

## Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in Committee Room No.2 (Bad Münstereifel Room), Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **11<sup>th</sup> October 2011**

### Present:

Cllr. Burgess (Chairman);  
Cllrs. Apps, Mrs Bell, Mrs Blanford, Davey, Feacey, Shorter  
Mr R E King, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr J N Wedgbury  
Mr R Butcher – KALC Ashford Area Committee

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (iii) Councillors Apps and Shorter attended as Substitute Members for Councillors Robey and Claughton respectively.

### Apologies:

Cllrs. Claughton, Heyes, Robey, Mrs E Tweed, Mr M A Wickham.

### Also Present:

Cllr Galpin

Lisa Holder (District Highway Manager Ashford – Kent Highways & Transportation), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), Kirsty Hogarth (Business Manager, Environmental Services – ABC), Sarah Paul (Technical Administrative Assistant – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

## 159 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Mr King	Code of Conduct – Personal and Prejudicial – Had used his Member Highway Fund to fund schemes at Challock and Smarden. Did not vote on those schemes	160
Mr Koowaree	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – Son in Law worked at Henwood Industrial Estate	161
Shorter	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – Chairman of Kingsnorth Parish Council	160
Wedgbury	Code of Conduct – Personal and Prejudicial – Had used his Member Highway Fund to fund schemes at Beaver Green and Furley Park. Did	160

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Minute No.</b>
	not vote on those schemes.	
	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – Member of Kingsnorth Parish Council	160
	Code of Conduct – Personal and Prejudicial – His wife worked at Henwood Industrial Estate. Left the meeting whilst this item was discussed.	161

## **160 Amendment 18 – Proposed Parking Restrictions in Various Locations within the Borough**

Mrs Holder explained that Ashford Borough Council had been commissioned by KCC Highways & Transportation to carry out the formulation of the traffic order and consultation on their behalf.

The Technical Administrative Assistant introduced the report and gave a PowerPoint presentation overview of each of the six small safety schemes included within the Amendment 18 traffic order. The report and presentation also detailed the results of the recent consultation in respect to the making of the order. The traffic order consisted of parking and waiting restrictions constituting Member Highway funded schemes in various locations across the Borough. All bar one of the schemes related to safety restrictions in the vicinity of schools while the last consisted of a minor amendment to an existing length of corner protection.

The Board then considered each of the schemes in turn: -

### **Beaver Green Community Primary School Highway Safety Scheme**

The scheme was intended to address the current parking problems affecting the roads in the immediate vicinity of Beaver Green Community Primary School at the beginning and end of the school day. The proposals consisted of a 'school keep clear' restriction on both sides of the carriageway protecting the school patrol crossing point on Cuckoo Lane and 'no waiting at any time' protection around the nearby junctions and bend. Six representations had been received in response to the consultation – four in support of the proposals but expressing the view that they could go further; one which asked for a slight reduction to one of the lengths of 'no waiting at any time' restriction; and one that had been subsequently withdrawn.

The County Member for the area said that this was an important scheme and it was vital that it went ahead as parking practices around the school were making the area unsafe. If anything, people in the area wanted it extended further, but local support for the proposals was high and he hoped it could be completed before the end of the October Half Term. Mr Wilkinson explained that subject to the outcome of this meeting, the intention was for all of the work within Amendment 18 to be undertaken

during the week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> October (Half Term). All proposals would also be fully enforceable.

The Board agreed to support the scheme as proposed.

### **Furley Park Primary School Highway Safety Scheme**

The scheme consisted of the proposed removal of the existing informal 'school keep clear' restriction across the vehicular access to the school and the introduction of formal 'school keep clear' restrictions on both sides of the carriageway protecting the pedestrian crossings to either side of the school access with a 'no waiting at any time' restriction on both sides of the carriageway protecting the bend between them. Four representations had been received in response to the consultation – all of which were in support of the proposals including a submission from Kingsnorth Parish Council and a petition with 12 signatories. The scheme was again an attempt to combat irresponsible parking at school times and issues that the bus company were having in trying to negotiate the area and keep to timetable. This issue had been raised at the Quality Bus Partnership and there was the potential for the bus service to be withdrawn if the problems persisted.

The County Member for the area said that a lot of hard work had gone on in the development of this scheme. There had been a number of minor shunts and incidents in the area at school times involving both cars and buses and children's safety was being put at risk by thoughtless parking. He said it was a vitally important scheme and it was important to keep the bus route as well. A Member who used to be the County Member for the area and a Governor at the school explained that the housing was on the opposite side of the road to the entrance of the school, so the road was heavily crossed on foot and some sort of parking regulation was needed.

The Board agreed to support the scheme as proposed.

