

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **8th March 2011**

Present:

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

Cllrs. Cloughton, Cowley, Feacey, Heyes, Woodford
Mr M J Angell, Mr P M Hill, Mr R E King, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mrs E Tweed, Mr J N Wedgbury
Mr R Butcher – KALC Ashford Area Committee.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (iii) Mr R Butcher attended as Substitute Member for Mr T Reed.

Apologies:

Cllrs Mrs Blanford, Clarkson, Mr T Reed.

Also Present:

Cllrs Holland, Smith

Gareth Williams (Technical Director – Jacobs)

Andrew Burton (Project Manager – KHS), Jamie Watson (Project Manager – KHS), Toby Howe (Highway Manager East Kent – KHS), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

404 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Feacey	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – Trustee of the Ashford Volunteer Bureau.	408, 409
Heyes	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – Member of Ashford Town Centre Partnership Management Board.	407, 409
Mr Koowaree	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial - Member of Ashford Town Centre Partnership Management Board and Secretary of the Centre for Voluntary Organisations Ashford.	407, 408, 409

Mrs Tweed Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial - 407, 409
Member of Ashford Town Centre Partnership
Management Board.

405 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 7th December 2010 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

406 Tracker Report

The Chairman drew Members attention to the Tracker of Decisions.

Resolved:

That the Tracker be received and noted.

407 Proposed Introduction of New and Amendment of Existing Parking Restrictions in Victoria Way

Mr Watson introduced the report which detailed the results of the recent statutory consultation process undertaken in Victoria Ward, Ashford. Traffic movement and safety proposals had been developed in consultation with Ashford Borough Council to introduce and amend movement and parking controls associated with the new extensions to Victoria Road and Leacon Road, Ashford. He outlined the seven responses received to the consultation and the particular objections and observations made and also tabled an up to date plan of the proposed restrictions.

A Member asked about the proposed 'No Left Turn' restriction existing Victoria Crescent into Victoria Road. Mr Watson explained this was to prevent larger vehicles having to swing wide and enter the oncoming traffic lane in order to turn left at what was a tight junction. It would be an enforcement issue for the Police.

Board Members agreed that following their introduction, the restrictions should be reviewed after one year.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) the proposed traffic safety and movement management scheme be implemented.**
 - (ii) the proposed parking safety scheme be implemented.**
 - (iii) the following Orders be made: - The Kent County Council (Various Roads, Ashford) (Waiting Restrictions) Order 2011; The Kent**

County Council (Victoria Road, Ashford) (20mph Speed Limit Zone) Order 2011; and The Kent County Council (Victoria Crescent, Ashford) (Prohibition of Left Hand Turns) Order 2011.

(iv) the above Orders be reviewed one year after implementation.

408 Implementation of Kent County Council's Revised Guidance on the Application Procedure for Disabled Persons' Parking Bays and the Charging Regime to be Adopted

Mr Wilkinson introduced the report which explained that KCC had recently completed a review of the Disabled Persons' Parking Bay application procedure which included consultation with representatives of the District Councils. The review had been brought about as a result of concerns over the compliance of the existing policy with the Disability Discrimination Act which was subsequently replaced by the Equality Act. As a result of this review a revised procedure had been produced for adoption by the District Authorities. The issue of whether to charge for the introduction of bays had however been left open for decision at District level, although a recommended maximum limit of £250 had been set. Members were therefore asked to consider and recommend the adoption of the revised procedure and on whether a charge should be introduced. The recommendation was to not charge, particularly as the installation of a disabled parking bay as a result of an individual application did not grant exclusive use to the applicant.

In response to a question, Mr Wilkinson explained that the costs of providing a disabled persons' parking bay involved drafting and advertising the Traffic Regulation Order, providing and installing the signpost and sign plate, installing the road markings and the administration costs. The costs varied considerably depending on the number of bays being processed concurrently and it was preferable to process six to eight bays in one go to achieve economies of scale.

