

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **15th June 2010**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Clarkson (ex-officio), Claughton, Cowley, Feacey, Heyes
Mr M J Angell, Mr R E King, Mrs E Tweed, Mr J N Wedgbury.
Mr T Reed – KALC Ashford Area Committee

Apologies:

Mr P M Hill, Mr S J G Koowaree.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Holland, Naughton, Taylor.

John Farmer (Countywide Improvements Major Projects Manager - KHS), Behdad Haratbar (Head of Countywide Improvements – KHS), Tara O’Shea (Transportation Engineer – KHS), Vicki Hubert (Partnership Officer - KHS), Jamie Watson (Project Implementation Manager – KCC), Jo Horton (Road Safety Officer – KCC), Paul Jackson (Head of Environmental Services – ABC), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), Jeremy Baker (Principal Solicitor – Strategic Development – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

Linda Doran (Economic Projects Manager – Ashford’s Future), Stephen Bourner (Sustainable Transport Projects Officer – Ashford’s Future), Neil Bowsher (Project Manager – Optimum Consulting).

56 Urgency Provision

The Chairman advised that in accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 he had accepted the late inclusion of an item entitled “Proposed Introduction of Temporary Waiting Restrictions in Henwood Industrial Estate” as a matter of urgency by reason of special circumstances, namely to highlight the acute parking problems currently experienced on the Henwood Industrial Estate and to request that Members approve the introduction of temporary parking restrictions to alleviate the issue while a more permanent solution was developed and taken through statutory process.

He also advised of a change to the order of business of the Meeting.

57 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Claughton	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – One of the speakers from the Bethersden Working Group was known to him.	61
Feacey	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – Chairman of Energyshift Ltd who worked with members of the taxi trade.	59
Heyes	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – Member of Ashford Town Centre Partnership Management Board.	62
Naughton	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – Governor at Victoria Road Primary School,	63
Taylor	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – Ward Member for Bethersden.	61
Mrs Tweed	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial - Member of Ashford Town Centre Partnership Management Board.	62
Mr Wedgbury	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – Serving fire fighter for the London Brigade (Ashford Fire Station was based on Henwood Industrial Estate).	69

58 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 9th March 2010 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

59 Transport Forum

The Board received the report of the Chairman of the Transport Forum for the Meeting held on the 14th May 2010. The Forum had considered updates on Bus Services; Eurostar; Southeastern Railways; Network Rail; Taxis; and a Campaign for Free Off-Peak Rail Travel for Kent's Over 60s.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Regnier, a local resident, attended and spoke in support of the Campaign for Free Off-Peak Rail Travel for Kent's Over 60s. He explained he was a pensioner living in Kennington and he had become fully

involved in and committed to Mr Farrow's campaign. He believed free off-peak rail travel for Kent's Over 60s was reasonable, justifiable and achievable. He explained that Mr Farrow had obtained the written support of nearly all Kent Districts and the County Council for his campaign and the work he had done in obtaining more than 6,000 signatures of support on his petition was remarkable. He was now aiming to obtain 10,000 signatures before he presented his petition to Downing Street in September. The Leader of Ashford Borough Council had pledged his written support to the campaign subject to some provisos on disposable income etc and whilst he understood the concerns some had over funding and the current national deficit, he considered this should not stand in the way of something that was ultimately about fairness. Over 60s could already travel on buses for free and those in London Boroughs already had free use of the trains and this inequality did need to be addressed. He asked the Board to consider the merits of the scheme and to show their support by lobbying MPs when the petition was submitted in the autumn.

A Member said that whilst it was a laudable campaign few things in life were free and should this go ahead, taxes would have to rise to pay for it. At the same time many pensioners had more disposable income than those who worked and especially young families so he felt unable to support it in its current form. Perhaps there was more of a case to offer subsidised or free travel to those on benefits whilst reducing their benefit payments accordingly. The Chairman of the Transport Forum said they had spoken about this issue at some length at their meeting and had agreed it was a laudable campaign but there were concerns about how it would be paid for. Even a subsidy for over 60s would need to be met from somewhere and there were issues about means testing to consider as well. A blanket for free travel for all over 60s could include for example millionaires, whilst youngsters on low incomes would still have to pay full price.

A Member said he supported the scheme. He did not think it should be dismissed just because of the current financial climate and perhaps was an aspiration that could be supported for now and the practicalities could be re-visited in the future. Another Member said there was perhaps a role for the railway companies to play here in that many of the off-peak hours and offers had already been eroded and Southeastern for instance, had already asked for an extra £23m from government. Perhaps they could make a gesture to allow pensioners' travel to be subsidised.

A Member said that as Kent Older People's Champion he had first been made aware of this campaign in October 2009 and he understood that KCC was currently preparing a paper on this issue and the whole concessionary travel problem. He could not divulge what was likely to be in that report at this stage, but he wanted to assure all present that KCC were looking at this very seriously.

