

## Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **11<sup>th</sup> June 2013**.

### Present:

Cllr. Heyes (Chairman);  
Mr J N Wedgbury (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Apps, Chilton, Claughton, Davey, Feacey, Robey  
Mr M J Angell, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr C Simkins, Mr D Smyth, Mr M A Wickham.

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

Mr K Ashby – KALC Representative.

### Apologies:

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Burgess, Yeo, Mr P M Hill.

### Also Present:

Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Galpin, Sims.

Stephen Gasche (Principal Transport Planner – Rail – KCC), Toby Howe (Highway Manager East Kent – KCC Highways & Transportation), Lisa Holder (Ashford District Manager – KCC Highways & Transportation), Becky Bailey (Traffic Engineer – Member Highway Fund – KCC Highways & Transportation), Mark Carty (Head of Cultural & Project Services – ABC), Jerry Fox (Project Office Manager – ABC), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), Sarah Paul (Technical Administrative Assistant – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

## 16 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Mr Ashby	Announced an 'Other Interest' as he farmed the land opposite Beckett Road, Appledore	25
Claughton	Announced an 'Other Interest' as Chairman of the Ashford Access Group which was a consultee over Shared Space	21
Feacey	Announced an 'Other Interest' as a Governor of Towers School	20

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Interest</b>	<b>Minute No.</b>
Heyes	Announced an 'Other Interest' as he occasionally parked in Dexter Close.	20
	Announced an 'Other Interest' as he lived near the Godinton Road Bus Gate.	22
Mr Koowaree	Announced an 'Other Interest' as he sat on the Kent Fire Authority	20
Mr Wedgbury	Announced an 'Other Interest' as he worked for the London Fire & Rescue Service.	20

## **17 Minutes**

### **Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2013 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.**

## **18 Tracker Report**

The Chairman drew Members attention to the Tracker of Decisions.

A Member mentioned the proposed traffic calming measures in Kingsnorth which had been on the tracker for nearly seven years and said he wanted to move this on as soon as possible and decide how the Section 106 money was going to be spent. Another Member concurred with this comment and said it would be important to include the ABC Ward Member and Parish Council in any discussions.

With regard to the response from East Kent Hospitals Trust concerning the car parking problems in and around the William Harvey Hospital, a Member said he was disappointed with the comment that communication with the local community 'would not be quite right at this time' and he did not understand why that could not start now. Mr Wilkinson further advised that the planning application had now been submitted to ABC.

### **Resolved:**

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

## **19 Update from Member Working Group on Lorry Issues**

The Chairman directed Members' attention to the addendum paper which included an update from Cllr Burgess as Chairman of the new Truck Stop Pilot Task Group. Other Members who were involved with that Group gave further updates and said

that the KCC Cabinet Member for Highways had expressed his support for the work the Group was doing and expected to attend future meetings.

**Resolved:**

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

## **20 Update on Goat Lees Parking Scheme**

The report detailed the results of an informal consultation conducted between 21<sup>st</sup> February and 15<sup>th</sup> March 2013 seeking residents' views on parking issues in the area and whether they wished to see a parking scheme introduced to address these issues. Residents had been presented with two alternative scheme types (Options 1 and 2) for comment. The Chairman directed Members' attention to the addendum paper which advised that two people had registered to speak on this matter and detailed the comments of the Ward Member who had been unable to attend the meeting and the comments of a local resident which they had asked to be tabled. The Chairman further advised that following discussions with the Leader, the final decision on this matter would be taken by the Cabinet and any outcome of tonight's meeting would be a recommendation to Cabinet.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Moore, a local resident spoke on this item. He said he was a former Head of Communications for Kent County Council and was involved in getting resident acceptance and planning permission for Kingshill Business Park at West Malling through adequate parking on the Business Park and proper standard of landscaping and environmental protection. Therefore he did know about consultation. He thought the consultation had been undertaken fairly without lobbying or mass voting, however the problems had arisen because of the sheer size of the catchment area, when the parking problem was more striking in one concentrated area. There were however figures that could not be ignored. 59% of all residents in Dunnock Road believed there was a major parking problem in the area caused by business parking, as did 87% of all respondents to the consultation. That equated to 150+ properties therefore probably 300+ voters and there was a lot of support for Option 2. Personally, he said quite often he could not get off his driveway safely because of inconsiderate and unsafe parking which was often 'nose to tail' for the full length of his road and/or obstructing pavements. This was not a problem caused by residents, the situation was fine at weekends and Bank Holidays, it was a failure of the Business Park. Therefore in his view the problem should be solved by the Business Park and not left for residents to deal with. The problem was getting worse in Dunnock Road and this would only increase when the new school opened in September. He appreciated the Cabinet would make the ultimate decision on this matter, but he hoped the Board could understand that there were very strong feelings over the issue and that strength of feeling could not be ignored.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Matthews, Chairman of Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Parish Council spoke on this item. He said he had monitored the progress of this issue during his time as Chairman and been kept up to date by residents, the Ward Member and his Vice-Chairman. He had expressed concerns to both the Chairman of this Board and the Chief Executive of ABC about the handling of this matter. He considered that this was not in line with the instructions issued at

