

## Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **14<sup>th</sup> June 2011**

### Present:

Mr M A Wickham (Vice-Chairman in the Chair);  
 Cllrs. Apps, Mrs Blanford, Cloughton, Davey, Feacey, Heyes, Mrs Martin, Robey  
 Mr M J Angell, Mr R E King, Mrs E Tweed  
 Mr R Butcher – KALC Ashford Area Committee

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (iii) Councillors Apps and Mrs Martin attended as Substitute Members for Councillors Burgess and Mrs Bell respectively.

### Apologies:

Cllrs Mrs Bell, Burgess, Yeo, Mr P M Hill, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr J N Wedgbury.

### Also Present:

Sandra Watkins (Project Manager – Road Safety – Jacobs), Andrew Burton (Project Manager – KHS), Jamie Watson (Project Manager – KHS), Toby Howe (Highway Manager East Kent – KHS), Paul Jackson (Head of Environmental Services - ABC), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), John Burns (Parking Operations Manager – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

## 36 Minutes

### Resolved:

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 8<sup>th</sup> March 2011 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.**

## 37 Petition Regarding Bonded Gravel Footpaths in Stanhope, Ashford

Mr Howe introduced the report which set out details of a petition that had been received requesting the removal of bonded gravel on the footpaths within the Stanhope estates. The petition was submitted by residents on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011, containing 256 signatures, and expressed concerns due to injuries that children had sustained due to trips or falls on the new footways with bonded gravel surfacing. It suggested that bonded gravel was not a suitable material for a high use pedestrian area, particularly where children were involved, and requested that the bonded gravel surfacing material be removed and replaced with a more conventional material. The report covered Kent Highway Services summary of the key issues with the change of surfacing due to the redevelopment of the area as per planning

permission 06/01895/AS and the financial implications to change the surface material of the footpaths. Mr Howe clarified that the report was for Members information rather than decision and the Board was asked to accept the petition, note the report and also note that no further action was required, however, the situation would be kept under review.

Members said that whilst they understood that the financial implications of remedial works meant that it was unlikely that they could be funded, they were not comfortable with doing nothing. A Member asked if the footpaths could not be done piecemeal as and when funding became available, even if that took a number of years, but it was explained that realistically, even if it were added to the programme, its priority meant it was very unlikely to be done any time soon. The question of how big a priority this issue should be when bearing in mind current budgets was discussed and if there had been any analysis of whether other groups of people liked the paths or even the extent of the problem. It was important that the County Council did not go too far down the line of committing resources to remove a surface that other people wanted. The Board agreed that no further action was required at this stage, but asked to be supplied with the list of future footway works so that they could review which ones had been given priority and if this particular issue could fit in to that anywhere.

In terms of lessons learned, Members hoped that this particular material would not remain in the Kent Design Guide as a suitable surface for a footpath. It was also considered that there should be more involvement with the local Ward Member and, if applicable, the Parish Council on issues such as this in the future.

**Resolved:**

**That the petition and report be accepted and noted and it be noted that no further action will be taken at this stage. However, the Board would like to receive the list of future footway works so that they could review which ones had been given priority and if this particular issue could fit in to that anywhere.**

## **38 Tracker Report**

The Chairman drew Members attention to the Tracker of Decisions.

A Member asked about the A28 Speed Limit Review and asked why it still appeared on the tracker when work had been agreed and would commence shortly. The Head of Environmental Services explained that the Tracker was simply a list of decisions taken by the Board over the last year or so and this item would come off the Tracker once work commenced. Members asked that KHS staff ensure that information was up-to-date for future Trackers.

**Resolved:**

**That the Tracker be received and noted.**

## **39 Ashford Pedestrian Guardrailing Assessment – Report Back**

Mrs Watkins introduced the report and explained this was an update following the report submitted to the Board in March 2011 and the recent Site Visit attended by some Members. Following that Site Visit an up-to-date presentation had been prepared and she would run through that at this Meeting and ask Members to make a decision on each of the nine sites in turn so that the Board would arrive at an in principle agreement. In response to a question about why the guardrails were installed in these locations in the first place, Mrs Watkins said it was difficult to go into specifics but a lot of them had been in place for many years and were installed under different Department for Transport guidelines and as part of a different road environment. In terms of costs, there were now no proposals for a blanket removal across the town, but savings would be made in terms of not repairing or replacing those barriers that had been earmarked for removal when that time came.

Mrs Watkins then displayed each of the nine sites on screen and Members gave their views on the proposals: -

### **Site 1 - Roundabout junction of A292 Maidstone Road / New Street / Magazine Road / Chart Road**

The recommendation in the report was that the majority of railings offered little benefit as a guide or a protective device except outside both the primary and nursery schools where they were proposed to be retained. Those 22.5 panels which were to be retained should be 1.4m high as they were on a shared foot/cycleway and would therefore need to be replaced. Following the Site Visit it had also now been proposed to retain the first seven panels in New Street just before the old Prince Albert pub and this was also agreed.

