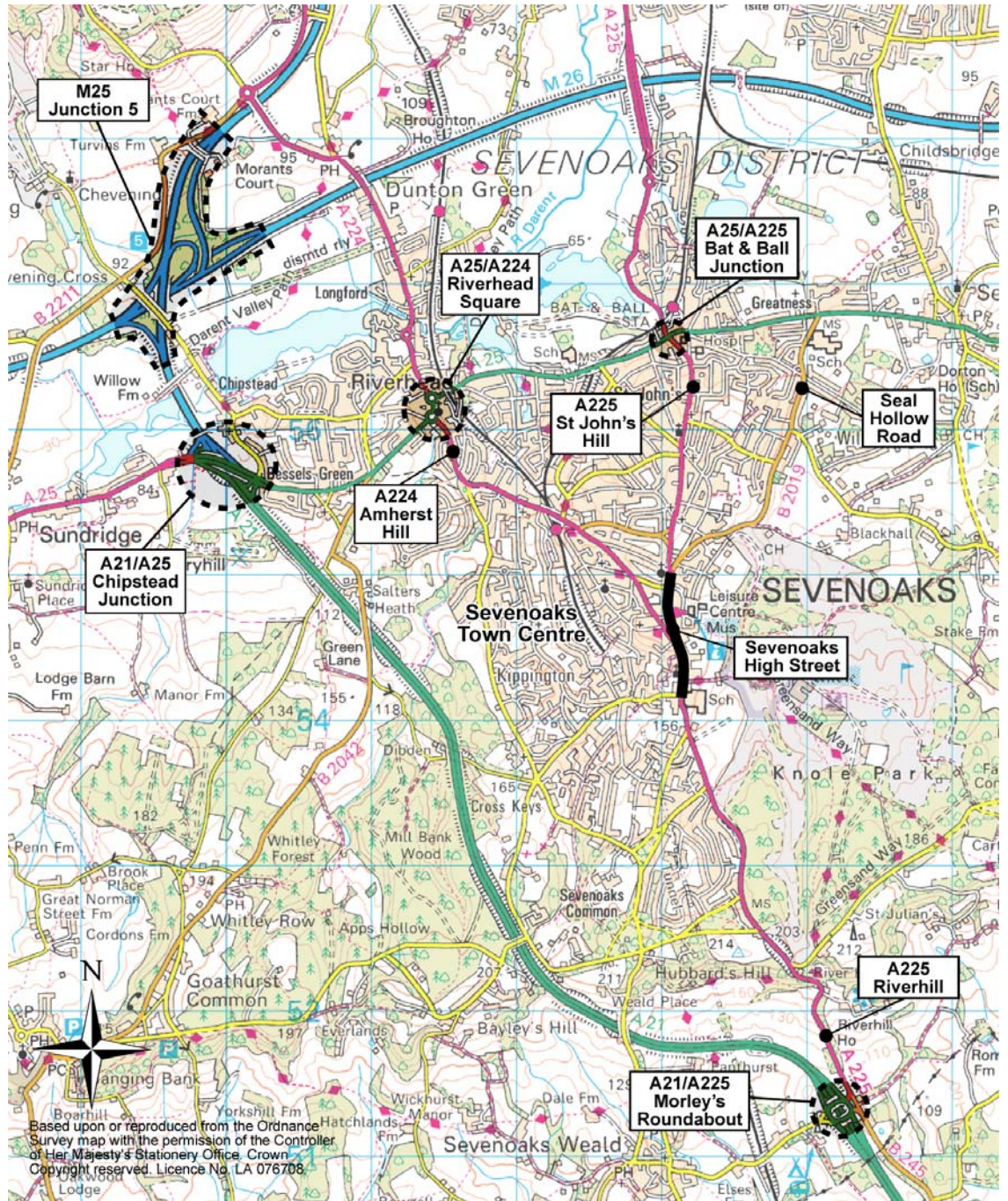


Figure 2.1 – General Location Plan – Sevenoaks Town Centre

A225 High Street – Sevenoaks  
 Heavy Goods Vehicle Traffic Management Investigation rev 1

An origin and destination study of goods vehicle traffic travelling through Sevenoaks was carried out during November 2009. The survey was carried out over the time period 0700 – 1900 hrs, and observation were taken of goods vehicle traffic entering and leaving the cordon at four locations. There were:-

- *A224 Amherst Hill – north of Sevenoaks Town centre, and south of A25 Riverhead Square*
- *A225 St Johns Hill - north of Sevenoaks Town centre, and south of A25 Bat and Ball Junction*
- *A225 Riverhill – south of Sevenoaks Town Centre and north of A21 Morley’s Interchange*
- *Seal Hollow Road – north-east of Sevenoaks Town Centre and south of A25.*

These locations are shown on the map at figure 2.1. The study results are shown in the tables at figure 3.1 to 3.3. Highlights from the survey are set out below, and attention is drawn to a number of key pieces of data, as follows:-

- *Around 15,000 vehicles were recorded in the 12 hour period, 0700-1900 hrs, two way flows, at A225 Riverhill.*
- *Of the vehicles recorded at Riverhill, 2% were heavy goods vehicles (defined as over 7.5 tonnes unladen weight).*
- *Of the 2%, around 9% travelled through the area from north to south or vice versa, and comprised around one vehicle in each direction per hour (a total of 31). The majority travelled to or from A225 Riverhill and A225 St Johns Hill.*
- *Additionally, a further 16% travelled through the area but made a stop on the way, very likely to deliver or collect goods from business premises between the survey points. These totalled less than 2 per hour per direction (a total of 45). The total goods vehicles over 7.5 tonnes unladen weight travelling through the area and making a delivery or stop en route totalled 123 vehicles.*
- *44 journeys were observed where heavy goods vehicles entered and subsequently left the survey area at the same location, having spent a period of time, presumably making a delivery/collection from premises. Of these, a number of vehicles were observed to make the same manoeuvre several times in one day. This may be indicative of trips associated with works being carried out in the area.*
- *Only one vehicle was observed making a through trip using Seal Hollow Road (this route has advisory signing indicating its unsuitability for heavy goods vehicles). This suggests that the advisory signing there has a positive effect.*