### **Challock Primary School Highway Safety Scheme**

The scheme consisted of the removal of an existing advisory only 'school keep clear' marking across the vehicular access of the school and the introduction of 'no waiting at any time' restrictions around the junctions and bends between the school and The Lees and Village Hall sites from which 'walking buses' were run at the beginning and end of the school day. The restrictions were intended to prevent parking in those locations where it would cause a danger or obstruction to other traffic and also to address the issue of pavement parking where it would obstruct the 'walking buses'. Ten representations had been received in response to the consultation – eight in objection to the proposals and two in support.

The County Member for the area said he was very supportive of the proposals. There was a real problem with the safety of children going to and from school and this was one of the reasons the walking buses had been set up. It was important to support those who took part in this. In addition there were always sufficient parking spaces available in the Village Hall car park so more needed to be done to encourage people to use these two resources more. Despite the objections, he did not think that the double yellow lines would be too intrusive and he thought it was

important to discourage cars from parking dangerously on the bend and at crossing points.

The KALC Representative said he was a little concerned about the proposals in that this was a relatively small village school and he wondered if there needed to be 24/7 restrictions in place, which may cause problems for local residents when the parking problems were perhaps for only two hours every day. Mr Wilkinson responded that the majority of the restrictions were being put in places where people should not be parking in any case in accordance with the Highway Code (10m from a junction, on a bend etc). Single yellow lines may suggest to people that it was acceptable to park in those places and that would send the wrong message. In addition the use of single yellow lines would be more visually intrusive because of the requirement to provide time plates on posts at regular intervals. The County Member also pointed out that the properties in the area did have sufficient off-road parking for themselves and visitors so there was no real requirement for significant on-street parking.

The Board agreed to support the scheme as proposed.

### **Rolvenden Primary School Highway Safety Scheme**

The scheme consisted of the proposed introduction of 'school keep clear' restrictions on both sides of the carriageway protecting the school patrol crossing point. No representations had been received in response to the consultation.

A Member said this was an extremely fast stretch of road so he was pleased to see the scheme and hear that an interactive speed sign was to be installed.

The Board agreed to support the scheme as proposed.

### **Smarden Primary School Highway Safety Scheme**

The scheme consisted of the formalisation of the existing 'school keep clear' restriction fronting the school (to maintain sight lines for children and parents crossing the road at the beginning and end of the school day) and 'no waiting at any time' restrictions on both sides of the carriageway to protect the adjoining bend. Two representations had been received in response to the consultation – one in support from the Parish Council; and one request to convert the 'school keep clear' part of the restriction to additional 'no waiting at any time'.

The County Member for the area said there had been lots of discussion over this scheme and now nearly everybody seemed to be in agreement. The 'school keep clear' zone would actually be a tighter restriction in that area at peak times, but free up much needed additional parking for the recreation ground at weekends.

A Member asked about additional junction protection that had appeared on other schemes but not this one. Mr Wilkinson explained that had originally been proposed for this scheme also, but there had been objections and it had been taken out.

The Board agreed to support the scheme as proposed.

### **Amendment to Corner Protection in The Street, Smarden**

The scheme consisted of the simple proposed conversion of a length of 'no waiting between 8am and 6pm Monday to Saturday' restriction to 'no waiting at any time' at the junction of The Street and Water Lane and a slight reduction in its length. This amendment was proposed in order to address inappropriate parking taking place on the junction during the evenings. No representations had been received in response to the consultation.

Members agreed that this was a dangerous corner as people tended to park there to use the pub and it did not allow much room for manoeuvring, particularly with larger vehicles. There was also a weight restriction in Cage Lane which was often ignored and lorries did get stuck there and had occasionally clipped the buildings.

In response to a question about whether narrower yellow lining could be used in Conservation Areas such as this, Mr Wilkinson explained that was not proposed. They had experimented with narrower lines in the past but the quality and tolerance had not been satisfactory. There were compromises to be made on the colour though and they would be looking to use the lighter primrose yellow paint in this location.

In his absence, a Member raised a point on behalf of the Vice-Chairman. He had asked if it would not be better to contact all schools in the Borough to review their keep clear markings in one go, rather than doing a few schools at a time. Surely this approach would be beneficial in terms of economies of scale for KCC and the Vice-Chairman had already raised this issue with County Officers. It was explained that this would have to be a KCC policy decision and a sizeable piece of work that would require a significant budget. The schemes approved today had been particularly related to safety and largely funded by Member Highway Fund monies. The Board agreed to write to KCC Highways & Transportation urging them to consider the Vice-Chairman's idea.