the meetings of this Board in September and December 2012, for Officers to engage with the Ward Member, KCC Member, Parish Council and resident representatives to find a mutually agreeable solution. His Vice-Chairman had made attempts to organise a meeting to agree the modifications to the report agreed in early April so that the report could be placed to the Board with the agreement of all parties and hence properly conclude the process, but in his view these attempts had been ignored. Furthermore, with the Parish Council being a key stakeholder and supplying significant funding, he considered this was wholly inappropriate. The fact that a solution in principle should be agreed by all parties was also recorded in an email from ABC Leader Councillor Gerry Clarkson. The new report, which was not supported by the Ward Member, Parish Council or residents, was almost identical to the report to the Board in September 2012 which had been rejected as already stated. Furthermore the latest report had not been submitted to the local representatives for review or to seek agreement. It seemed clear to him that the recommendation was to choose Option 1, the Board and Cabinet would support this, therefore overriding the favoured Option 2 of the Parish Council, Ward Member and residents. He wished to state for the record that the Parish Council did not support the latest report.

The KCC Division Member for the area said that as a newly elected Member he was coming to grips with the issue but he had been briefed by his predecessor and he was aware of some of the history. In his view the real solution lay in the release of more land for parking from the landlords of the Business Park. The consultation appeared inconclusive. Option 2 was supported by some but not by all. In his view Option 2 appeared too expensive, unenforceable and could set a precedent. He hoped there could be a further discussion with the interested parties before the report came back to the Cabinet as well as potentially further discussions with the landlord.

A Member read out an additional short statement from the Ward Member who could not be present at the meeting. It re-affirmed his desire that the report be rejected to allow for further discussions between the local representatives to mutually agree an amended Option 2.

During the debate the following comments were made: -

- It was regrettable that after a considerable time looking for a solution for the parking problems at Goat Lees there did not appear to be an option on which consensus could be found.
- There was a suggestion that some of the businesses on the park were charging their employees to park and this could be one of the reasons why people were choosing to park in the nearby residential roads for free. Although there was little the Council could do to influence private businesses, this was perhaps something that could be investigated further. In any event, the point about approaching the businesses on the park regarding the possibility of releasing more land for car parking was a key one and should be taken forward. It was clear that the root cause of the problem was insufficient free and available parking for employees on the park, for whatever reason that may be. All efforts should be made to renew the dialogue with the

landlord over additional parking provision and determining what, if any, charging regimes were in place.

- There was a danger of the 'law of unintended consequences' in this case in that a proliferation of double yellow lines in this area would create a precedent for the town and would also simply push any parking problems into neighbouring streets.
- A Member said he had visited the area that morning and did not consider the parking he had witnessed to be a major problem and would certainly not cause any issues for the Emergency Services. He wondered if the main point of concern was the possibility for extra congestion at school opening and closing times when the new school opened in September.
- 75 out of 887 households and businesses consulted had voted for Option 2 compared to 54 for Option 1. The five streets north west of Trinity Road and closest to the Eureka Business Park made up five of the seven roads supporting Option 2 and made up 48 of the votes for this option. Conversely 10 of the 17 roads outside this area supported Option 1 and only two supported Option 2. The potential problem with Option 2 was that it could ease the problem for one group of residents but adversely affect a larger group of smaller housing where available on street parking was already at a minimum. The report had proposed Option 1, the safety scheme, which would protect corners, junctions, the bus route and some of the potential parking overspill from the new school.

