

## Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **10<sup>th</sup> September 2013**.

### Present:

Cllr. Heyes (Chairman);

Cllrs. Apps, Burgess, Chilton, Claughton, Davey, Feacey  
Mr M J Angell, Mr P M Hill, 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 Robey, Yeo and Mrs Bell respectively.

Mr K Ashby – KALC Representative.

### Apologies:

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Robey, Yeo, Mr J N Wedgbury.

### Also Present:

Cllr. Sims.

John Farmer (Major Capital Projects Manager – KCC Highways & Transportation), Lorna Day (Kent Parking & Enforcement Manager - KCC Highways & Transportation), Lisa Holder (Ashford District Manager – KCC Highways & Transportation), Mark Carty (Head of Cultural & Project Services – ABC), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), William Train (Technical Administrative Assistant – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

## 116 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Claughton	Announced an 'Other Interest' as he lived in close vicinity to the Drovers Roundabout	123
Heyes	Announced an 'Other Interest' as he lived in close vicinity to the Godinton Road Bus Gate.	124

## **117 Minutes**

**Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2013 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.**

## **118 Transportation, Highways & Engineering Advisory Committee – 5<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

The Chairman advised that the inaugural Meeting of this new Advisory Committee had taken place on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2013. Discussion in the main surrounded the Terms of Reference and forward work programme for the Committee. There were some industry updates and discussion, although only two transport providers had been present. It was particularly disappointing that no representatives from the train companies had come to the Meeting. The next Meeting was on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> October and would be totally dedicated to parking issues in the Borough.

**Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Transportation, Highways & Engineering Advisory Committee held on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2013 be received and noted.**

## **119 Tracker Report**

The Chairman drew Members attention to the Tracker of Decisions.

**Resolved:**

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

## **120 Update from Truck Stop Pilot Task Group**

Councillor Burgess, as Chairman of the Truck Stop Pilot Task Group, gave an update on recent activity from the Group. He advised that KCC had engaged consultants to prepare a lorry parking study and those consultants had already been in discussions with ABC Strategic Planning Officers about the way forward. A draft report would be produced in early October following discussions with all Kent Districts.

**Resolved:**

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

## **121 Nomination of a Member for the Disabled Persons Parking Bay Panel**

The report presented details of the Chairman's nomination for a third voting Member for the Panel to decide contested disabled persons parking bay applications.

In response to a question Mr Train advised that at present there were five or six outstanding appeals.

**Resolved:**

**That Councillor Mrs Bell act as the third voting Member on the Disabled Persons Parking Bay Panel.**

## **122 Ashford Shared Space Study**

A short report had been circulated advising of the conclusion of the Ashford Shared Space Study by Amey. Mrs Holder apologised for the late distribution of the update and advised that the final report from Amey had only been received the previous day. She advised that the defects identified on the old Ring Road and those in Bank Street would be addressed as two distinct schemes. She further advised that a Working Group would be set up by KCC to plan remedial works and this would include input from other stakeholders. Plans for permanent repairs still needed to be finalised and costed but would not happen in this financial year. In the meantime, KCC would continue to ensure that any safety critical defects that occurred were made safe.

The Chairman said that his initial reaction to this update was one of disappointment. It seemed to exonerate everybody and not get to the heart of the matter. The Board considered it was important for them to see the full report and be able to ask questions about it. It was proposed that Amey be invited to the next meeting in December to present the full report and answer Members' questions.

The following additional comments were made: -

- It was hoped that ABC Members and Officers could have a meaningful input to any Working Group that was set up by KCC, as well as including groups like Ashford Access.
- It was confirmed that KCC would fund the remedial works.
- One of the ABC Ward Members for the area asked to be kept informed with developments and the timescale for remedial works.
- Holding measures would include remedying the safety critical defects, trialling new cleansing products and interim measures to prevent further damage to the footway in Bank Street from vehicles.

- It was important to point out that a significant majority of Members had wholeheartedly supported Shared Space since the start of the process and continued to do so, but the faults and the way they were being addressed were not helping with public perception. It was therefore essential that the problems were sorted out as soon as possible with the production of a detailed list of the study's findings and a projection of when the remedial works would be completed and the cost of those.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be received and noted and that Amey be invited to the next Meeting in December to present the full report and answer Members' questions.**

## **123 Drovers Roundabout – Update Report**

Mr Farmer gave a summary of the Independent Review undertaken by Amey and the recommendations going forward.

The first point observed by the review was that whilst some queuing was inevitable at certain points at certain times of the day, under normal circumstances generally the junction flowed pretty well. There were some particular issues at peak times around the north/east part of the gyratory (Fougeres Way/Simone Weil Avenue) due to the five exit nature of the junction. There had been a significant amount of work undertaken by the signals team in terms of optimising traffic light times and continued monitoring would be ongoing. The issue of shielding the amber and green signals with 'louvres' was understood but Amey considered this was outweighed by the safety implications and the risk of seeing a green light from other junctions. KCC would investigate whether there was an alternative design or any technology that could be used to screen without compromising safety. Pedestrian crossings were currently on permanent demand (activated regardless of whether there were people waiting to cross). This would be reviewed but it may actually help the situation in terms of controlling entry onto the roundabout.