Whilst noting that the campaign had received the written support from the Leaders of KCC and (with certain provisos) ABC, Board Members agreed that it would be sensible to reserve their position on the campaign until KCC's report on the issue had been published and could be discussed later in the year.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mrs Whybrow, of the Ashford Independent Taxi Drivers Association, attended and spoke on the Station Improvement Plans and the impact on taxis. She said if an elderly or disabled person called for a taxi to pick

them up from the station doors, in the future they would have to say no. There were no taxi spaces proposed close to the domestic side of the station so drivers would have to wait with their cars and ask customers to come to the other side of the river to meet them. This would place vulnerable and partially sighted people in danger. It was already very difficult and dangerous to load and unload vehicles, particularly with wheelchairs, amongst fast moving traffic and there was also a risk of damage to vehicles. Taxi drivers had known nothing of the plans until recently and had been threatened with exclusion from the Station when they had attempted to point this out to passengers by handing out leaflets. There were plans for a plaza but there seemed to be no provision for bins or seats there so why was this space being wasted when it would be far nicer for people to sit by the river? The plans were not fair or reasonable and disabled and disadvantaged individuals would find it very difficult to access taxis when leaving the station.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mrs Ruck, a taxi driver in the Borough, also attended and spoke on the Station Improvement Plans and the impact on taxis. She said the new taxi rank was proposed to be on the far side of the bridge at the Station and this would not be visible to potential customers due to the contour of the land. Space had been allocated for four cars plus a feeder rank, but this would not be able to function. There had been a number of meetings with Mr Bowsher but his position sadly appeared to be very static and the focus appeared to be about aesthetics over function. Ashford's Future should be trying to cater for growth and this growth would place greater demand on transport so it was questioned why they would spend £2.5m on a pedestrian plaza at the Station when that money could be spend to develop the area as a proper transport interchange for trains, buses and taxis. Other designs had been suggested but the desire seemed to be all about aesthetics. She asked Members to exert any influence they could over these plans.

In response Mrs Doran said that it would have been preferable if the points being raised by the taxi drivers had been provided in advance in order for Ashford's Future to have had time to make a more thorough response. She said the overriding issue considered in the development of the plans had been increasing safety at the Station and she introduced Mr Bowsher, the Project Manager, who she hoped could counteract some of the points raised. Mr Bowsher said he had met with both Mrs Whybrow and Mrs Ruck previously and wanted to re-iterate that the plans would provide taxi spaces in excess of the current provision. Accessing taxis via disabled ramps was a problem currently and he hoped this would be better catered for under the new arrangements as kerbs would be at the correct height. Ashford International was a Category A security risk (the same as a London Station) which was why bins had not been approved as part of the design of the plaza. Mr Bowsher said that with regard to being able to view the taxi rank, the ground would be lowered and levelled for a number of reasons such as flood mitigation, allowing a view of the river and to make taxis more visible to customers. He was keen to work with the taxi trade to ensure that clear and adequate signage was put in place. The space in front of the domestic Station was not sufficient for a transport interchange and whilst this had been looked at closely, it had been decided to clear the area of all vehicles to create a safer and more pleasant environment. The lack of space and frontage in this area did limit what could be done there and the volume of traffic had increased dramatically in recent years and there had been a number of accidents and near misses there recently. Therefore safety was the key driver behind these plans.

Southeastern were responsible for safety at the Station and on the forecourt and his duty in construction would be to make the area as safe as possible. He said he could not comment on the threatened exclusion from the Station by Southeastern.

The Chairman said that whilst there was no decision for the Board to take on this matter, the speakers could be assured that Members had heard the points that had been made. A Member said he was disappointed to have heard the word "counteract" used and considered this was not conducive to serving the community and their interests. Other Members expressed concern about the plans for the Station Forecourt and the fact that little appeared to have been done to try and alleviate the points of concern that had been raised. The seeming desire for aesthetics over creating a genuine and functional transport hub was concerning and trains, buses and taxis all had to be taken into account. If this did not fit in with the aesthetics perhaps the aesthetics should be changed. Members wanted to know more about the scheme and a Site Visit to the Station was suggested with the potential for an agenda item on the scheme coming to the September meeting of the Board so that Members of both Councils could have an input.

A Member who was Chairman of the Ashford Access Group said that they made it their business to be involved at the outset of any project and to represent the concerns of all those with disabilities. He had been approached by the Mr Bowsher as part of the stakeholder process to ensure that the views of disability groups were fully taken on board, and highlighted that subsequently he had had three meetings with Mr Bowsher. He assured all present that they would not let any matter rest if they felt there was going to be a disadvantage to those with disabilities.

Mrs Doran said that Ashford's Future would be happy to arrange a Site Visit and a continuing dialogue would be welcomed. She apologised for using the word "counteract" if that had offended anyone, but felt there had been some inaccuracies in what had been said by the speakers.

In response to a question about when the works were likely to start Mrs Doran replied that work was on hold due to next week's Emergency Budget so there was no start date at present. She also said she would provide answers on the question of vulnerable adults outside of the Meeting.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the report of the Chairman of the Transport Forum for the meeting held on the 14th May 2010 be received and noted.**
 - (ii) the Board defer making a decision on whether to support the Campaign for Free Off-Peak Rail Travel for Kent's Over 60s until KCC's report on the issue had been published and could be discussed later in the year.**
 - (iii) a Site Visit be arranged at the Station to understand more about the plans for improving the Station Forecourt and a report on the scheme be submitted to the September meeting.**

60 Tracker Report

The Chairman drew Members attention to the Tracker of Decisions.

A Member referred to the Transport Forum recommendation from March 2006 about developing a suitable scheme for disabled access to Ashford Town Centre and asked what the position on this was. Mr Jackson responded that most of the work had been done on this but it did need a wrap up report back to the Board. This included the increase in disabled parking spaces and the issues around shared space.