A Member said it was frustrating to note that many existing disabled bays were no longer needed due to people moving on or passing away and asked if the Council was able to remove those. Mr Wilkinson explained that if people informed the Council that they were no longer required, they would be removed however they were largely reliant on families or neighbours getting in touch. The Council did currently write about once every two years to the addresses where disabled bays were installed to ask if they were still needed, and this did seem to be about the right interval. Unnecessary bays did eventually get picked up, but perhaps not as quickly as everybody would like.

Mr Wilkinson explained that Ashford Borough Council carried out the work on behalf of the County Council. They would use the contractor who offered the best price. Additionally, KCC had committed to undertaking an Equalities Impact Assessment on these procedures in the near future once KCC had adopted them as formal policy, and that would be reported separately.

Resolved:

- That (i) the introduction of the new revised application guidelines provided by Kent County Council be approved.**
- (ii) Disabled Persons' Parking Bays be provided at no cost to the applicant.**

409 Ashford Pedestrian Guard Railing Assessment

The report asked the Board to consider and comment on the proposals to review sections of guard railing in Ashford. Mr Williams explained that there was new national guidance to Highway Authorities to remove street clutter and provide better pedestrian accessibility whilst still maintaining road safety. Jacobs had carried out a survey of pedestrian guard railing in Ashford and the report contained recommendations along with illustrated diagrams detailing proposed retention and removals. The removal of guard railing which was not required for pedestrian safety or for other reasons was in line with national guidance to de-clutter streets and would also reduce ongoing maintenance costs and help improve the appearance of the public realm.

A Member said the report was extremely sensible and he knew that in the Central London Boroughs the removal of such guard railing had improved the safety record. As a firefighter he had witnessed many occasions where pedestrian guard railing had worsened an accident. Another Member mentioned the danger the railings could potentially cause cyclists.

Another Member said he was concerned by the proposals and wondered if this was not a case of "aesthetics over safety" and if that was the case he could not support what was proposed. There were clearly areas, such as Maidstone Road for example, where removing the guard rails would not be in the interests of safety. Additionally at a time when money was tight, why was this proposed to be done now? He considered the rails were not clutter and they were there for a reason and for that reason, they should be left alone. Another Member considered that the proposals were a waste of public money and should be set aside. The report did not give any financial details and should not be considered it was affordable.

Mr Williams said that safety was paramount and that was one of the key considerations of this review. The assessment that had been undertaken was a snapshot of the situation, but he was looking for some local knowledge to help the overall picture. In his experience, he did concur with the view that a guard rail would not restrain a car from hitting a pedestrian in the event of an accident and was likely to make the situation worse. A cost/benefit analysis had been undertaken and the proposals would be self-financing within two years (chiefly due to reduced maintenance costs and the scrap value of the galvanised aluminium).

The general feeling of the Board was whilst there may be areas where railings could reasonably be removed the majority of Members did not want a blanket removal across the town. The re-engineered ring-road and slower traffic speeds had changed the parameters, but railings at particular crossing points, especially near schools did

need to be retained. In line with the request for local knowledge the Board agreed to defer making any decisions on this report and feed back to Mr Williams on the areas where they felt railings should be retained. Mr Williams could then report back to the June Meeting with firm proposals on a case by case basis. He also endeavoured to include information that had been collated on technical data and accident blackspots in that report.

In discussion, areas where consideration should be given to retaining railings were: - the crossing at Maidstone Road; at the roundabout at the top of New Street and at Chart Road on the way to St Mary's School. It was also mentioned that the path behind the barriers outside numbers 1 and 3 Chart Road (shown on page 45 of the Agenda) was some 50cm lower than the road level.

Resolved:

That decisions on this report be deferred and Members be invited to contact Danny Sheppard (ABC Member Services) with areas where they feel pedestrian guard railing should be retained.

410 Update on Highway Improvements at M20 Junction 9, Drovers Roundabout and a New Foot/Cycle Bridge over the M20, and Victoria Way

Mr Burton introduced the report which updated Members on the progress being made on the construction of these major highway schemes that would support the growth of Ashford. He explained that since the last update in December, progress had been affected by the bad weather. Substantial completion of the works at Drovers Roundabout and M20 Junction 9 was now likely towards the end of April 2011. Erection of the foot/cycle bridge was scheduled for a weekend period during May with an opening date in July. With regard to landscaping, to minimise the risk of the soft landscaping withering in the summer, it was likely that the bulk of the planting would be carried out in November 2011.