- *The volume of buses using the route is not dissimilar to the volume of heavy goods vehicles. These vehicles are often of a similar large size as heavy goods vehicles. Buses are not included in the volumes referred to above.*

The surveys indicate that although there is a level of heavy goods vehicle traffic using A225 to travel to and from the A21 and A25, through Sevenoaks town centre and vice versa, the overall volume is very low.

If an environmental weight restriction was implemented in the section of High Street north of the A224 London Road junction, the volume of through movements removed (presuming 100% compliance) would be around 30 per day in total. Environmental weight restriction can be at one of two weights only (either 7.5 or 17 tonnes unladen weight – the upper level has the effect of restricting articulated vehicles only. The lower weight level restricts any vehicle which is required by law to carry reflective yellow plates with red borders at the rear. This small volume represents around one vehicle per hour, per direction. If an environmental weight limit was imposed, the traffic would need to divert to another route. It is possible that this could affect another area adversely.

Owing to the higher general volume of goods vehicle traffic requiring access to the area for deliveries and servicing, enforcement of such a restriction may be considered problematic because identifying a vehicle which has travelled through without stopping will be difficult. Any vehicle being monitored could, in any case, simply stop en route to avoid the offence. Liaison with Kent Police in development of proposals is essential as they would need to enforce any restrictions.

**Figure 3.1 – Through goods vehicle traffic over 7.5T unladen weight – week day 0700-1900**

Destination (to)	Origin (vehicle from)				TOTAL
	A225 nbound Riverhill	A224 sbound Amherst Hill	A225 sbound St Johns Hill	Seal Hollow Road sbound	
A225 sbound Riverhill	0	1	10	0	11
A224 nbound Amherst Hill	3	1	0	0	4
A225 nbound St Johns Hill	13	1	1	0	15
Seal Hollow Rd nbound	0	0	0	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>31</b>

**Figure 3.2 – Through goods vehicle traffic 3.5 to 7.5T unladen weight – weekday 0700-1900**

Destination (to)	Origin (vehicle from)				TOTAL
	A225 nbound Riverhill	A224 sbound Amherst Hill	A225 sbound St Johns Hill	Seal Hollow Road sbound	
A225 sbound Riverhill	0	0	3	1	4
A224 nbound Amherst Hill	3	0	0	0	3
A225 nbound St Johns Hill	6	0	0	0	6
Seal Hollow Rd nbound	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>

**Figure 3.3 – Goods vehicle traffic 3.5T unladen weight and over – travelled through area but delivery/stop en route – weekday 0700-1900**

Destination (to)	Origin (vehicle from)				TOTAL
	A225 nbound Riverhill	A224 sbound Amherst Hill	A225 sbound St Johns Hill	Seal Hollow Road sbound	
A225 sbound Riverhill	13	6	4	1	24
A224 nbound Amherst Hill	7	27	7	5	46
A225 nbound St Johns Hill	10	11	11	2	34
Seal Hollow Rd nbound	4	2	1	12	19
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>123</b>

The volume of HGV traffic generated in the Upper High Street due to the requirements of the businesses to have deliveries or load goods is an important factor in considering a traffic management scheme for the High Street. A visual survey of business types, rear accesses and any localised problems these activities may generate, in practice, has been carried out. The visual survey is intended to complement the delivery and servicing questionnaire study referred to in section 5 of this report. The questionnaire study is intended to develop a more detailed understanding of their requirements and of loading/unloading activity in the area.

From the visual survey, each type of business has been assessed and categorised based on the category of the business. The categories are detailed below;

- *Pubs / restaurants* - (8 in total)
- *Café / Bistro* - (4 in total)
- *Retail large* - (9 in total)
- *Retail small* - (68 in total)
- *Services* - (23 in total)
- *Public buildings* - (1 in total)
- *Private Residence* - (20 in total)
- *Empty building* - (5 in total)

Plan number B1254000 001 at Appendix A details how these properties are distributed throughout the area surveyed.

The survey has allowed us to determine that less than 50% of properties in the area are small retail outlets, deliveries for which may be infrequent and may require only a small or medium sized goods vehicle to carry their goods.

#### **4.1 Properties with Rear Servicing Access**

Plan number B1254000 002 at Appendix A shows which properties have rear access or loading facilities. These properties should not be causing any adverse effects on traffic flows if drivers use the correct facilities.

The majority of the retail properties on the east side of the High Street have rear accesses which can be accessed from Suffolk Way. The retail properties on the west side of the High Street that have rear accesses are located in the Bligh's Walk area and can be accessed via the public car park leading off Pembroke Road. Most of the small retail premises on the west side of High Street do not have rear



servicing facilities, so will need to receive deliveries from vehicles parked on the carriageway. The extent and frequency of unloading requirements will be determined from the questionnaire survey (see section 5).

Virtually none of the premises to the south of the junction of London Road (A224) with High Street (A225) have rear accesses. However, the majority of premises in this area are residential. The remainder are either small retail or service providers, but any loading and unloading requirements could be expected to disrupt traffic flows in this area. The extent and frequency of unloading requirements will be determined from the questionnaire survey (see section 5).