The Head of Cultural and Project Services said that he had recently taken over responsibility for parking issues and he understood that this was a difficult and complex case where no one solution would please everybody. He said firstly he would like to stress that Officers had worked very hard to find a solution and any personal criticism was not warranted. Officers worked and acted on behalf of Members and sought to implement their wishes in good faith. He re-iterated that any recommendation made tonight would go forward to the Cabinet and there was certainly still plenty more opportunity for discussions over this matter.

Board Members said that they understood the emotive nature of the issue and the diversity of opinion, but some of the inflammatory language used by one of the speakers towards the Officer was disrespectful, unwarranted and unnecessary. At one point during the debate, following repeated requests from the Chairman for quiet in the public gallery, the Meeting was adjourned in an attempt to restore order. Eventually two individuals were asked to leave the Meeting and the meeting resumed.

**Recommended:**

**That a formal consultation on Option 1 (Safety Scheme) be approved, subject to: -**

- (i) further discussions with the relevant local representatives**

- (ii) **renewing the dialogue with the landlord at the Eureka Business Park over additional parking provision and determining what, if any, charging regimes were in place**

**before the recommendation is considered by the Cabinet.**

## **21 Ashford Shared Space Study**

The progress report brought the Board up to date on the Ashford Shared Space Study to investigate maintenance issues. Mrs Holder advised that Amey were currently undertaking the review and this would be complete by the end of July 2013. This report summarised the findings to date, and the final report, including remedial options and costings, would be submitted to the next Board Meeting in September. She endeavoured to keep the ABC Ward Members informed on progress.

The following comments were made: -

- Board Members unanimously supported the concept of Shared Space and said that the situation was infinitely better than the old Ring Road in opening up the Town Centre.
- There had clearly been some naivety over some of the assumptions made at the start of the process and there appeared to be attempts in the report to “pass the buck” in some respects. Members had expressed concern about issues such as ongoing maintenance, the flume, the materials and the warranty situation since the start of the process and they had received assurances that everything was in order.
- Suggestions that certain things had not been done due to budget constraints at the end of the construction phase were not acceptable. Members had been constantly told that there would be money for ongoing maintenance. Additionally, the fact that the granite was not sealed was clearly a mistake and if this was a funding issue, Members should have been asked for their opinion on that at the time.
- The Design Team had not kept in regular contact since implementation and some of the suggestions made with regard to the needs of the disabled were not taken forward.
- It was important to point out that Shared Space would not be seen at its full potential and capacity until development had been completed on the opposite side of the road.
- The granite was now cracking at Godinton Road/Forge Lane and this would need to be included in the final report.
- Maintenance on immediate safety issues was still being undertaken throughout the study process, and a timescale for the remedial works

identified in the study would be agreed following the completion of the study at the end of July 2013.

**Resolved:**

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

## **22 Camera Enforcement in Ashford**

The report set out the latest position with regard to the introduction of camera enforcement in Ashford. The project sought to introduce camera enforcement to replace the existing rising bollard in Beaver Road and improve compliance at the Godinton Road Bus Gate. The Officer concerned had provided the update report and would be present at the next Meeting in September with a further update. The Chairman said it was worth clarifying that ABC had yet to decide whether it wanted to take on responsibility for enforcing bus lane contraventions and that there was a question mark over whether all revenue costs would be funded by the scheme itself as stated in the report, because with a credible deterrent (fixed enforcement cameras) at the bus gates there should be little or no misuse / potential income. ABC needed to be mindful of the ongoing financial commitment.

Members broadly welcomed the report and were pleased to see an outline timetable for the tasks that needed to be completed. There was concern however that in its conclusion the report stated “depending on the value of the equipment the procurement process could lead to considerably extended timelines”. This was extremely concerning given the history of this issue and the time it had taken to get to this position. The Head of Cultural & Project Services said that if it complied with EU procurement requirements and it would speed up the process, he would be happy for ABC Officers to try and do the procurement on KCC’s behalf without any cost to them.

