

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **20th September 2011**

Present:

Cllr. Burgess (Chairman);
 Mr M A Wickham (Vice-Chairman);
 Cllrs. Apps, Mrs Bell, Mrs Blanford, Claughton, Davey, Feacey, Heyes
 Mr M J Angell, Mr P M Hill, 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) Councillor Apps attended as Substitute Member for Councillor Robey.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Robey, Yeo, Mr R E King.

Also Present:

Andrew Burton (Project Manager – Kent Highways & Transportation (KH&T)), Toby Howe (Highway Manager East Kent – KH&T), Lisa Holder (District Highway Manager Ashford – KH&T), Paul Jackson (Head of Environmental Services - ABC), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

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Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 14th June 2011 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

133 Transport Forum

The Board received the report of the Chairman of the Transport Forum for the Meeting held on 24th June 2011. The Forum had considered: - an update from David Brazier – KCC Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste; and discussions on taxis, bus services and trains. The Chairman said that it had been a productive meeting and the update from David Brazier had been particularly well received.

Resolved:

That the report of the Chairman of the Transport Forum for the Meeting held on the 24th June 2011 be received and noted.

134 Tracker Report

The Chairman drew Members attention to the Tracker of Decisions. Mr Wilkinson advised of one correction to the report in that the consultation period for the introduction of waiting restrictions in Henwood Industrial Estate would end on the 23rd September 2011 and not the 25th as stated on the Tracker.

A Member mentioned the proposed traffic calming measures in Bluebell Road & Roman Way, Park Farm and Church Hill, Kingsnorth. This issue dated back to 2006 and the problem at Church Hill was getting worse. He considered a way forward needed to be found and asked for a meeting to be organised to discuss this at the Ashford Highways Depot.

A Member asked about the management of double parking and parking at dropped kerbs and why private driveways were excepted when this was often the area that caused most problems. Mr Wilkinson explained that in the case of private driveways, the occupier could quite legitimately choose to park in front of their own driveway or permit someone else to do so, making it difficult to enforce against someone without knowing whether that was the case. The Police had powers to enforce against such obstructions, but they would give a higher priority to people who were blocked in on a driveway rather than those who could not access one. The whole policy of the management of double parking and parking at dropped kerbs was a KCC one which was being applied across the County in a consistent way.

Resolved:

That the Tracker be received and noted.

135 Resolution of Objections to Proposed Bus Stops in Singleton and Proposed Procedure for Dealing with Future Objections Received at Informal Consultation

The Chairman introduced the report which explained that an informal local consultation had been held on the siting of three bus stops (with bus boarders and clearways) in Kirk View, Imperial Way and Singleton Hill in order to serve the planned extension of the A Line bus service into Kirk View and Imperial Way. A total of six objections, two objections to each of the proposed bus stops, were received during the consultation process. Due to the informal nature of the consultation and the need to avoid delay to the introduction of the bus service, approval had been sought and received by a Panel representing the Board to decide upon the objections received and report back to the next Joint Transportation Board meeting. The report detailed the outcome of the Panel meeting and recommended that the Board formally agree the formulation of a Panel to decide on all objections received during future small scale informal consultations as formal policy.

The Chairman explained that the Board Chairman, Vice-Chairman and ABC Cabinet Member for the Environment had all been involved in the site visit on this occasion and the problem with this particular case was that the bus route had been included in the original development plans, but then not implemented for some years, so people

had got used to being able to park in the locations identified for the bus stops. He thought the recommendation to formally agree the formulation of a Panel would improve the situation in the future, as would the adoption of a procedure by ABC's Planning Department to include details of proposed bus services in all new development plans. Board Members agreed that bus companies should be consulted on major housing projects at the planning stage in terms of the siting and access of bus stops and that as such the Chairman of the Board should write to ABC's Planning Department on those terms.