## **4.2 Damage to Properties and Highway Caused by Vehicles**

Another aspect considered in the site review was localised damage to both infrastructure and street furniture that could be directly attributed to larger vehicles passing through the area.

Many sections of the footway which were originally surfaced using large style paving slabs have been replaced with smaller new style slabs (*photo 4.1.1*) which show no signs of damage and even the few remaining larger slabs which have cracks may, due to their age, have been broken by smaller vehicles (*photo 4.1.2*).



*Photo 4.1.1*



*Photo 4.1.2*

No specific damage to buildings was observed, which could be attributed to impact from passing vehicles. The footways and highway furniture does not exhibit wear or damage beyond that which would be expected in a busy urban street and the kerbs show few signs of the wear or damage that would be expected if continual collision with them as a result of vehicles mounting them takes place.

The area of the High Street that appears to have, in the past, had the most serious problems with loading issues is the portion just north of the junction between the A225 and A224, where the road widens out naturally, in front of the public house. This forms a natural parking/loading area, which is often used for deliveries by the brewery to the public house, for instance. This area has had new paving and bollards installed in recent years to prevent vehicles from mounting or damaging the footway. There are also various parking restrictions in this area to control the location and duration of parking at this point of the High Street.

The extent of the damage to the remaining length of High Street surveyed suggests vehicles driving on to the pavement occasionally, outside premises, to collect a person or package infrequently but causing the paving slabs to crack and minor collisions with existing signing or furniture. The damage does not suggest use by large goods vehicles, however.

## 5 Delivery and Servicing Questionnaire Study

A study has been carried out of delivery patterns in Sevenoaks Town Centre. This has been achieved by means of a questionnaire-based survey during February 2010 of all business premises in the High Street. A covering letter and questionnaire was distributed by post using a postcode address file (PAF) supplied by Kent County Council (KCC) to all premises in the High Street (NB the questionnaire was distributed to premises in London Road and Pembroke Road also, as part of a wider study). A FREEPOST enveloped was provided for ease to encourage businesses to respond. A sample questionnaire and covering letter, as sent to all of the business premises in the High Street, is shown in Appendix B.

The study has enabled general delivery requirements and patterns to be established, this being an essential element to be accommodated within any traffic management scheme promoted.

### 5.1 Study Analysis

The response rate from businesses along Sevenoaks High Street was 35%, slightly higher than the overall response rate for the overall study area (29%).

The results from businesses along Sevenoaks High Street reveal that 67% of delivery and dispatch is undertaken by cars or vans and 21% is carried out by lorries. One of the main reasons for this split in vehicle type could be due to the type of businesses along the High Street. As can be seen in drawing number B1254000 001, only a small proportion of the businesses are large retail outlets, and it is these premises that are more likely to require deliveries and despatch undertaken by lorries.

The majority of businesses along the High Street are smaller outlets or services that require smaller items to be delivered and not bulk pallets. These deliveries are often carried out using cars and vans, which are suitable for the purpose.

**Figure 5.1 - Type of vehicle used for delivery and despatch along the High Street**

Vehicle Type	Delivery		Despatch		Total	
	Number	% age	Number	% age	Number	% age
Car/small van	15	27%	10	43%	25	29%
Large van	24	44%	8	35%	32	38%
Lorry rigid	9	16%	3	13%	12	14%
Lorry Articulated	4	7%	2	9%	6	7%
Not specified	3	5%	0	0%	3	4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>

The times that delivery and servicing is undertaken is an important aspect to assess the impacts the delivery and servicing has on the traffic flows in Sevenoaks urban area. As demonstrated in figure 5.2 below, the majority of deliveries and servicing is carried out between 08.30 and 18.30.

**Figure 5.2 – Deliveries/despaches by times of day – High Street**

Time	Number	% age
Before 0830	6	16%
0830 – 1830	29	76%
After 1830	0	0%
Combination	0	0%
Not specified	3	8%
TOTAL	38	100%

As there are no loading or unloading restrictions delivery/servicing in Sevenoaks High Street, the delivery companies are able to deliver from the highway at any time of the day. The majority of these occur between 08.30 and 18.30. This is not surprising in view of the opening times of the majority of businesses located along the High Street.

The results reveal that 84% of businesses are unable to set the time of their delivery suggesting the time deliveries are made are influenced by other factors such as local restrictions and traffic, or the delivery schedule of the carrier.

As part of the HGV Traffic Investigation report, site visits identified the premises along the High Street with rear access or loading areas. The results are shown in drawing B1254000 002. This information has been supplemented by the results of the delivery questionnaire.

It is interesting that despite the number of properties which appear to have rear access or a loading area available, 78% of businesses along the High Street revealed in the questionnaire that the highway in front of the premises is used for access to deliver and despatch goods. It is possible that this could be related to the type of vehicles used as it may be easier for deliveries by car/van to be carried out by parking on the highway, dropping off the required goods and then continuing with their delivery schedule.

**Figure 5.3 - Area used for access along the High Street**

Access type used	Number	Percentage
Highway in front of premises	25	78%
A private area off the highway	3	9%
Other	0	0%
Not specified	2	13%
TOTAL	32	100%

This could also be due to the convenience, as properties to the east side of the High Street access their loading areas from Suffolk Way and properties on the west of the High Street access from Bligh’s Walk. By using the highway in the front of the premises, delivery companies are able to continue north or south along the High Street after their drop off without the need to divert. It must be taken into consideration that this situation could be exacerbated in the future with one way traffic proposals in the town centre, as vehicles delivering and servicing would be forced to divert their route if rear accesses are used and therefore there may be an increase in the number of vehicles parking in the highway to avoid this.