**Resolved:**

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

## **23 Rail Franchising – Position Statement**

The Chairman had asked that the Board receive a position statement on rail franchising as an opportunity for Members to discuss the issue and raise any points of concern or other rail issues for further consideration. Mr Gasche, who was KCC’s Principal Transport Planner for Rail, was also present to give some background and answer questions.

Mr Gasche explained that the Department for Transport’s (DfT) long term plan for rail franchising, announced in March, had produced a detailed timetable for all rail franchises. The effect for Ashford was that the current Southeastern franchise had effectively been extended to June 2018 and the Southern franchise would now be incorporated in the new Thameslink franchise which was to be awarded in September 2014. There were some other key issues in the pipeline for Ashford that

he would be working on including: - working through Transport for London's proposals to take over the South East London Metro services; the retention and improvement of International Services at Ashford International; and possibilities for a direct Kent to Gatwick service (realistically around the time of the new south eastern franchise in 2018). The Chairman advised that ABC's new Transportation, Highways & Engineering Advisory Committee would be looking closely at rail issues and how they affected Ashford and in addition to franchising and the points raised by Mr Gasche, the Board considered the following issues should be pursued by the Advisory Committee: -

- The relationship between Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International and the fact the more people in Kent wanted to use Ashford for international services.
- Possibilities surrounding the new Deutsche Bahn services using Ashford International in the future.
- An examination of parking charges at rural stations and the knock on effect this had on parking in surrounding streets.
- Possibilities of providing more 'fast' services to Charing Cross which have been lost since the introduction of High Speed 1.
- The Park Farm Rail Halt.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be received and noted and the issues raised form the basis of work on rail issues for ABC's Transportation, Highways and Engineering Advisory Committee.**

## **24 Hamstreet Crossing**

The report advised of the pleasing news from Network Rail that a bid for a footbridge at Hamstreet Station would be made to the overall £70m fund for level crossings during the period 2014-2019. Whilst this did not guarantee that the scheme would be funded, it was expected to feature highly on the national priority list. The Head of Cultural and Project Services considered it would be worthwhile to write to Network Rail to seek more details over the timescale for this matter and where Hamstreet lay in their priority list.

It was explained that a footbridge had been proposed rather than safety gates as this related to a public footpath and in terms of safety the footbridge would be preferable.

**Resolved:**

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

## **25 Highway Works Programme 2013/14**

The report updated Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2013/14.



Officers agreed to feed back more information to Members on the following matters that appeared on the Highway Works Programme: -

- Would an interactive warning sign still form part of the proposals for the A28/A262 junction?
- A safety issue had arisen at Stanhope Ring Road where there was a bus stop located next to a school crossing. Historically there had been many near misses but there had been a serious accident involving a young girl there recently and there was a lot of concern locally.
- Whilst it was pleasing to see the design work in progress for the traffic signal modifications at Elwick Road/Station Road, could Officers also look at Somerset Road/North Street as there were also dangerous tailbacks there.

The KALC Member advised that works to repair the embankment slip at Beckett Road Appledore would now commence on the 19<sup>th</sup> June. This had first been reported in March but had been delayed due to the need for Kent Wildlife Trust to undertake an ecological survey. To him this seemed excessive and he asked if there was anything that could be done to speed things along in the future. Mrs Holder advised that unfortunately in such a case this would not be possible.

**Resolved:**

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

## **26 Results from the Highway Tracker Survey 2012**

The report informed the Board of the key results of the 2012 Resident, County Member and Parish/Town Council Highway Tracker Survey. The full survey report was published on the KCC website.

A Member said this provided a good opportunity to state how impressed he had been with the work of KCC Highways and Transportation since the weather had improved in terms of repairing potholes, resurfacing etc and he would like to place that on record. There had certainly been a substantial improvement and the relationship with Enterprise appeared to be bearing fruit.

**Resolved:**

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

## **27 Find and Fix Programme 2013**

The report advised that KCC's third annual Find and Fix Programme started in January 2013 in response to the damage caused to road surfaces by winter weather and summarised the progress to date in the Ashford District

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**Resolved:**

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

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Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Danny Sheppard:  
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