With regard to the two petitions submitted to the last Meeting of this Board, Mrs Hubert updated that following investigation KHS would not be pursuing traffic calming measures at Highfield Road, Willesborough but would look into the possibility of installing a safer road crossing at the junction of Church Road/Osborne Road/Bentley Road, Willesborough. Further details would come to a future meeting of the Board.

Resolved:

That the Tracker Report be received and noted.

61 A28 Bethersden Speed Limit Review

Before consideration of this item Mr Haratbar said that with the current state of the economy most Local Authority departments had been expecting a reduction in funding and the announcement had come for KHS in recent weeks and they were expecting an in-year reduction. The implication of that was that the speed limit reviews had been suspended however there would still be an opportunity to look at individual issues, such as Bethersden, if desired.

Mrs O'Shea introduced her report and gave a presentation on the review of crashes on the A28 at Bethersden which has been appended to these Minutes for information. It covered: - the background to the review; the role of KHS; casualty reduction definitions; road safety targets; the results of specific traffic and crash investigations in the area in question; other non speed related concerns that had been raised; and what could be done for vulnerable road users. The report concluded that the further investigation into the speed and safety issues raised by Bethersden Parish Council following the results of the Speed Limit Review had not altered the original conclusions. KHS would continue to monitor and review crashes on the A28 and would put in a bid for funding, through the Scheme Prioritisation System, for a scheme to provide informal crossing facilities near to the Forge Hill junction.

Mrs Buckley and Mr Williams of the A28 Speed Limit Review Bethersden Working Group then gave their presentation which has been appended to these Minutes for information. Mrs Buckley explained that the Group wanted to make a positive change for all users of the A28. In January the Board had asked KHS to respond to the request for a speed limit review of the Bethersden stretch of the A28 but all that

seemed to have been examined were potential engineering measures. Mr Williams introduced the presentation and explained that the issue was not about engineering measures but about addressing the issues in the DfT Circular 01/2006 surrounding quality of life for all as well as safety and reducing traffic collisions and injuries. Provision of an informal crossing point would be welcome but it was not just about lowering kerbs, speeds needed to come down. KHS had admitted that they were only interested in reportable crashes over the last three years but this did mask the true picture. There had been four reportable crashes in the last three years at Spratts Barn for example but more than 30 un-reportable ones. He referred to the DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet (1/04) which defined a village as "having 20 or more houses on one or both sides of the road over a minimum distance of 600m". It also stated that "a standard speed limit of 30mph in villages should be the norm". It was quite clear from this description that Bethersden did conform to the definition of a village and should have a 30mph limit and he could not understand why this had been mis-quoted in KHS's report. The presentation also covered: the character of the road and the vulnerability of many of those who used the road; the results of the Kent Police speed survey; the impact of speed; and the core findings of the Working Group. The presentation concluded by proposing amended speed limits within and approaching Bethersden to those proposed by Jacobs/KHS. Mr Williams said that another point he was disappointed by was that KHS had said that Kent Police did not support a reduction in the speed limit to 30mph, but Sgt Gary Fittle of Kent Traffic Management had only been asked to comment on the 2nd June and had only been asked to comment on the Jacobs report. The Police had not seen the Working Group's report and he said if they had done they would have revised their opinion. Mr Williams then introduced PC Justin Farrow, a Patrol Officer for Tenterden and the villages for the last four years.

PC Farrow said that in his four years working in the area he had had the misfortune of dealing with several fatal and serious accidents as well as countless non-reportable accidents on this stretch of the A28. He also knew there were many more that he had not been called to where people had made their own arrangements. He had read both the Jacobs and Bethersden Working Group reports and he would fully support the reduction in speed limit proposed by the Working Group. The Jacobs report did not take into account the needs of the vulnerable residents and users of the road. Bethersden was the only one of the 18 villages on his patch which did not have a 30mph limit and many of those only had about 1/10 of the traffic flow of Bethersden. Drivers' attitudes did change dramatically in a 30mph zone and he had noticed a marked difference in how these were approached. Frankly, if one death or serious injury could be prevented by lowering the speed limit on this stretch of road it was worth it.

The County Councillor for the area said he was disappointed that despite the overriding support given to the Working Group's findings at the January Meeting, this had not been reflected in KHS's follow up report and indeed the statement from the Traffic Advisory Leaflet (1/04) had been wrongly quoted in that report. Bethersden more than met the standard definition of a village so he could not understand why there was even a question mark about whether Bethersden Working Group's proposals should be supported and consultation on those proposals should begin as soon as possible.

Other Members agreed and said that the views of the people could not be ignored in cases like this and the concentration on crash data was not always constructive. One of the stumbling blocks this Board had always had was understanding KHS's criteria about whether a road was dangerous or not. It was considered that there were a number of other places where a lowering of the speed limit would also be appropriate and Charing was mentioned as one example. Members also wished to congratulate the Bethersden Working Group on the hard work they had undertaken in preparing their report and said it was an example to all. Clearly this Board could not make a decision on this matter but the strong views of the Board should be made to the KCC Cabinet Member with a view to moving forward with the Bethersden Working Group's proposals. The Chairman said Officers had been given a clear steer of the strength of feeling on this issue and KCC Members were encouraged to make representations on this to the Cabinet Member. In response to a question about what would happen next, Mr Haratbar said a report on this would be taken to the Cabinet Member in the next few weeks. Mr Haratbar further undertook that the report would outline the recommendations from the Speed Limit Review Team and the counter arguments put forward by the Bethersden Working Group.