## 6 Heavy Goods Vehicle Operating Centres

### 6.1 Background

The Goods Vehicles (Licencing of Operators) Act 1995 requires all operators of goods vehicles to make application to the Traffic Commissioners for a licence for the operation of vehicles from the desired operating centre. The work of the traffic Commissioners falls under the remit of VOSA (the Vehicle Operator and Services Agency), which is an executive agency of the Department for Transport. The relationship to the Department of Transport is similar to that of the Highways Agency.

The Traffic Commissioners consider licence applications based on a number of parameters, such as suitability of site and facilities to allow the vehicles to be maintained adequately, and with due regard to the adjoining environment. Approval is granted for the operation of a set number of vehicles and (where appropriate) trailers.

The Act requires that applications for O Licences are published locally, and this is achieved through a publication called 'Applications and Decisions'. A similar process is operated for public transport services called 'Notices and Proceedings'. A local Authority, which is also a Planning Authority, is entitled to object to the granting of O Licences on environmental grounds, and additionally, the Traffic Commissioner can impose conditions on the licence. He may also consider road safety issues in consideration of an O Licence application.

### 6.2 Review of Licences in the Sevenoaks Area

A review has been carried out of known Operator Licences in the Sevenoaks area to assist in understanding potential heavy goods vehicle operating patterns which these may generate. 167 Operating Centres were identified within the Sevenoaks District Council area, although none of these were located within the area bounded by A21, A225, Seal Hollow Road and A25.

However, there are groups of Operating Centres located just to the north of the A25, near to either A224 or A225. These can be summarised as follows:-

Location/Area	O Licences	Total Vehicles	Total Trailers
N Downs Business Park – Dunton Green (near A224)	5	13	0
West Kent Cold Stores – Dunton Green (near A224)*	7	16	2
Sevenoaks Quarry – Bat & Ball Road (near A225)	5	60	0
Sevenoaks Enterprise Centre – Bat & Ball Road (near A225)	2	4	3
Vestry Rd Ind Est (near A225)	1	6	2
Pitstop Motel – Riverhill	3	4	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>8</b>

Table 6.2



The Operating Centres listed in table 6.2 are located within 2 miles or thereabouts of the town centre.

\* N.B. The West Kent Cold Stores site at Dunton Green is the subject of planning approval for mixed use redevelopment, comprising 500 homes and some commercial premises, which will remove a significant number of licenced vehicles in the area. However, during construction, there may be additional construction traffic running through Sevenoaks and Riverhead.

### 7.1 Conclusions

The study has identified a number of potential factors which may contribute to the volume of goods vehicle traffic in the High Street at Sevenoaks. These include:-

- *High Street, Sevenoaks forms a part of the A225. This is a principal route, so can be expected to perform the function of a distributor route for this general area. However, long distance traffic would be expected to use the primary route network (M25; M26; A21 and A25) in this area, rather than travelling along A225.*
- *As a sub-regional shopping centre, Sevenoaks generates goods vehicle traffic requiring access to the town centre for delivery and servicing purposes.*
- *Significant goods vehicle operating centres are located to the north of the town centre, adjacent to A225 (quarry; waste site; business park) and A224 (cold stores). These generate goods vehicle traffic.*
- *A225 route from Bat and Ball junction to A21 Morley's Roundabout and vice versa is shorter than A25 and A21 route, through Riverhead Square – this could encourage some through journeys, although the study suggests that the level of through goods vehicle traffic is very low, and there is no evidence to indicate its use by long distance traffic, in preference to the primary route network.*
- *The section of the High Street between A224 London Road junction, and A225 Bat and Ball junction forms a part of a designated high load route. This is to avoid the low bridge on A25 at Sunny Bank, near Riverhead, which has a height restriction of 14ft 9in. To put this in perspective, only the highest goods vehicles will need to avoid the bridge. As an example, double deck buses would be able to pass under the bridge.*
- *Although a reasonable proportion of the premises in the High Street have access for servicing away from the High Street, servicing of the remaining premises will need to be carried out from the High Street, so will result in the need for the operation and parking of goods vehicles in the carriageway for this purpose for the foreseeable future. A study has shown that some premises which have rear loading access have deliveries from vehicles parked in the highway outside. It should be noted that if any measures are taken to reduce through goods vehicle traffic, owing to the relatively low volume of such traffic, and continued presence and operation of such vehicles for servicing, any perceived improvement which may be anticipated by the public might not be achieved.*

## 7.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been developed based on a number of themes, for consideration:-

### 7.2.1 Good Vehicle Operation Management

The requirement for operation of goods vehicles both in connection with servicing of premises and also in the context of vehicle operating centres suggests that initiatives aimed at influencing the management of such operations to mitigate the impact of goods vehicle operation could be worth investigating further. It is possible that environmental benefits could be achieved by engaging stakeholders in the development of voluntary frameworks to achieve this.

Conversely, working with operators and other Agencies to achieve agreements on routeing for goods vehicle traffic to and from local operating centres may be beneficial.

