

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **9th March 2010**

Present:

Cllr. Burgess (Chairman);
Mr M A Wickham (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Ayres, Mrs Blanford, Clokie, Cowley, Heyes, Woodford.
Mr M J Angell, Mr R E King, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mrs E Tweed, Mr J N Wedgbury.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (iii) Councillor Ayres attended as Substitute Member for Councillor Clarkson.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Clarkson, Claughton, Mr P M Hill, Mr T Reed (KALC).

Also Present:

Cllr. Mrs Heaton.

Phil Gilbert (Local Transport & Development Manager – KHS), Carol Valentine (Community Delivery Manager – KHS), Jamie Watson (Project Implementation Manager – KCC), Paul Jackson (Head of Environmental Services – ABC), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

466 Minutes

(a) Joint Transportation Board - 8th December 2009

The Chairman of the Transport Forum said he was pleased to report that as a result of responses received during the consultation, including one from the Transport Forum and this Board, Southern Railways had decided not to go ahead with its proposals to remove the direct Ashford to Brighton service as part of its future timetable.

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of this Board held on the 8th December 2009 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

(b) Special Joint Transportation Board – 20th January 2010

A Member referred to the statement in the Minutes that “15% of accidents were caused by speed alone”. He considered this was quite clearly untrue as whilst speed

may contribute and may even be the most likely cause of accidents, it was never the sole cause and statistically high speed motorways were the safest roads to drive on. The Chairman said that whilst this may be correct, the Minutes were there to be a correct record of what was said at the Meeting and this statement was said.

Another Member asked what would happen next regarding the A28 Speed Limit Review given that Bethersden Parish Council had given such an in-depth presentation at the Special Meeting. The Chairman clarified that Officers from Jacobs and Kent Highway Services were meeting with representatives of Bethersden Parish Council to look at their proposals and it was hoped a way forward could be found. A report responding to the request for a speed limit review of the Bethersden stretch of the A28 was scheduled to come to the Joint Transportation Board at its next meeting on the 15th June.

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Special meeting of this Board held on the 20th January 2010 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

467 Petitions

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.1 Mrs Bruce submitted a petition requesting traffic calming measures for Highfield Road, Willesborough. She said it was the main thoroughfare for some large housing estates, two schools and also a main route to both the Orbital Park and South Willesborough so did carry a lot of traffic. Vehicles currently drove at high speeds up and down Highfield Road and there was a growing concern amongst all residents, but especially parents, about safety in terms of crossing the road and children playing nearby. Mrs Bruce said she had collected 96 signatures thus far in support of traffic calming. Interactive digital warning signs, speed bumps or a 20mph zone were all things that she hoped would be considered.

Mrs Bruce then came forward and presented the petition to the Vice-Chairman. The Chairman advised that it would be referred to Kent Highway Services as the responsible Authority for Highways in the County.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.1 Mr Blake submitted a petition requesting a safer road crossing at the junction of Church Road, Osborne Road and Bentley Road, Willesborough. He said as Practice Manager of the Willesborough Health Centre he had been asked to co-ordinate submission of the petition on behalf of St Mary's Church and patients of the Surgery and it now had 491 signatures. A significant amount of people came to the Health Centre on foot and there was a lot of concern in the area about traffic speed, the lack of a dropped kerb for disabled transport, the lack of visibility because of the bend in the road and the hedges and the general increase in traffic to and from Boys Hall Road. The layout of this particular junction and the speed of traffic in the area were the two significant causes of the problem and if no action was forthcoming there was a high risk of a serious accident. He hoped the possibilities for a new safer crossing could be examined.

Mr Blake then came forward and presented the petition to the Vice-Chairman. The Chairman advised that it would be referred to Kent Highway Services as the responsible Authority for Highways in the County.

468 Tracker Report

The Chairman drew Members attention to the Tracker of Decisions.

A Member referred to the proposed traffic calming measures in Church Hill, Kingsnorth and the original proposal for traffic lights at the junction with Ashford Road. He said he would like to arrange a meeting involving Parish Councillors, the Ward Member and KHS Officers to see what could be done here and if traffic lights were still a possibility. He was not sure what money was available but he would like to discuss the matter further. Mr Gilbert said he would be in contact to arrange this meeting. The Chairman also advised that there was further information about this issue under the report on Section 106 Agreements later on this Agenda.

Resolved:

That the Tracker Report be received and noted.