One Member said that on a personal level he was a little disappointed with the direction of the discussion. As someone who had worked in the emergency services for 26 years and attended many traffic accidents, he said it should not be ignored that the A28 was a main trunk road and a 30 mph limit was unnatural. If 30mph was appropriate, that should be the limit for the whole stretch from Tenterden to Ashford. He considered that too many people thought lowering the speed limit was the answer to all road safety problems but the accidents here were not about speed they were about individual driver error and road conditions. In his view, keeping traffic speeds artificially low was not the answer.

Recommended:

To the KCC Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that public consultation be carried out on the proposal by the Bethersden Working Group to introduce revised speed limits in Bethersden.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 17.5 Mr Wedgbury asked for it to be recorded that he had voted against the resolution.

62 Proposed Alterations to the Waiting and Parking Restrictions in Ashford Town Centre – Amendment 16

Mr Wilkinson introduced the report which detailed the results of the recent consultation in respect to the making of the Amendment 16 traffic order. The order, which related to parking and waiting restrictions in Ashford Town Centre, consisted in the main of administrative amendments to the existing traffic order intended to improve the accuracy of the descriptions of the restrictions marked on the ground – thereby facilitating the full enforcement of the shared space area and elsewhere in the Town Centre. In addition a small number of physical changes were proposed within the order. Mr Wilkinson outlined the proposals in more detail for the Board.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Hoare, of Car Right Car Sales, spoke on this item. He said he had run his business from Gasworks Lane for 17 years and access had never been a problem. Emergency access was needed for the High Speed Rail Link and on the two occasions this had been needed it was gained easily. His business had survived a number of hard times recently with the works around the town and ring road, but placing extra double yellow lines in this small part of Gasworks Lane would adversely affect the business again. People used the road for short term visitor parking, part exchange valuations and for dropping off cars early in the morning before normal opening hours. Parking in one of the towns car parks was not an option. The proposals seemed an unnecessary expense for a few metres of double yellow line in this quiet part of the town. He asked that the proposals for Gasworks Lane either be set aside or replaced with short term parking bays.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mrs Kenny, of the Ashford Town Centre Partnership, spoke on this item. She said she was objecting to the proposals on behalf of five businesses and her detailed comments were contained within the tabled papers. The majority of the concerns surrounded loading and unloading at properties between 7am and 7pm. Until recently the businesses had been able to use the County Square loading area but that ability had recently been taken away and this had highlighted the lack of loading space in Bank Street and the shared space which was insufficient to serve the 40 businesses there. Bank Street had become nothing more than a car park and vehicles had not been able to use the designated loading bays. For businesses such as a chemist and a florist this had been a hindrance and people had consequently been ticketed in Bank Street when trying to load/unload when they simply did not have any where else to go. She hoped a speedy resolution could be found to identifying a loading area for these properties.

Mr Wilkinson displayed the plans for the extension to the double yellow lines in Gasworks Lane. He said that the planning permission for the car dealership stated that the proprietors of the establishment should provide seven customer/staff parking spaces on site. There was also evidence of cars regularly being parked on the shared space/public highway by the dealership, contrary to current regulations, and photographs of this were displayed. Parked vehicles were also restricting the ability of cars being able to turn in Gasworks Lane. The proposed alterations to the restrictions would provide clarity as to where cars should and should not park and improve safety and access in Gasworks Lane. With regard to the points raised by the Town Centre Partnership, Mr Wilkinson said that most of these points had been covered in the report. None of the restrictions cited in the Bank Street/Tufton Street area were new and they would not affect the Council's ability to enforce in the area after 1st July 2010. He sympathised with the difficulties regarding loading/unloading and the Council was working with County Square in an attempt to allow businesses in Bank Street to be able to use their private loading area. The Portfolio Holder said he took on board the points about supporting small businesses but agreed that this proposal would greatly improve the current situation for traders. There was not room to accommodate loading at the top end of Bank Street but being able to enforce on illegal parking would free up the existing two loading bays for businesses which were currently effectively unusable and this was the key point.

Resolved:

- That (i) **the Amendment 16 Traffic Order be made.**
- (ii) **all additional road markings and signage relating to the proposed physical changes in the Order be implemented.**

63 Victoria Way

The report updated the Board on progress with the scheme and sought approval for the maintenance plan at Victoria Square and works to the junction at the A28 Chart Road/Loudon Way. The Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF) funding agreement with the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) had been completed, the land acquisitions and related agreements had all been completed and KCC had entered into a contract with Volker Fitzpatrick to construct the works. The overall project estimate and tender sums gave confidence that the works could be completed within budget. Mr Farmer explained that Appendices A and B to the report contained further information on the costs and the maintenance regime. The capital cost was about £500,000 and enhanced maintenance costs of the Square would be an extra £20,000 per year and this was a concern in the current financial climate but the Victoria Way project had always been seen as “more than just a road” and this ethos was one of the reasons HCA had given its funding support. HCA had also accepted the further capitalisation of £100,000 to cover the enhanced maintenance of the Square for five years. Options for the funding of longer term future maintenance were under consideration but the five year period had bought some breathing space. Matalan roundabout was a busy junction but in simplistic terms Victoria Way was neutral in terms of its overall traffic impact. GAF funding for investigation of improvements had been withdrawn but in any event improvements would have been undeliverable within the funding timescale. The Chart Road/Loudon Way junction was considered a constraint on the operation of the Matalan roundabout and improvements had been investigated to allow a short length of two lanes. The estimated cost was £400,000 and could be funded from CIF but it was a balance between cost and benefit and there was no need to commit to these works for another 2/3 months.