### **Site 2 - The junction with A292 Maidstone Road and Chart Road**

The recommendation in the report was to remove all pedestrian guardrailings in this area. Following discussion the Board agreed that the nine barriers on the bend of Chart Road into Maidstone Road should be retained as it was a dangerous bend and a lot of school children used this area so it would keep them off the road and channel them to the designated crossing points.

### **Site 3 - Chart Road**

The recommendation in the report was to remove the railings located on the western side footway. However, the large grassed central island had two staggered panels positioned approximately 1.5m apart on an incline, and it was proposed that those panels should be retained. This was agreed by the Board.

### **Site 4 – Somerset Road**

The recommendation in the report was to remove all of the 30 railings on the northern footway at this site. This was agreed by the Board.

### **Site 5 – Edinburgh Road/Park Street**

The recommendation in the report was to remove all of the railings on this site. However, following the Site Visit it had been proposed to retain the five panels in front of the archway immediately outside the Kentish Express offices. This was agreed by the Board.

### **Site 6 – Elwick Road**

The recommendation in the report was to remove all of the railings on this site. This was agreed by the Board.

### **Site 7 – Station Road**

The recommendation in the report was to remove all of the three railings on this site. However, following the Site Visit it had been proposed to retain the first of the barriers, immediately in line with the main entrance of the Bowling Alley. This was agreed by the Board.

### **Site 8 – Park Street**

The recommendation in the report was to remove all of the railings on this site. However, following the Site Visit it had been proposed to retain all of the panels except the first two immediately adjacent to the bus stop. This was agreed by the Board. It was also noted that the plan on display was incorrect and would be amended.

### **Site 9 – Roundabout junction of Mace Lane/Hythe Road and Henwood/Mill Court.**

The recommendation in the report was to retain the eight panel section of railings as there was a trip hazard and to retain some panels at Henwood following comments received about cyclists using that route. This was agreed by the Board.

Mrs Watkins thanked Members for their input into this process and explained that a final report would be produced taking into account all of the comments made at both the Site Visit and at this Meeting. The relevant barriers would then either be replaced or removed when the time came. It was confirmed that the barriers were made of mild galvanised steel rather than aluminium.

### **Resolved:**

**That the discussions above form the basis of the final Ashford Pedestrian Guardrailing Assessment.**

## **40 Management of Double Parking and Parking at Dropped Kerbs**

Mr Burns introduced the report and explained that Kent County Council had adopted formal powers to enforce double parking and parking at dropped kerbs under the Traffic Management Act 2004. As a consequence written approval had been given to each District Council to commence such enforcement. The report therefore sought the support of the Board to agree that Ashford Borough Council should adopt the powers to enforce these parking matters. It was also proposed that prior to enforcement taking place a comprehensive media PR exercise and warning notice campaign be undertaken to advise and notify motorists of the new restrictions. It was estimated that this campaign would cost approximately £2500 and there would not be a need to employ additional Civil Enforcement Officers to undertake these duties. The report went into more detail on the definitions of these offences and included example publicity leaflets produced by Kent County Council. The ABC Cabinet Member supported the recommendations.

A Member said he did have a concern over the legal definition of double parking, which was 50cm or greater from the kerb. He considered the major problem regarding double parking was when there were two cars together and this is what most people understood by the term, so he hoped Officers would not be too pedantic in penalising residents. He was also unsure about the claim that this extra work could be absorbed within existing resources. Mr Burns explained that as with all parking policies, common sense and the practicalities of a situation would rule the judgement and any enforcement would have to be suitable for the contravention and backed up by firm evidence. Of course, most people understood double parking as one vehicle parking outside of another and in reality if a vehicle was simply parked 52cm from a kerb but not causing any difficulties then action was unlikely to be taken. In terms of resources, the additional duties would be undertaken as part of the normal patrols and it was anticipated that incidents would be relatively rare so they should not take up significant additional time and resources and require extra Officers. The easing of this problem and deterrent to those who double parked or parked across dropped kerbs though would be a significant benefit to the local community.

### **Resolved:**

- That**
- (i) the new powers to enforce double parking and parking at dropped kerbs with the exception of private driveways, be approved and adopted by Ashford Borough Council.**
  - (ii) it be agreed that, prior to enforcement taking place, a comprehensive media PR exercise and warning notice campaign be undertaken to advise and notify motorists of the new restrictions.**

## **41 Highway Improvements at Drovers Roundabout, M20 Junction 9, and new Foot/Cycle Bridge over the M20 – Update Report**

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 the bridge had been successfully installed during the road closure on the weekend of 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> May and the closure had been managed relatively smoothly. The final opening date of the bridge had been delayed slightly because of bad weather but was currently expected to be opened during the first week of August. With regard to Drovers roundabout there had been problems, chiefly due to the decision to turn on the traffic signals two weeks earlier than planned because of safety concerns. Signals initially operated to a fixed time plan and it took a few weeks for vehicle detectors that continually measured traffic flows and queue lengths to optimise the timing of the traffic signals to become operational. This had therefore caused problems when the lights were first switched on and was still causing some congestion, but the system would be working fully with visible improvements expected during the following week. With regard to landscaping at the roundabout many plants and shrubs had already been planted, but the recent dry weather meant that the grass would not be seeded until December. The cow and drover sculptures would be re-instated within the next week or so.