#### **Resolved:**

- That (i) the Amendment 18 traffic order be made.**
- (ii) all required road markings be implemented.**
- (iii) the Board write to KCC Highways & Transportation urging them to consider the Vice-Chairman's idea to review all School keep clear markings in the Borough as one exercise.**

### **161 Amendment 19 – Proposed Highway Safety Scheme in Henwood Industrial Estate**

Mrs Holder explained the background to this issue was that parking on the Henwood Industrial Estate was causing safety and obstruction issues and causing difficulties for businesses in terms of access arrangements. Mrs Paul explained that there had been an influx of complaints in spring 2010 and these had been backed up by

Officers' observations at the time. The main problems could be summarised as follows: - parking on bends and opposite junctions; parking on footways; parking on both sides of a carriageway that was too narrow to facilitate this; and drivers parking in a way that obstructed commercial vehicles getting in and out of the individual accesses. As a result, and in view of the seriousness of the issue, a paper was tabled at the meeting of this Board in June 2010 intending to immediately introduce a safety scheme under a temporary traffic order. It was hoped that a more permanent solution under the statutory processes could then be found later on. Unfortunately, due to funding issues, the process was delayed and funding had only just been found, so formal consultation had now been undertaken on a permanent scheme. A total of 11 representations had been received to the consultation – one in support from a local business owner, one from one of the Ward Members; eight from individuals employed on the Henwood Industrial Estate; and one from Kent Community Health NHS Trust who had offices on the Estate. The main concerns of the various representations were: - the loss of parking and non-availability of sufficient parking facilities on the Estate; potential for displacement of vehicles into residential roads; and the affordability of Henwood Pay & Display Car Park. With regard to the potential displacement of vehicles, Officers considered that the impact of this was difficult to assess as there was a high turnover of vehicles during the day and there was still suitable on-street parking on the other areas of the Estate which remained under-used. Drivers did tend to congregate in particular areas close to their own destinations. Therefore it was considered that many of the displaced vehicles would be able to be accommodated elsewhere on the Estate. Additionally, if the proposed restrictions were implemented, businesses may decide to provide more off-street parking on their own premises. In terms of the Pay & Display Car Park, it was important to pitch the pricing at a realistic level, but not one that attracted people in from other town centre car parks, or undercut public transport options.

One of the Ward Members said that whilst he had no problem with the proposed restrictions and understood why regulation was needed, he did have concerns about displacement of vehicles (particularly the potential to spill out into residential areas) and the fairness of charging levels. At present, individuals were parking at absolutely no cost so they were already massively undercutting public transport options. To go from that to an annual season ticket price of £675 for the Henwood Pay & Display Car Park was unrealistic in the current economic climate, as was asking already stretched businesses to liberate more parking spaces on their individual sites. He considered there needed to be a full detailed review of how displaced parking could be properly and fairly accommodated.

The ABC Cabinet Member said that she had examined the site and the parking situation was chaotic and undoubtedly causing problems for the businesses there. It was clear that something had to be done and she supported the proposed restrictions, but agreed with the Ward Member in the sense that it was important to help the businesses on Henwood Industrial Estate, but not by simply penalising the employees. She considered the decision should be deferred until the December meeting of this Board to allow for more negotiations with the employers on the site and to find a fairer solution for the Pay & Display Car Park. She understood the point about not wanting to attract people in from other town centre car parks, but she hoped some options could be explored such as discounted or preferential rates for

staff who worked on the Estate. At present the Car Park was hardly being used at all so was a wasted asset.

Mr Wilkinson said, whilst he understood the comments being made, there was a longstanding problem at Henwood. Without significant changes to access points they could not free up extra additional space for on-street parking and it seemed clear that Members generally supported the need for the proposed restrictions. He thought it was important to give the businesses as much forward notice as possible of the proposed restrictions so they could begin to prepare themselves and start to make suitable arrangements. Such measures had been successful in a similar situation on the Orbital Park so he hoped the Board would see fit to agree the detail of the scheme at this meeting, even if they wanted to defer implementation.

After further discussion the Board said it was happy to agree the proposed scheme in principle, but that a decision on implementation should be deferred until the December meeting of the Board to allow time for further discussions with the businesses/employers with a view to providing alternative parking solutions for employees and visitors, and an examination of the charging regime in Henwood Car Park. There was a recognition that this was an important scheme in terms of highway safety and it was County Council funding but it was vitally important to get the details right. It had already been delayed for over a year because funding was not available, so a delay of an extra couple of months in order to get it right should not be a problem. There was concern that otherwise, the Board may agree something it was not quite ready for. There were also issues that may have to be considered by ABC's Cabinet such as car parking tariffs and potential future developments at Henwood Industrial Estate. The Chairman re-iterated that the Board totally recognised the need and was committed to finding a solution for the area.

**Resolved:**

**That the proposed safety scheme in the Henwood Industrial Estate be agreed in principle, but a decision on implementation be deferred until the December meeting of the Board to allow time for further discussions with the businesses/employers with a view to providing alternative parking solutions for employees and visitors, and an examination of the charging regime in Henwood Car Park.**

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