A Member said that he had grave concerns about the pavilion in John Wallis Square both in terms of its aesthetic design and potential maintenance costs. Ashford’s recent history with public art did not fill him with much confidence. Another Member said that art was in the eye of the beholder and he actually did not dislike the design of the pavilion. He was concerned about the maintenance costs though, particularly in the current economic climate and asked if a ten year capitalisation could be pursued rather than the five years that had been agreed. Mr Farmer considered that realistically they had been fortunate to secure five years maintenance costs.

The item was then opened up for questions/comments and the following responses were given: -

- Victoria Way was purely a project name. The official road naming had to go through the due process.

- There was a risk associated with not delivering the project by the 31st March 2011 but the Contractor had said this was achievable. HCA recognised that the contract had been awarded later than intended and there could be complications such as utility works and obligations to the adjacent land owners so the project would be closely monitored.
- The maintenance plan should be viewed as a working draft. The report was seeking the Board's support and the figures were a good first indication of what would be needed but should not be viewed as final. The longer term issue of the ongoing cost of maintenance was high on everyone's agenda and the recommendation should be to note rather than approve the plan whilst certain issues were resolved.
- The maintenance costs would be split between KCC and ABC although in reality it was difficult to have a hard distinction between highways and the public realm so a common sense approach had been adopted. It was therefore intended that KCC would be responsible for the hard surface and areas immediately adjacent to the highway and ABC would be responsible for the Square, cultural areas and public realm. It was accepted this could be confusing but this was the point of having a clear spreadsheet detailing maintenance activities, responsibilities and costs. One lesson learnt from construction of the ring road was that deadlines were tight and there was not the luxury of changing design decisions at this stage.
- Leaf sweeping around the large Nursery Stock tree would be discussed with ABC with a view to adding this to the draft maintenance plan.
- There would be double yellow lines in Leacon Road and Victoria Way so the whole length would be no waiting and this should deal with the lorries that had started to park there.
- Stagecoach had been asked to provide temporary bus shelters to replace those that had been removed to allow for the imminent alterations in Brookfield Road.

Resolved:

That the working draft maintenance plan for Victoria Square and the funding implications of that plan be noted.

64 Ashford Town Centre Streets – Scheme Update

The report updated the Board on an operational review by Kent County Council of the re-configured A292 Ashford Ring Road and shared space zone. Mr Watson gave further details on: - the junction design concept; puffin crossings; positioning of signal equipment; signing and lining; safety/crash data; and proposals to alter the Somerset Road junction with North Street and Forge Lane to ban the straight ahead movement. This would be an experimental order in an attempt to address an area where there had been some minor incidents. Despite some minor teething problems

and areas of congestion the overall scheme had provided a far safer and more pleasant environment for Ashford town centre. It was an innovative scheme and would continue to be monitored.

The Chairman said that certain parts of the shared space appeared a bit scruffy and that one or two small measures would make great improvements. Mr Watson said there would be noticeable improvements in the coming months. Once the parking situation in Bank Street was resolved and the “lego blocks” were removed from Apsley Street this would make a great difference. There was a need for a similar maintenance plan as suggested for Victoria Way and Ashford’s Future were working on a document on general public realm maintenance.

In response to a question Mr Watson explained that if approved the experimental order banning the straight ahead movement at Somerset Road could be in place within 4-6 weeks. It would be interesting to see how it worked and could be made permanent if it was successful.

Another Member said that despite the predictions from a certain television presenter of “chaos on the streets of Ashford” the shared space safety record had been impeccable. He had invited said presenter to visit Ashford but perhaps unsurprisingly had yet to receive a response. Whilst there was no reason for complacency, Members should take comfort from the safety record. Further workshops with the disability groups were planned and he hoped all would take the opportunity to attend.

Resolved:

That further changes to the network at Forge Lane/New Street/Somerset Road junction take place to ban the straight ahead movement by way of an experimental Traffic Order, along with minor alterations at various locations to assist with reducing congestion utilising funding set aside from English Partnerships for this purpose.

65 M20 Junction 9/Bridge and Drovers Roundabout Improvement Schemes

The report updated the Board on progress with the various schemes. A lot of effort had gone into completing the Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) agreement with SEEDA. Land acquisitions had been completed, subject to completion of the land for the bridge, and advanced site clearance had been carried out and this had taken place on the 5th May 2010. KCC had awarded the contract to BAM Nuttall to construct the works. The overall project estimate and tender submission gave confidence that the scheme could be carried out within budget and timescales, subject to risks outlined within the report, although contingency plans had been agreed with SEEDA.

Members asked about the re-landscaping of Drovers Roundabout. People were very upset about the way this roundabout had been cleared in preparation for the works and everyone was keen to know when and how the landscaping would be re-instated. It was considered that this whole issue had been a public relations disaster

and made worse because trees had been removed in full bloom. Mr Farmer said he would be happy for the landscaping proposals to come back to a future meeting of this Board. A letter had been sent to residents in the area giving detailed information and further regular updates would be provided. The point about clearing trees in bloom was accepted but clearance had deliberately been left as late as possible to make sure all agreements had been reached and the scheme was proceeding. The clearance was done with an ornithologist in attendance and he had been assured that it had not affected any nesting birds.