469 Proposed Introduction/Amendments of Parking Restrictions in Victoria Ward Area

Mr Watson introduced the report which detailed the results of the recent statutory consultation process undertaken in Victoria Ward, Ashford. Parking management proposals had been developed in consultation with Ashford Borough Council to introduce and amend parking restrictions in order to protect local residents and other stakeholder's ability to park once the Victoria Way improvement scheme was introduced. He also directed Members attention to plans of the proposals which had been tabled. He outlined the proposals and how they would affect Victoria Crescent, George Street, Victoria Road as well as Bowens Field and Jemmett Road.

The consultation process had generated 22 responses from just over 150 affected properties. These comprised two letters of support, ten identical letters with different correspondence addresses requesting the scheme extent be changed and ten other assorted objections. Four objections had been received regarding the proposed Controlled Parking Zone in Victoria Crescent.

A Member said that she was concerned that residents in Jemmett Road would not have the option of obtaining exemption permits and wondered where those without driveways and garages would park. Mr Watson said that as he understood the properties had parking at the rear but he would check this point.

One of the Ward Members for the area asked if it had been possible to deal with the concerns raised by residents at the recent consultation meeting held at Charter House. He knew there were issues with the proposals which needed to be dealt with but on the whole he welcomed the proposals. Mr Watson explained that residents of Victoria Crescent had requested that the times of restrictions should be reduced but

it had been explained why these were needed from an enforcement point of view. There was a danger that parking could be displaced further into Bowens Field and Chichester Close and this would be kept under review and if there was a desire to extend the scheme at a later date this could be accommodated.

Resolved:

- That (i) the proposed parking management scheme be implemented.**
- (ii) subject to a review of both Traffic Regulation Orders, correction of any errors and agreement of the final documents with Ashford Borough Council Officers, the Kent County Council (Various Roads Ashford) (Street Parking Places) Order 2010 and the Kent County Council (Various Roads Ashford) (Waiting Restrictions) Order 2010 be made.**

470 Bank Street Alterations

Mr Watson gave an update on the Bank Street Alterations. He said that parking enforcement in Bank Street would be able to commence shortly. The improved and additional signage had been put in place and the necessary lining including marking of disabled bays, loading bays and taxi ranks would take place as soon as the weather allowed. There was still a lot of grit on the road which had prevented line painting. The Traffic Regulation Order was currently out for consultation and would be implemented as soon as possible.

A Member read out a statement on behalf of another Member regarding an accident he had had in Bank Street because of the lack of a distinctive marking between the kerb and the road. The Member said that he was aware of numerous other similar accidents and although a temporary yellow and black adhesive tape had been put in place some time ago to differentiate between the kerb and the road this had quickly deteriorated. This remained a hazard and was one which Kent Highway Services were aware of so the Member questioned whether Officers cared about the issue or just hoped it would go away. Safety should be of paramount importance when it came to Highways and this had been an issue for over two years. Mr Watson accepted that for far too long this issue had not been completed. The need for a visual line to be placed along the kerb had been recognised and a works order was placed some time ago. It had been scheduled for late summer 2009 but the specialist materials had not arrived. By the time they had arrived the weather had deteriorated and the line could not now be put in until the weather had improved and the temperature was high enough (5°C and rising). This work would be done as soon as possible and Mr Watson said he could only apologise sincerely for the delay.

One of the Ward Members for the area said there was also concern about buses and taxis not being able to get up Bank Street because of all the parked cars. He asked if once the restrictions were properly implemented the lining would be thicker and more prominent than elsewhere in the Town Centre as he wanted it to be very clear that you could not park in Bank Street. Mr Watson said that the lining would be the minimum size (50mm) to fit in with the philosophies of Shared Space. If it did not prove successful the whole Shared Space scheme was still in its review period. Also,

the temporary red and white blocks would also be removed once the proper restrictions were in place.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted.

471 Thirlmere, Kennington

The report provided a response to an issue raised at previous Joint Transportation Board meetings where concern had been expressed about highway safety matters at this junction.