Two of the local Ward Members spoke and said that whilst there had been a slight improvement in removing cones and opening up lanes to traffic earlier, the traffic situation approaching the Drovers Roundabout could still be unbearable and cones were still often not removed until well after 4pm. Following a recent site visit, the Members were under the impression that cones would be removed from 3.30pm and that would help avoid some of the long tailbacks. The lack of road markings (signing and lining) approaching the roundabout was also causing confusion and the lack of give way markings was leading to vehicles "criss-crossing" dangerously and not knowing who had the right of way. The need to give way immediately after a set of traffic lights on the Maidstone Road was also extremely confusing and the whole thing was considered "an accident waiting to happen". There was also frustration that often drivers would crawl through the traffic only to find inactivity on site. Mr Burton said that it had previously been agreed that crews would attempt to start removing cones from 3.30pm, but this was not always easy, especially when surfacing was taking place. They wanted to get as much surfacing done in one go as possible to avoid "patchworking" so there would be occasions when they failed to meet the

deadline, although their intention was always to start lifting the cones at 3.30pm to have them all clear by 4pm. Another Member said there had to be room for a bit of flexibility over the removal of cones and everybody had to understand the pressure to catch up and complete these schemes on time, particularly after the bad weather. A certain level of tailbacks was unavoidable during major construction works such as this.

The Chairman then opened the item up to Members and the following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- In terms of landscaping, trees would be planted on both sides of Fougères Way from Junction 9 up to the Drovers Roundabout with additional planting on the left hand side. There would also be a specific landscaping plan for the roundabout itself including hedges and railings.
- The Drovers Roundabout's iconic cows would hopefully be returning over Easter and were about to be re-painted.
- Any overnight/weekend road closures would be widely communicated and this would be done as early as possible. There was a recognised need to be specific about times.
- The presence of work crews in fluorescent jackets did tend to keep the majority of drivers to a reasonable speed.
- The comments about the traffic lights and give way markings were useful and Mr Burton would take those back.

Resolved:

That the progress being made towards completing these projects be noted.

411 Highway Works Programme 2010/11

The report updated Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2010/11. Mr Howe was introduced as Kent Highway Services' new Highway Manager for East Kent. The following issues were raised: -

- The completion of the pedestrian/cycle crossing at Norman Road appeared to have dropped off the programme, could its status be clarified?
- The longstanding issue of Barrey Road and exiting the Industrial Estate there was still causing a problem. It had been hoped that the forthcoming Cheesemans Green Development would be able to provide some Section 106 funding to find a solution, but with the deferral of the M20 Junction 10A this was now unlikely to come on board for many years and a more immediate solution was needed. It was recognised that ultimately this was a Highways Agency issue because the A2070 was a trunk road, but could questions be asked?

- The amended lining at Chart Road had been done badly and needed re-doing as soon as possible.
- Confirmed figures were sought on how much the missing links of the Christchurch School to Park Farm cycleway would cost. KCC Members would be willing to pool some of their Highway Fund monies to get this finished if it was a realistic figure.
- The pothole repairs in Cypress Avenue, Godinton Park had not been particularly successful and there were also numerous potholes there which had been un-treated. Mr Howe advised that the next stage of KCC's 'Find & Fix' pothole blitz would start later in the month and he would examine the history of this particular location.
- The construction of a cycle track along the disused railway line at Henley Fields, Tenterden had been halted following the discovery of Great Crested Newts. Mr Howe would check that there were no other issues.
- There was a problem with flooding at the Chocolate Box Shop and other low lying premises in Hamstreet, primarily caused by blocked gullies. Neither KHS nor Southern Water appeared to take responsibility for it but it kept reoccurring. Mr Howe endeavoured to speak to Drainage Engineers and look at the history of this location.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

412 Dates of Meetings for 2011/12

These were confirmed as:

Tuesday 14th June 2011

Tuesday 13th September 2011

Tuesday 13th December 2011

Tuesday 13th March 2012

DS

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Danny Sheppard:
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