Resolved:

- That (i) progress with the schemes be noted.**
- (ii) it be noted that the new foot/cycle bridge over the M20 is included in the contract let by KCC.**

66 Thirlmere, Kennington

The report provided an update to the original JTB report in March where a Member requested that further evidence be gathered to determine if action should be taken at the Thirlmere/Grasmere Road junction. The report concluded that the traffic data clearly showed that there was not a speeding problem at the location and coupled with the excellent safety record it was therefore not proposed to make any changes at the location.

A Member said that previous reports had agreed that an additional “side road warning” sign be provided and she hoped that at the very least this would still happen. Mrs Hubert said she understood that this proposal may have been removed due to the suggestion for speed bumps etc but she would report back that this sign was still wanted.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

67 Highway Works Programme 2010/11

The report included a summary of the identified schemes that had been programmed for construction by Kent Highway Services in 2010/11.

It was explained that the table only showed schemes that had been fully signed off by the Cabinet Member. Mrs Hubert said she would make sure it was up to date with all County Councillor’s own schemes before the next meeting.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

68 Winter Service Consultation 2009/10

Due to the lateness of the hour it was agreed to defer consideration of this item. Members had been asked to consider the questions in the report in advance of the Meeting and come prepared to respond so it was agreed that the best way forward was for Members to forward those comments to Danny Sheppard at ABC who would ensure that they were fed back to KHS by the consultation deadline of 30th June 2010.

69 Proposed Introduction of Temporary Waiting Restrictions in Henwood Industrial Estate

The report had been tabled and accepted as an urgent item by reason of special circumstances (Minute No. 56 refers).

The report had been submitted to highlight the acute parking problems currently experienced on the Henwood Industrial Estate and requested that Members approve the introduction of temporary parking restrictions to alleviate the issue while a more permanent solution was developed and taken through statutory process. Mr Wilkinson explained the problem had worsened in recent weeks and the level of on-street parking had got to the point where it was now obstructing delivery vehicles. He showed some photographs which demonstrated the problem.

In response to a question Mr Wilkinson said that parking on the pavement was a criminal offence so it was for the Police to enforce rather than Civil Enforcement Officers and realistically it would not be a priority for them until an accident occurred. Waiting restrictions here (double yellow lines) would give the Local Authority some control and an ability to enforce against dangerous and obstructive parking.

Resolved:

- That
- (i) prohibition of waiting restrictions be implemented under a temporary Traffic Regulation Order to address dangerous and obstructive parking on the Henwood Industrial Estate.**
 - (ii) a review of the temporary prohibition of waiting restrictions be carried out subsequent to implementation with a view to making the restrictions permanent.**
 - (iii) the formulation of the final parking restrictions be informed by the review and the supporting permanent Traffic Regulation Order be taken to statutory consultation and any objections received be reported to a future Meeting of the Board.**

DS

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Danny Sheppard:
Telephone: 01233 330349 Email: danny.sheppard@ashford.gov.uk
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: www.ashford.gov.uk/committees

A28 Bethersden Review of Crashes



Report to JTB June 2010

By Tara O'Shea, Transportation Engineer

Background

- Government circular 01/2006 required traffic authorities to review the speed limits on all their A and B roads, and implement any necessary changes, by 2011, in accordance with this guidance.
- The review has been undertaken across most of the Ashford Borough and has provided a snapshot assessment of the suitability of the speed limit on each of these roads.
- The review should provide a consistent network of speed limits across the country.
- It does NOT target non speed related issues.
- It does NOT recommend speed limits that are unenforceable or unachievable.



Reasons for this Presentation

- Bethersden Parish Council objected to the conclusions and recommendations of the speed limit review
- Bethersden Parish Council issued a response to the public consultation of the review, claiming that there was evidence to suggest that, in some instances, lower speed limits and additional engineering measures were required to deal with the issues being experienced along the A28
- At a special meeting of the JTB in January, it was agreed to look into Bethersden Parish Councils concerns further, hence this presentation



What do Kent Highways Do?

- The Transportation Team develop and implement transport strategies to manage growth and minimise the impact of traffic on the highway network. We also look at how we travel and how we can do this safely
- Each and every year the Transportation Team of engineers study the personal injury crash data that Kent Police provide
- We use this data in various ways – mainly to look at how we can mitigate, with engineering measures, the occurrence and severity of these personal injury crashes



What do Kent Highways Do?

- Once a particular pattern of crash has been identified, Engineers use their professional knowledge of current standards and practices to decide what measures will go some way to reducing the frequency and severity of that particular type of crash.
- This is identified as a CRM – Casualty Reduction Measure



Casualty Reduction Definitions

- The minimum requirement for a scheme to be considered a CRM is 3 reported injury crashes of a similar pattern over a 3 year period, usually at a specific site.
- Crash Cluster sites are also studied annually and are identified where there are 6 or more crashes within a 50m radius on 40mph roads and 4 or more crashes within a 50m radius on roads 50mph and above



Progress

- It was agreed to look again into the crash data held for the “hot spot” areas Bethersden Parish Council has identified.
- This further investigation would not alter the conclusions of the Speed Limit Review as the Review and Crash analysis are two completely separate functions within KHS.