One of the local Ward Members said that after the chaos of the first day when the traffic lights were switched on, he was pleased to say there had been an improvement. The following week, when the computer system should be working fully, would be a good test. The lane markings at the roundabout were also causing confusion (particularly when entering and exiting for the A20) and causing traffic to change lanes at the last moment, so there was a need for a bit more clarity. Mr Burton explained that there was an ongoing dialogue about the lane markings in the area and there would be some changes to reflect the feedback received.

Another one of the local Ward Members said he hoped that the benefit of the computer system would be felt in all directions approaching the Drovers roundabout. On occasions traffic had been backing up onto the main carriageway of the M20 which was extremely dangerous. He understood why the lights had been switched on but it was a very emotive situation and he hoped the benefits would immediately become clear. He agreed with the comments about there being a recent improvement and thanked Mr Burton for listening and taking on board the comments of Members and replying promptly to emails. It was greatly appreciated.

Members expressed their pleasure with the bridge. People from all over the County were talking about it and it was certainly iconic and was a credit to Ashford. Mr Burton explained that the lighting for the bridge may have to be installed separately but it had been designed in a way that it could be retro-fitted. They would be looking for private funding at a later date to provide the lighting. There would also be a competition whereby residents would be invited to come up with a name for the Bridge and Officers would be working with the local media on that in the near future.

Mr Watson then gave a brief update regarding the Victoria Way project. He explained that the lining in Leacon Road was now complete; the new link road joining Leacon Road with Victoria Road was about a month from completion as was the Beaver Road to Victoria Road School link; and following delays John Wallis Square would be complete by October. One of the Ward Members said he was glad to see the project progressing so well, but he had had trouble finding the slip road to Victoria Crescent and asked Mr Watson to take that on board.

**Resolved:**

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

## **42 Highway Improvement Scheme Update**

Mr Howe introduced the information report which updated on the Integrated Transport Schemes to be implemented in the financial year 2011/12. The following issues were raised: -

- The Safer Routes to Schools but was controlled centrally and there was limited funding. A contact name could be provided for interested Members.
- The lack of money being spent in Ashford was reflective of a lack of funding and the priorities being greater in other areas.
- Perhaps the more of the funding should be taken out of 'ring-fenced' pots so it could be used more generally and where it was most needed.
- With regard to Bus Stop improvements, there was a definite problem in Bybrook Road where two Bus Stops had been put in immediately opposite each other. When two buses arrived at the same time it did cause frustration and motorists had starting mounting pavements. One of the Bus Stops really should be moved slightly further up the road.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be received and noted.**

## **43 Highway Works Programme 2011/12**

The report updated Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2011/12. Mr Howe introduced the report and explained that in addition to the listed schemes and the current work on potholes, the Government had given KHS £6.5m to spend on weather related road damage. Another £2.5m had been set aside for potholes (approximately £200,000 per District) and work had been carried out since April. Approximately £110,000 had been spent so far in Ashford. The remaining £4m of the overall County total would be spent on re-surfacing roads across the County. In terms of the Programme the following issues were raised: -

- The County Member for the area said that the road surfacing at Iden Lane, Egerton had not been completed in April 2011 as stated but would be taking

place the following week. He was also interested in the cost of the bridge reconstruction that had taken place at Romden Road, Smarden.

- The two new bus shelters at Bluebell Road and Ashford Road, Kingsnorth programmed for late May 2011 under the County Member Highway Fund Works had still not commenced and there was no update. A Member said it was things like this that caused difficulties for Elected Members and hoped that the record keeping of the Member Highway Fund monies could be kept more up-to-date. Officers recognised that the installation of Member Highway Schemes had not worked as smoothly as it could and staff had been recently re-allocated to get these moving and give firm delivery dates to Members.
- Pothole repairs in Collard Road and pavement repairs in Western Avenue were urgent and needed to be undertaken as a priority.
- A speed indicator device was to be installed at Faversham Road approaching the Towers School from Boughton Aluph, but there was still a need to install 30mph indicator signs on both sides of the road so this could be enforced. The County Member also hoped that the device was not simply being moved from one end of the Faversham Road to the other as she had allocated some of her Highway Fund for this and devices were still needed at either end of the road.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be received and noted.**

## **44 Results of the Highway Tracker Survey 2010**

The information report set out the key results of the 2010 Resident, County Member, District Member and Parish/Town Council Highway Tracker Survey. The full report was over 100 pages long and was available on the KCC website. It was considered that the impact of extreme winter weather, coupled with reduced funding was reflected in the results.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be received and noted.**

## **45 Date of Next Meeting**

**It was noted that the next Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board would be held on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2011 (previously 13<sup>th</sup> September).**

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Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Danny Sheppard:  
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