Three areas recommended for further consideration are:-

- *Development of a Freight Quality Partnership for the Town Centre and surrounding area – this might include, for instance, agreements on the hours during which deliveries occur; the size of vehicles used; the access routes taken.*
- *Work with VOSA, Sevenoaks District Council and goods vehicle operators to ensure that Operator Licences granted in the area include appropriate safeguards for road safety and environmental factors in the town centre.*
- *Quiet, out of hours deliveries can reduce congestion, cut pollution in local areas and save businesses time and money. The Department for Transport, with the Noise Abatement Society and the Freight Transport Association, has formed a Consortium to take forward a Quiet Deliveries Demonstration Scheme. The scheme aims to develop best practice and realise the benefits across local neighbourhoods. HGV deliveries in towns and cities often take place during night-time or weekend periods to avoid disturbance to local residents. However, this increases traffic and carbon emissions at peak hours. The Consortium is now looking for sites for six or more quiet delivery demonstration trials at retail premises across England this year. The trials aim to show the potential benefits from curfew relaxations for quiet deliveries whilst protecting local residents from excess noise. It is possible that Sevenoaks could bid for this, and such a scheme may provide benefits from reducing traffic congestion impacts in the High Street, as well as targeting improvements in air quality.*

It is notable that the loading/unloading questionnaire has indicated that even premises with rear loading facilities have deliveries from the carriageway. Additionally, the majority of the loading/unloading takes place during the period 0830 – 1830 hrs. The development of a freight quality partnership (FQP) could assist in reducing the impact of deliveries on traffic congestion and the environment in the

High Street, and it is recommended, therefore, that priority is given to further consideration of this.

## **7.2.2 Traffic Management Measures**

### **(a) Restricting the Operation of Goods Vehicles**

The goods vehicle traffic survey has identified a low level of through goods vehicle traffic, with significantly more traffic of this nature present for the purpose of access to premises for servicing and delivery purposes. This suggests that any perception of benefit which the public may have through banning such traffic will be diluted by the continued presence and operation of such vehicles for servicing purposes. The potential for goods vehicle restrictions to generate significant opposition from residents and others on routes where traffic has been perceived to, or actually have diverted should not be underestimated, along with the difficulty of achieving agreement from business operators affected by the restrictions.

It is not possible to prohibit goods vehicles from operating in the High Street for servicing purposes as this would, effectively, create an unreasonable constraint on the operation of businesses in the High Street, and especially those which do not have alternative facilities for loading and unloading off the highway.

However, the implementation of restrictions in the High Street may have a marginal effect on the environment by reducing goods vehicle traffic, although it should be borne in mind that the transferred traffic will have a negative effect in the areas to which it relocates, for example, A25 through Riverhead Square (also a Sevenoaks DC AQMA).

It would be necessary to seek the support of Kent Police for the implementation of restrictions as these would need to be enforced. This may not be straightforward owing to the presence of a much higher proportion of goods vehicles in the area for servicing of premises, rendering enforcement difficult, and increasing the likelihood that members of the public would perceive that vehicles present are abusing the restriction rather than needing to be there to service the businesses.

Any restrictions proposed would need to take account of the requirement to maintain a high vehicle diversion route to avoid the low bridge on A25 at Sunny Bank, and would also be subject to checks on existing highway layouts at Pembroke Road/London Road and Pembroke Road/High Street traffic signalised junctions to ensure that heavy goods vehicles can carry out the manoeuvres without encroaching, for instance, into right turn lanes where traffic queues (e.g. the left turn from Pembroke Road to A225 High Street). In this instance, increased goods vehicle flows might block the left turn whilst they wait for traffic in the right turn lane in High Street to clear.

Having mind to the above factors, the following are considered worthy of further consideration and consultation, although the proviso that the level of environmental, traffic management or road safety benefit achieved, or perceived to be achieved by the general public, may be limited:-

- *Option A - Consider implementation of an experimental environmental goods vehicle restriction of 7.5 tonnes (except for access) in both directions, on A225 High Street, between the A224 London Road*

*junction and Pembroke Road junctions. It should be noted that Pembroke Road would need to be re-designated as part of the A224 and A225 high load route, in lieu of the restricted section. This would prohibit through operation of both rigid and articulated heavy goods vehicles, but such vehicles could still access the area for delivery purposes. (This could remove around 30 vehicles per day – 0700-1900)*

- *Option B - Consider implementation of an experimental environmental goods vehicle restriction of 17 tonnes (except for access) in both directions, on A225 High Street, between the A224 London Road junction and Pembroke Road junctions. It should be noted that Pembroke Road would need to be re-designated as part of the A224 and A225 high load route, in lieu of the restricted section. This would prohibit through operation of articulated heavy goods vehicles only.*
- *Option C - Consider implementation of an experimental environmental goods vehicle restriction of 7.5 tonnes (except for access) in one direction only, on A225 High Street, between the A224 London Road junction and Pembroke Road junctions. It should be noted that Pembroke Road would need to be re-designated as part of the A224 and A225 high load route, in lieu of the restricted section. This would prohibit through operation of both rigid and articulated heavy goods vehicles in one direction only. (This could remove around 15 vehicles per day – 0700-1900)*
- *Option D - Consider implementation of an experimental environmental goods vehicle restriction of 7.5 tonnes (except for access) in both directions, in the section of A225 High Street, between its junctions with Oak Lane and Pembroke Road. It should be noted that Pembroke Road would need to be re-designated as part of the A224 and A225 high load route, in lieu of the restricted section. This would prohibit through operation of both rigid and articulated heavy goods vehicles. (This could remove around 30 vehicles per day – 0700-1900).*

*This has the additional benefit over the other options that the through goods vehicle traffic will be removed from the section of High Street south of A224/A225 junction, past the school and Knole Park. However, through goods vehicle traffic would need to use A21 and A25 as a diversionary route – these are the appropriate primary routes, in any case.*

The areas covered by options A to D are shown on drawing B1254000 003.

**(b) Other Restrictions**

In Section 1 of this report, mention was made of the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board’s (JTB) decision to investigate traffic management measures within the town centre area in the context of addressing air quality objectives.