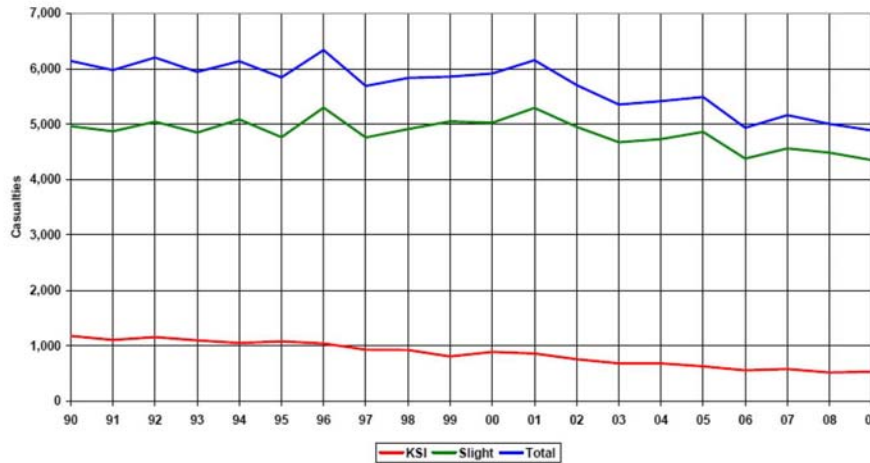
Road Safety Targets

- Figures show that the road safety improvement is exceeding the targets set by Government for 2000 to 2010.
- In 2009 there were 4,886 **casualties** (from 3,682 personal injury **crashes**) on KCC roads, of which 534 were either killed or seriously injured.
- Government's national targets for 2000 to 2010 are a:
 - **40%** reduction in people killed or seriously injured
 - **50%** reduction in children killed or seriously injured
 - **10%** reduction in people slightly injured
- During the period 2000 to 2009 KCC achieved a:
 - **40.1%** reduction in people killed or seriously injured (892 to 534)
 - **53.1%** reduction in children killed or seriously injured (113 to 53)
 - **13.4%** reduction in people slightly injured (5,024 to 4,352)

All figures quoted are casualties (or injuries) and **not** the number of crashes and have been obtained from the Kent Travel Report 2009.



Road Safety Targets

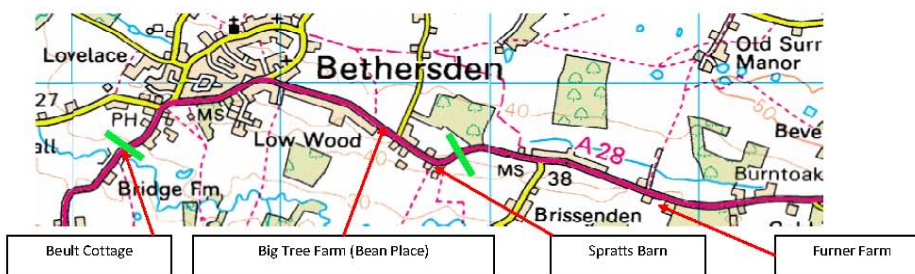


Traffic Casualties – 1990 to 2009 from Kent Travel Report 2009



Hot Spots Current Crash Data

3 Year Personal Injury Crash Data to 31/12/2009



Beult Cottage – over 180m there were 7 crashes. 4 vehicles driven by 17-23 year olds. All loss of control and 6 were in wet road conditions. The wet crashes are currently undergoing further investigation.

Big Tree Farm to Spratts Barn – there were 4 crashes in this location. One involved the avoidance of a fox, two were driver error when lapses in concentration caused drifting onto the wrong side of the carriageway and another, a 17 year old, lost control in wet conditions. No single engineering measure can mitigate the causation factors in these crashes.

Furner Farm – There was one crash involving a 17 year old pulling out of a private drive into the path of a motorcycle resulting in a serious injury.

Traffic Data

- An essential part of this further study was to find out what speed vehicles were actually travelling at, together with volume and type of traffic
- 2 counts were undertaken on the A28, one near Kiln Lane and another near to Forge Hill
- The result of this survey was



Traffic Data Volume/Type

- During the week counted there showed 38284 vehicles travelling in the westbound direction and 38803 travelling in eastbound
- Of these vehicles, just over 6% of traffic was HGV movements
- The level of HGV movements is in line with expected traffic flows on strategic A class roads within the highway network

(data from Kent Travel Report 2009)



Traffic Speeds A28 - 40mph Limit Recorded Mean Speeds

Kiln Lane

Westbound – 38.5 mph
Eastbound – 38.5 mph

Forge Hill

Westbound – 36.0 mph
Eastbound – 36.5 mph



Other Non Speed Related Concerns

- Vulnerable users, such as pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists
- Bethersden Primary School Children



Vulnerable Road Users – What Can Be Done?

- Site observations noted that the desired location for some people to cross the A28, especially in respect of the school run, was near to the Forge Hill junction.
- It is possible to investigate the implementation of an informal crossing point, with dropped kerbs for example, to help facilitate pedestrians at this location. This will need to be assessed through our scheme prioritisation system to bid for funding.