The County Council Member for the area said she understood the points being made in the report but there was a definite perception of a problem here and the elderly residents who lived in Thirlmere and still wanted to drive should be treated fairly and equally and not have their concerns dismissed. There was poor visibility when exiting this junction and the residents of Thirlmere should not be left too scared to exit their own road. She did not understand why something could not be done to give them peace of mind. This issue was being raised at the Kennington Forum every month and would not simply go away. Another small warning sign would simply not be enough to solve the problem. Another Member said that in planning terms a “perceived” safety concern was a material planning consideration so could the same principle not be used here? As elected Councillors was it not their duty to do everything they could to alleviate such concerns? He urged a more “can do” attitude across the board.

A Member said that as far as he could see the only solution would be to install speed bumps in Grasmere Road to slow the traffic down as it crossed the Thirlmere junction. Officers agreed to take this matter away and investigate the feasibility of installing speed bumps. Mr Gilbert said that the majority of drivers in the area were local residents who knew the roads well and felt comfortable enough to drive more quickly, so he agreed that additional signage may not be the solution.

Resolved:

That Officers be asked to investigate the possibilities for installing speed bumps in Grasmere Road, Kennington.

472 Feedback on the Winter Maintenance Programme for the Ashford Borough

Following the recent extreme winter weather conditions in the County, it was reported that Kent Highway Services would be producing a report in late March outlining how Kent as a whole fared during the winter weather. A further report looking at the winter programme policy as a whole would be discussed and debated in July. The KCC Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste had welcomed feedback from local Members and Parish Councils regarding their experiences of the recent inclement weather and local gritting priorities. Members’

views were therefore sought. Mrs Valentine further explained that this review would involve a large scale consultation exercise commencing in April including the Chief Executives of District Councils, local County and District Members and visits to the Parishes to get the views of all concerned. Any views given at this meeting would also be fed into that process.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Shorter of Kingsnorth Parish Council and representing the Governors of Kingsnorth Church of England Primary School attended and spoke on this item. He said that he had been made aware of a number of complaints during the recent snowy weather in both of his roles. One problem, which he was sure was not unique to Kingsnorth, was the lack of treatment of estate roads. The condition of the estate roads meant that most people could not get as far as the main roads, which had been treated, and consequently could not get to work or school. The lack of treatment at Church Hill, Kingsnorth had left sheet ice and this had caused the closure of the Primary School due to health and safety concerns. The school had a duty of care to their staff and children and that was put at risk by the conditions of the surrounding roads. Mr Shorter said he understood why Kent Highways concentrated efforts on the main routes but considered there should be some sort of financial cost benefit analysis undertaken for clearing/not clearing some of the smaller estate roads as a lot of people would have lost a lot of money and children would have lost some of their education as a result of not being able to get out on the roads. There was also a growing call for community action and for residents being encouraged to clear paths and roads outside their own properties, but this was not possible for all and had to be balanced with the responsible authorities' duty of care.

The issue was then opened up for feedback from Members and the following points were made: -

- Whilst the issue of limited resources was understood the last two winters in particular had been severe and this could turn out to be a trend.
- Pavements had been treacherous and the busy routes in the Town Centre appeared not to have been treated at all. There were countless slips and accidents as a result and older people in particular had raised this issue. The footpath at Jemmett Road between the Town Centre and the College was given as one example.
- Most people were willing to clear the areas in front of their own homes but there was concern about the issue of liability. Indemnities may have to be considered. There was a general feeling that people had been mis-informed and scared away from acting because they were frightened of being sued. The legal position had to be made clearer to all.
- Congestion on roads adversely affected the ability to properly grit and spread salt.
- There needed to be a better understanding of the priority order for roads to be cleared. Spine roads on larger housing estates and steep hills in heavily populated areas should also be considered as main priorities. There was no

point prioritising main roads and motorways if the majority of people could not get to them.

- A 'can-do' attitude had to be adopted. If the public were reporting that certain areas needed attention then they should be taken seriously. The priority list had to be a bit more flexible because as said previously there was no point gritting major routes if nobody could get to them.
- Could some sort of neighbour system like Neighbourhood Watch be set up for snow and ice clearing? Volunteers could be given the equipment for clearing and treating roads and footpaths, including salt "spinners", and do so in their areas. The County Council could even consider paying the individuals to do the job.
- The severe weather had obviously worsened the pothole situation in the area which now needed urgent attention. Certain areas such as Shadoxhurst were mentioned as being bad but it was recognised this was a boroughwide, countywide and indeed nationwide problem.
- Could the policy for only being able to make a claim for an accident suffered as a result of a pothole 20mm or more be challenged?