The JTB had in mind testing options for making part of High Street one way. Although this proposal is beyond the scope of this study, it should be noted that implementation of such a proposal would offer the opportunity for managing the road space in the High Street more effectively, and give the opportunity to improve



pedestrian provision by providing bays for parking and loading, whilst widening the footways in other areas, owing to the need to accommodate through traffic in one direction only. Any proposal for restricting through goods vehicles does not give the opportunity for space reallocation because parts of the High Street are relatively narrow and the whole width is needed to accommodate traffic in both directions.

The disbenefits are the need to divert displaced traffic along other roads, and through other junctions, thus increasing traffic in those areas, with potential affects on the environment, traffic management, road safety and junction operation.

However, notwithstanding this, the case for combining other traffic management measures with restrictions on through goods vehicle operation, to enable road space in the High Street to be reallocated should not be overlooked. Such proposals would need thorough testing, to ensure an informed decision is made. This was proposed in the AQMA study proposal.

### **(c) Local Highway Management Measures**

The site study (section 4 of this report) identified areas of footway where damage has been caused by vehicles mounting the footway. It is recommended that these areas be considered to determine whether minor highway alterations could be made to mitigate this. In particular, this should be considered in relation to the outcome of the delivery questionnaire study, which highlights the areas where there is most need for deliveries to be made from the highway. Such measures could include:-

- *Provision of bollards at key locations to prevent footways from being mounted.*
- *Renewal of broken paving slabs.*
- *Minor kerb realignment, where appropriate.*
- *Use of strategically placed items of street furniture to minimise unsatisfactory manoeuvres.*

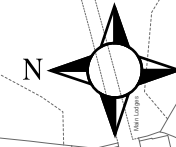
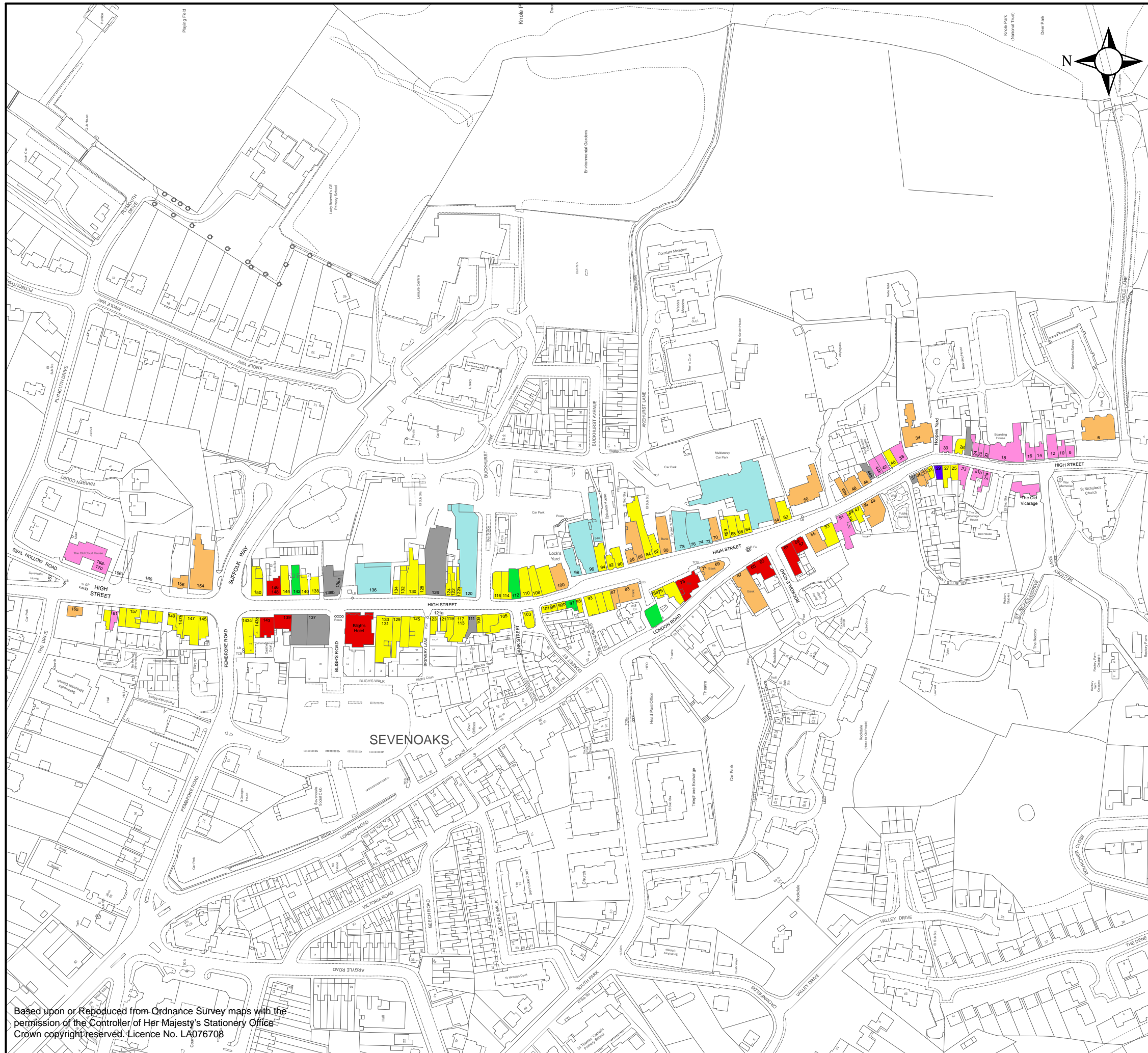
## Appendix A Drawings