In discussion Members noted that although on this occasion the Cabinet Member and Ward Member had been the same person, for the future the Ward Member and the Parish Council Chairman (if relevant) should be invited to attend the meeting. It was agreed that the recommendation be amended to reflect this.

Resolved:

- That (i) a Panel consisting of the JTB Chair, JTB Vice-Chair, Cabinet Member for the Environment and Transport Forum Chair be approved, to decide on all future objections received during small scale informal consultations relating to transportation matters and the Ward Member and Parish Council Chairman (if relevant) be invited to attend all such meetings in a non voting capacity.**
- (ii) the outcome of the Panel's meeting on the proposed bus stops in Singleton be endorsed.**
- (iii) the adoption of a procedure to include details of proposed bus services in all new development plans be recommended and the Chairman of the Board should write to ABC's Planning Department on those terms.**

136 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 both he and Mr Burton (regarding the Major Capital Projects) were available to answer Members' questions. In terms of the Programme the following issues were raised: -

- The County Member for the area said that he thought the construction of a tarmac path at the unmade section of Nelson Close, Ashford had been scheduled from his Member Highway Fund. If this was being done as part of the Local Transport Plan he had no objection, but asked for clarification. Mr Howe said he would check and get back to the Member.
- The resurfacing work undertaken at Iden Lane, Egerton was questioned as a priority when it affected so few properties. Mr Howe believed this was where potholes in the area had previously been patched and this work related to the final sealing of those. He said he would confirm the rationale and sequence of events.

- A County Member said that she had identified a number of schemes in her Division for her Member Highway Fund including 30mph repeater signs at Faversham Road, Kennington and traffic calming at Essella Road, but they did not appear to be on this schedule. Mr Howe explained that Kirsty Williams had recently been appointed as KH&T's dedicated Member Highway Fund Manager and a tighter and more up-to-date report on Member Highway Fund projects would be produced for future meetings of this Board.
- The Ward Member said that he considered it important that residents of Bockhanger Lane be kept fully informed and consulted on proposals to create a new Public Right of Way linking to the Eureka Leisure Park.
- The County Member for the area updated the Board on the position regarding a new multi user route in Kingsnorth. The report noted that there was Section 106, Sustrans and Member funding in place for the creation of a part cycle track and part Bridleway subject to planning permission, and that work was scheduled for 2011/12. There had been some objections to part of the scheme because of the fear of potential increased crime, however Kent Police's latest position was that they did not object and thought that this was highly unlikely. He understood that the project needed to receive the go-ahead by the end of 2011 to secure the Sustrans funding, so urged Officers to get it in the programme and schedule the works as soon as possible so that there was a complete cycleway to serve the area.
- A Member raised the lining on Chart Road that had been done badly and needed re-doing and asked when this was likely. Mr Howe said he would find out the timescale and get back to the Member.
- A Member said that the report did not seem to take into account drainage schemes. There was a particular issue at Snargate Road, Kenardington where works were essential to prevent further flooding and he thought he had agreed with the Drainage Engineer that these would be undertaken. He was frustrated that with winter approaching again, these did not appear to be programmed. Mr Howe said he would talk to the Drainage Manager and report back to the Member.
- There had been no further delays with Victoria Way Phase 1 and it was still scheduled for an October completion and opening.
- A Member asked if all salt bins were now bright yellow as they often did not blend well into the background in rural areas and could be an eyesore. Mr Howe explained that unfortunately they were designed to stand out and they were all now yellow.

There was then a lengthy discussion on the A20 Fougères Way, Drivers Roundabout and M20 Junction 9 Improvements. A Member said he had always tried to accentuate the positives of the scheme but it was becoming increasingly difficult. The original completion date of spring 2011 had now slipped to October and there still appeared to be numerous lanes closed off for no reason with no work occurring. More specific points of concern from Members were: - inaccurate lane markings at

the Drivers Roundabout (in particular the inside right lane at Maidstone Road directing traffic to the M20 when it should be to Simone Weil Avenue); the poor quality of road markings; the number of consecutive traffic lights in such a small area which were causing nuisance and danger and did not allow the traffic to flow properly; access to Highworth School at peak times with waiting traffic backing up as far as Simone Weil Avenue; the poor landscaping of the roundabout and verges; arrangements for pedestrians and cones making the lanes at the Junction 9 roundabout very narrow and dangerous.