With particular regard to potholes Mrs Valentine said that the County Council had recognised this problem as a clear priority. Even before the recent severe weather, 31,000 potholes had been repaired so far this year. Dedicated "find and fix" crews were operating to repair potholes on the carriageway there would be updates on this on the KCC website. In addition the Leader of KCC had allocated an extra £1m for a "spring blitz" on pothole repairs and KCC had put out to tender to small and medium sized local enterprises to bid for work to remedy defects and potholes. The Leader of ABC said that perhaps the scheme recently adopted in Germany whereby people purchased or sponsored potholes for dedications could be considered as a way of raising money to solve the problem.

In terms of the priority given to certain types of road Mrs Valentine explained that as part of the consultation process Members would be given sight of the Winter Service Handbook for Ashford and the list of priorities was in there. Members were encouraged to have a look at this and feed back if they felt the priorities were not right.

It was clarified that the points made would go forward as part of a report to KCC's Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview Committee on the 23rd March addressing how Kent fared during the winter weather. The Winter Service policy as a whole would then be discussed and debated in July following the extensive consultation exercise as described earlier, with a report coming to a subsequent meeting of this Board.

Resolved:

That the points above be fed back to Kent Highway Services for their reports to the Environment, Highways & Waste Policy Overview Committee in late March and July 2010.

473 Section 106 Agreements

The report outlined contributions made through Section 106 Agreements.

A Member said that the developments at Park Farm South and East had generated a lot more vehicle movements in the area and caused problems that would not be addressed until the new road came on board in two or three years time so there was a need to make improvements at the Kingsnorth junction. Another Member said that there were a lot of unreported shunts in the area and it may be that the remaining contribution could be used to fund traffic lights.

A Member asked if future reports could give a bit more information such as a list of outstanding agreements, payment dates and requirements. The Chairman said that the Borough Council had a dedicated Section 106 Support Officer who kept a record of Section 106 Agreements so he was sure this information could be forthcoming.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

474 Highway Works Programme 2009/10

The report updated Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2009/10.

Members asked if a brief note on roads coming up for adoption and who was responsible for roads and other maintenance could be circulated. Adoption of roads on new estates was always one of the main issues raised by constituents. It did appear that there had been quite a lot of progress on this issue over recent years but there had not however been as many updates over recent months and Members knew of roads where people had been living for 9 or 10 years but had still not been adopted. Officers agreed to look at the possibilities of providing Members with a more regular update.

In response to a question about County Member Highway Fund Works, Mrs Valentine updated the Board that a report including a list of projects had been received earlier that day and she would ensure that this was circulated.

With reference to the Operation Stack Lorry Park, the Leader of ABC asked that as this was likely to cost in the region of £70m and KCC had quite rightly refused to put any money on the table thus far, why was KHS still proposing to spend any money at all on the outline design of something that nobody could afford and had strong and valid objections against it? In his view a moveable barrier between Junctions 8 and 9

of the M20 remained the viable option. It was the opinion of the Chairman that the report may be out of date on this issue.

The following points were also raised in discussion: -

- It was hoped that the Safer Routes to School scheme at Beaver Green School and the completion of the missing link of the Christchurch School to Park Farm cycleway that had been deferred to 2010/11, would not be deferred again and seen as a higher priority as these were safety schemes for children and also had green benefits.
- The Pelican crossing at the A2052 (Towers School) had been completed and not deferred to 2010/11 as stated in the report. However it was unclear why there needed to be two sets of traffic lights installed. This did appear a little over the top.
- It was disappointing that requested footway improvements at Tudor Byway were again not on the list despite numerous requests. It appeared that this had not been done for over 30 years and this really needed to be followed up.
- The joining of the footpath and cycleway at Norman Road had been on the programme for 2009/10 but it had not been done and now appeared to have been removed from the programme. Could this be followed up?

On a general point the Leader of ABC said that Joint Transportation Boards had been discussed at a recent meeting of the Kent Leaders and concern was expressed that too many issues were coming to the Boards for noting rather than agreement. Members were being told what had happened rather than being given an opportunity to influence what was happening. Could a list of potential schemes not be submitted which allowed Members to consider priorities and which ones should be prioritised over others?

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

475 Dates of Meetings for 2010/11

These were confirmed as:

Tuesday, 15th June 2010
Tuesday, 14th September 2010
Tuesday, 7th December 2010
Tuesday, 8th March 2011.

DS

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Danny Sheppard:
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