Drawing B1254000/001 – Sevenoaks Goods Vehicle Study – Retail Premises and Classifications

Drawing B1254000/002 – Sevenoaks Goods Vehicle Study – Retail Premises with Rear Access or Loading Area

Drawing B1254000/003 – Extent of proposed experimental environmental weight restrictions – Options A to D

Drawing B1254000/004 – Sevenoaks Goods Vehicle Study – Retail Premises using highway for loading







Drawing number		B1254000/001					
Notes							
KEY		Property Classification					
■ Pubs / Restaurants							
■ Cafe/Bistro							
■ Retail Large							
■ Retail Small							
■ Services							
■ Public Buildings							
■ Private Residence							
■ Empty Building							
0	01/12/09	Original	APM	GC	DB	DV	
Rev	Revision Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Check'd	Rev'd	App'd	
Client							
							
							
Miller House, 43 - 51 Lower Stone Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6GB, England Tel: 01622 666000 Fax: 01622 695085 www.jacobs.com							
Project							
Sevenoaks Goods Vehicle Study							
Drawing title							
Retail premises/classifications							
Drawing status							
For approval							
Scale		NTS		Do not scale			
Drawing number						Rev	
B1254000/001						0	
This drawing is not to be used in whole or part other than for the intended purpose and project as defined on this drawing. Refer to the contract for full terms and conditions.							

Based upon or Reproduced from Ordnance Survey maps with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown copyright reserved. Licence No. LA076708

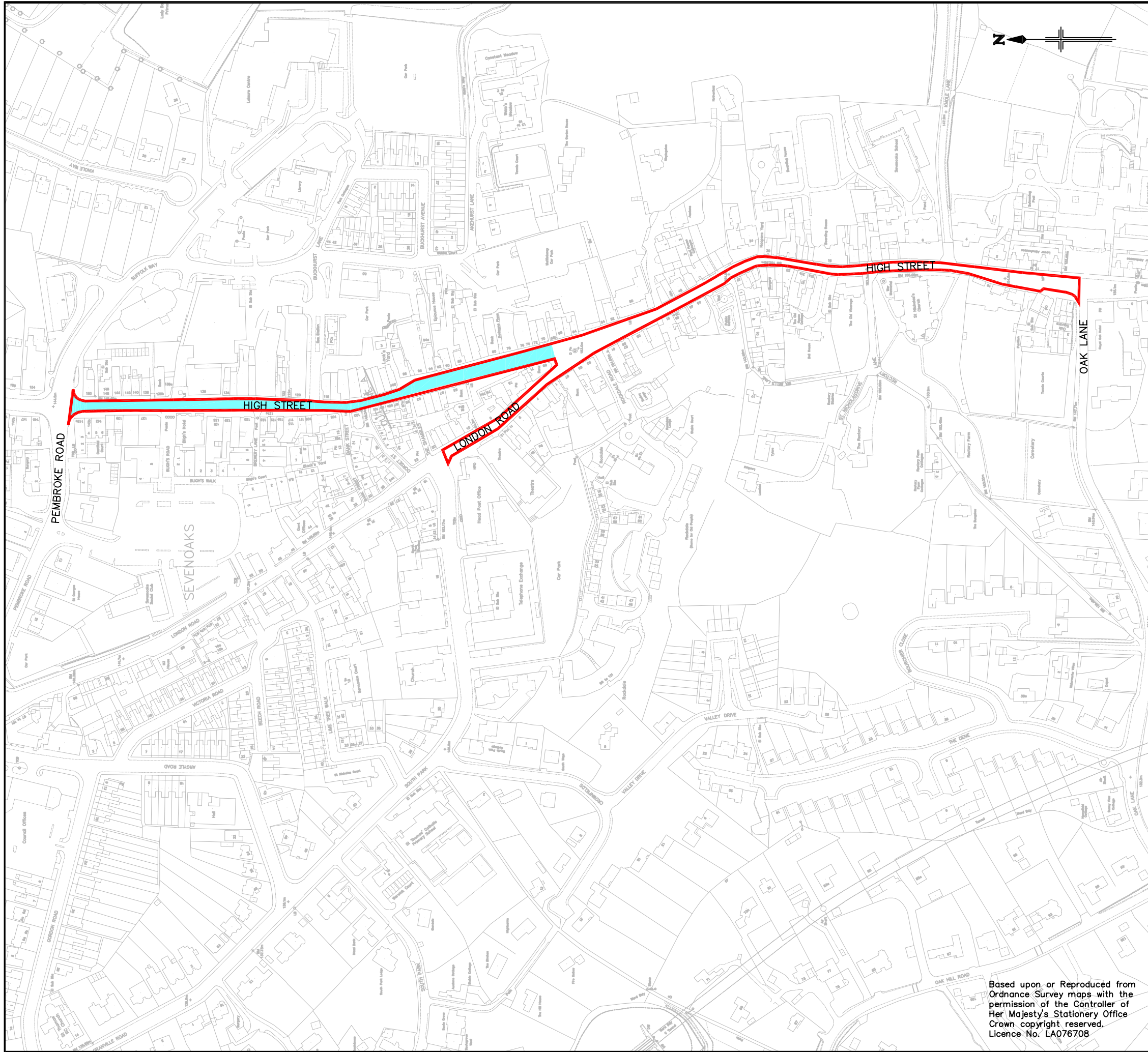




Drawing number		B1254000/002					
Notes							
KEY		 Properties with rear access or loading area  Properties with no rear access or loading area					
0	18/01/10	Original	APM	GC	DB	DV	
Rev	Revision Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Check'd	Revw'd	App'd	
Client							
							
 Miller House, 43 - 51 Lower Stone Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6GB, England Tel: 01622 666000 Fax: 01622 695085 www.jacobs.com							
Project							
Sevenoaks Goods Vehicle Study							
Drawing title							
Retail premises with rear access or loading area							
Drawing status							
For approval							
Scale			NTS		Do not scale		
Drawing number						Rev	
B1254000/002						0	
This drawing is not to be used in whole or part other than for the intended purpose and project as defined on this drawing. Refer to the contract for full terms and conditions.							