Forge Hill



Conclusions

- KHS will continue to monitor and review crashes on the A28
- KHS will put in a bid for funding, through the Scheme Prioritisation System, for a scheme to provide informal crossing facilities near to the Forge Hill junction



A28 speed limit review

Bethersden Working Group

Graham Williams & Caroline Buckley

Update June 2010

Government directive on speed review (DfT Circular 01/2006)

Balance the need to travel with the need to improve the quality of life:

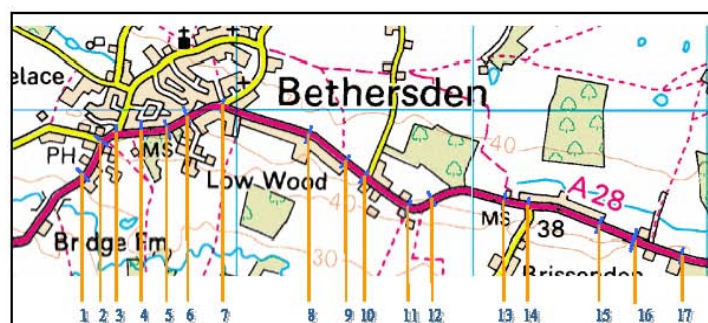
- ✓ Reducing road traffic collisions and injuries
- ✓ Overcome social exclusion and strengthening rural communities
- ✓ Develop safer environments for all road users
- ✓ Needs of vulnerable road users must be fully taken into account

Village speed limits (DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/04)

- Document defines a village as having 20 or more houses on one or both sides of the road over a minimum distance of 600 metres.
- Government states that “a standard speed limit of 30mph in villages should be the norm”.

3

The village of Bethersden



From Western to Eastern Gateways (1 to 12):

- 69 houses (on both sides of the road)
- 1.7 km
- 4 junctions
- Numerous bends
- Accident hotspots
- Limited visibility

4

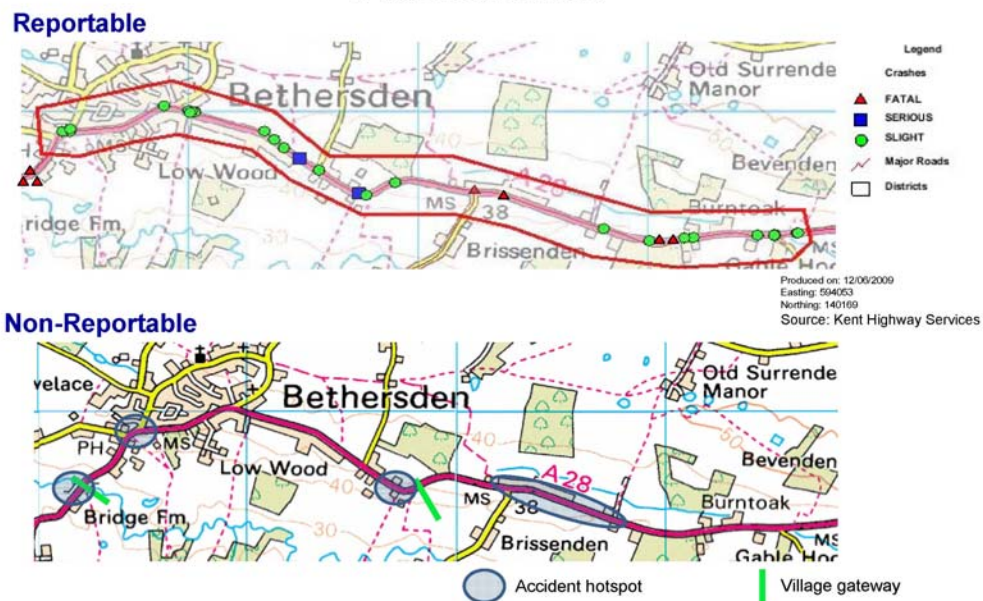
Survey of villages on A roads

27 villages:

- All have 30mph speed limit
- 63% have interactive speed signs
- 44% have prominent gateways

5

Accidents



6

A typical non-reportable accident



- ✗ Road closed for 2½ hours
- ✗ 5 Police in attendance

7

Character of the road - vulnerability

- Narrow A road (6.85m)
- Numerous sharp and deceptive bends
- 5 major junctions
- Poor visibility
- High density of access points
- Bridleways, footpaths and pavements



8

Use of the road

The A28 bisects the village!



9

Residents risk their lives daily

- ✗ No formal crossing points
- ✗ No bus stops
- ✗ Limited or no pavements



38.6 mph

Mean speeds

36.3 mph

10

Kent Police speed survey

In a 1¼ hour session:

- 10 motoring offences
- Highest recorded speed: 56mph
- Three vehicles in excess of 50mph

11

Impact of speed

- Government figures: 40mph speed limit results in an average speed of 43mph
- Pedestrian hit by car
 - At 40mph has 9 in 10 chance of being killed
 - At 30mph has 2 in 10 chance of being killed
- Reduction in the quality of life for a local community and a sense of vulnerability

12

Core findings

- Jacobs recommendations do not take adequate note of:
 - Character of the road
 - Use of the road
 - Vulnerability of residents
- Bethersden conforms to the government definition for a 30mph area.
- Level of speed and accidents impacts on vulnerability.
- Reducing the speed is a cheap option.

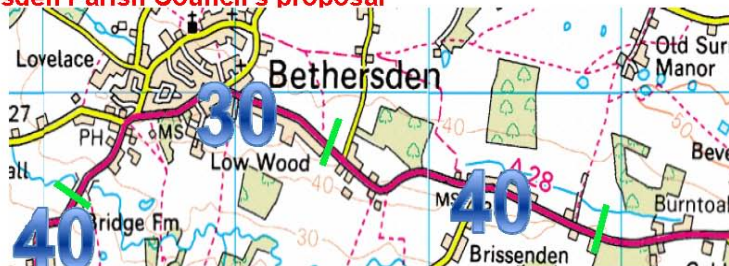
13

Current and proposed speed limits

Jacobs proposal



Bethersden Parish Council's proposal



14