In response Mr Burton made the following points: -

- The completion date would be October 2011. The signs advising of a date of spring 2011 had been a somewhat embarrassing point and had now been taken away. The points about delays were accepted and work was already ongoing with the contractor to produce a post-project review and once completed that would be made public and a report submitted to this Board.
- Current lane closures were due to the contractor being asked to come back and rectify work that had not been carried out satisfactorily and it was important for that work to be carried out now while they were still on site.
- With regard to the lane markings, there was an issue in that there were four lanes and five roads on to the roundabout. Therefore there did need to be an element of compromise in the signing of the junction. The Police Road Traffic Team and the Designer had looked closely at this together and in their professional opinion the current set up had been agreed as the safest compromise. There was an option to leave that particular lane blank on the signage and if Members thought the current signage wasn't working, this may have to be looked at again. Members said they were uncomfortable with the word "compromise" when it came to safety. If the signage and lane markings were making the area inherently dangerous then changes needed to be made.
- It was accepted as an inherent problem of signalised roundabouts that more than one set of lights were sometimes in drivers' immediate eye line and there was a danger of misinterpreting them. However, Mr Burton said he had been told that the design had gone as far as it could in shielding the "second" and "third" sets of lights, but he would investigate this further.
- The blanket permit for lane closures would expire at the end of September so it was hoped that the Contractor would have all works finished by then and Members would see an immediate improvement in the number of closures. Come October the Contractor would have to apply for any additional closure permits for individual sites.
- The original weed killing measures were unsuccessful and had been repeated. Therefore, in two weeks the weeds should all be dead before the major planting began on the 10th October 2011. This should improve the visual impact of the roundabout and verges.

- It was hoped that the traffic lights at the Junction 9 roundabout would be switched on during the October Half Term week when traffic flows were a lot lower in order to allow for an element of trialling.
- The footpath on Fougères Way was now permanently closed and pedestrians would also be deterred from crossing at the Junction 9 roundabout for safety reasons. The new pedestrian routes and their benefits would be clearly outlined locally.
- Mr Burton had witnessed the problem at Highworth School, however this was a local issue and the parking situation may be something ABC wanted to consider as the Planning Authority.
- Seven crashes had been recorded on site in the last year which was not insignificant, however only one had necessitated an ambulance.

A Member said that although he sympathised with some of the points being made, he believed most of the problems were caused by motorists not reading the roads and signs properly and driving too fast when approaching the roundabout. He hoped that the scheme would be allowed to settle down properly before people jumped to too many premature conclusions.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

137 KCC Highways & Transportation New Structure - Update

The information report outlined the changes that had taken place following a restructure of Kent Highway Services and highlighted the new staffing arrangements in Kent Highways and Transportation, particularly for Ashford, and how they would continue to focus on working with communities and ensure proper engagement with Members, Parishes and local people. Mr Howe introduced Lisa Holder, the newly appointed District Highway Manager for Ashford and explained the best process for logging calls and enquiries. He also explained that Lisa would be the immediate point of contact for non-specific enquiries.

In response to a question, Mr Howe advised that there was now a dedicated Member Highway Fund team in place headed by Kirsty Williams and Tara O'Shea was the Ashford contact. He endeavoured to circulate a diagram of the overall team structure to Members after the meeting. A Member asked if the structure could be reviewed in six months time.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

138 Date of Additional Special Meeting

It was noted that an additional Special Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board would be held on the 11th October 2011.

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Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Danny Sheppard:
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