Based upon or Reproduced from Ordnance Survey maps with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown copyright reserved. Licence No. LA076708





Drawing number **B1254000/003**


Notes


Key:

- Option A Experimental 7.5 Tonnes Restriction Except for Access
- Option B Experimental 17 Tonnes Restriction Except for Access
- Option C Experimental 7.5 Tonnes Restriction Except for Access in One Direction Only
- Option D Experimental 7.5 Tonnes Restriction Except for Access

0	17.02.10	Option Details	DB	KB	GC	DMV
Rev	Revision Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Check'd	Rev'd	App'd

Client





Miller House, 43 - 51 Lower Stone Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6GB, England  
Tel: 01622 666000 Fax: 01622 695085 www.jacobs.com

Project

**Sevenoaks Area  
Goods Vehicle Study**

Drawing title

**Extent of Options for  
Heavy Goods  
Vehicle restrictions**

Drawing status

**First issue**

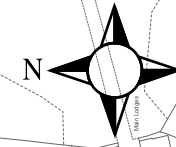
Scale	NTS @ A3	Do not scale
-------	----------	--------------



Drawing number	Rev
<b>B1254000/003</b>	<b>0</b>

Based upon or Reproduced from Ordnance Survey maps with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown copyright reserved. Licence No. LA076708

This drawing is not to be used in whole or part other than for the intended purpose and project as defined on this drawing. Refer to the contract for full terms and conditions.





Drawing number		B1254000/004					
Notes							
KEY		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: red; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Properties with rear access or loading area</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: grey; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Properties with no rear access or loading area</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 10px; height: 10px; background-color: black; border-radius: 50%; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Properties loading in front of Highway</li> </ul>					
0	07/0410	Original	APM	LM	DB	DV	
Rev	Revision Date	Purpose of revision	Drawn	Check'd	Rev'd	App'd	
Client							
							
							
Miller House, 43 - 51 Lower Stone Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6GB, England Tel: 01622 666000 Fax: 01622 695085 www.jacobs.com							
Project							
Sevenoaks Goods Vehicle Study							
Drawing title							
Retail premises using highway for loading							
Drawing status							
For approval							
Scale			NTS		Do not scale		
Drawing number						Rev	
B1254000/004						0	
This drawing is not to be used in whole or part other than for the intended purpose and project as defined on this drawing. Refer to the contract for full terms and conditions.							

Based upon or Reproduced from Ordnance Survey maps with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown copyright reserved. Licence No. LA076708

**Appendix B Sample Delivery Questionnaire and Letter**



Email: Laura.mcgrillen@jacobs.com  
Direct Dial: 01622 666167  
Fax:  
Ask for:  
Your ref:  
Our ref:  
Date: 9th February 2010

Dear Duty Manager

**Sevenoaks urban area – Business servicing Questionnaire**

Kent Highway Services are working in partnership with Sevenoaks District Council to undertake a study of current servicing and delivery requirements to all businesses in the Sevenoaks urban area.

To fully understand the current servicing and delivery arrangements, frequencies, vehicles used etc. at your address in Sevenoaks we have compiled a short questionnaire and would be grateful if you could complete this to assist with the study.

A Freepost envelope is enclosed for your convenience, all completed questionnaires to be returned by Wednesday 10th March, thank you in advance for your participation.

Yours sincerely,



Laura McGrillen  
Transport Planner



**Sevenoaks urban area – Business servicing questionnaire**

1. Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

2. Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

4. Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you dispatch from your business at this address? (Please tick)

Yes  No  (If 'no' please move to question 7)

6. Are dispatched goods transferred as: (Please tick)

Items

Bulk pallets/boxes

Combination

7. Do you receive goods at this address as incoming deliveries? (Please tick)

Yes  No

8. What size of vehicle is used for each of the following purposes at this address:

a) Dispatch (please tick)

Car/small van  (e.g. Fiesta)

Large van  (e.g. Transit)

Lorry (rigid)

Lorry (articulated)

Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

c) Delivery

Car/small van  (e.g. Fiesta)

Large van  (e.g. Transit)

Lorry (rigid)

Lorry (articulated)

Other (please specify)

\_\_\_\_\_

9. What time do deliveries/servicing to this address normally take place? (Please tick)

Before 0830

0830 – 1830

After 1830

10. Are you able to set the time of the delivery? (Please tick)

Yes  No

11. How frequent do your deliveries/servicing to this address take place?

Once a week   
2-3 times a week   
3-4 times a week   
5-6 times a week   
Daily

12. On which days do deliveries/servicing to this address occur?

Mon-Fri only   
Sat only   
Sun only   
Combination   
Anytime

13. Are the servicing vehicles:

Your own   
Suppliers   
Delivery company   
Combination

14. Do the delivery/servicing vehicles gain access from:

Highway in front  
of premises:   
A private area  
off the highway   
Other (please specify)

---

15. Are there opportunities to use motorcycle delivery services to this address?

Yes  No

16. Is secure motorcycle parking available at this address?

Yes  No

**Please return the questionnaire in the attached FREEPOST envelope or send to:  
Laura McGrillen  
Kent Highway Services  
Miller House  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME15 6GB**