In terms of signage and lane markings, Mr Farmer said that Amey considered these were clear with a few unavoidable exceptions in situations such as the A20 where the road opened up from two lanes to four lanes in a short distance. He considered that ideally there should be a maximum of two destinations per lane and this would be looked at. Some road marking destination abbreviations were probably not automatically clear to strangers to Ashford so it might help to add those abbreviations to signage. The main view expressed on signage though was that it might help to have additional small signs on the approaches showing the lane destinations at the roundabout. With regard to yellow boxes, on balance this had not been supported because they would have to be of such a size that may reduce capacity, create uncertainty and struggle to be enforced. Additionally further lane guidance markings (like those seen at Junction 10) could potentially be added in the future and this would not be possible with yellow boxes.

Mr Farmer said he had looked at the crash record of the Drovers Roundabout and its approaches for the last five years. In the 22 months pre-improvement there had been

16 reported accidents (all slight) at 8.7 per year; in the 15 months during construction there had been 9 slight accidents at 7.2 per year; and post completion 8 accidents in 23 months (again all slight) at 4.2 per year. He accepted this was over a short period but the results were encouraging and suggested the junction was not unsafe.

With regard to all aspects of the review, it was recognised that the John Lewis At Home development works were now underway, with other developments in the pipeline for the area, and the junction would have to be kept under regular review as and when those developments became operational.

In conclusion Mr Farmer said that the cycle time of signals and the operation of the junction would continue to be reviewed (particularly in the light of upcoming developments) as would the operation of nearby pedestrian crossings. Signal manufacturers would be contacted to see what alternative 'screening' was available and extra signage and road markings would be considered to aid clarity and consistency.

Members welcomed the update and the contents of the report. The following additional points were made: -

- It was sometimes difficult to make out the road markings in particularly wet or sunny weather. Hopefully the additional signage would improve matters.
- When two or more lorries arrived at the roundabout at the same time it did block the area and make it dangerous because of the short signal times.
- There were still one or two places where it was considered that the road markings were simply wrong but it appeared there was little that could be done to remedy this. Cars did continue to swerve across lanes at the last moment though and this was a common problem.
- There were still issues with speeding and light jumping at the roundabout although this was more about driver behaviour than the operation of the junction.
- The local Driving Instructors and Examiners did not take their pupils around this roundabout because they felt it was unfair. It was considered they could have had a useful input to this review.
- A Member asked if there could be a second entrance to the John Lewis store to the rear from the A20 which would mean a lot of approaching traffic did not have to negotiate the roundabout. Members were advised that there was no proposal for an entrance here because of nearby housing developments and the position of the railway.

**Resolved:**

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

## **124 Bus Lane 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. Mrs Day introduced the report and explained that a capital budget of £110,000 was available to design and install a scheme. She advised that a new Agency Agreement was currently with ABC's legal team for consideration and KCC had begun to design a scheme which was still on track for completion by the end of October 2013. There was a potential delay in that if the project cost was above £50,000 there would be a need to follow KCC procurement guidelines and seek three tenders. If there were no further delays a realistic implementation date was January/February 2014.

Members said that whilst they were pleased to see things potentially moving forward they were concerned about the possibility for further delays. It was likely that there would be clarity about the procurement process by the end of October and the Chairman asked for another update to come to the next Meeting of the Board in December. Officers were urged to do everything they could to progress this as soon as possible. Mr Wilkinson said that both KCC and ABC were working together on this scheme and it was new territory. This would be a pilot scheme working with new technology and it would be vitally important to get this right and to ensure that the systems were working properly.

Mr Carty said that when considering such specialist and unique schemes there was sometimes some latitude with regard to financial guidelines and he considered both Authorities' Legal teams could get together to see if there could be a bit more flexibility in the procurement process.

### **Resolved:**

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

## **125 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: -

- Delayed surfacing works at Sly Corner, Kenardington should have been completed in full when pothole patching had taken place at the same location.
- The drainage pumping station for the Henwood Estate needed to be added to Appendix B – Drainage Repairs & Improvements.
- Why were improvements planned for the B2080 Reading Street/Ebony Road junction? There appeared to be nothing wrong with the current junction.

- Whether the interactive warning signs on the approach to the A20/Sandyhurst Lane crossroads were still on course for September/October 2013.
- Despite the police crash investigators not highlighting the highway layout as a contributory factor to the serious incident that occurred in February 2013 at Stanhope Ring Road, there remained a lot of concern locally about the safety of the crossing point near the bus stop. The Head Teacher of the John Wallis Academy had also expressed his concern about the situation with both primary and secondary school children trying to cross the road there now. Vehicles parking alongside the road also made it difficult to see approaching traffic. The ABC Ward Member said that if a zebra crossing was installed at the junction he was sure it would prevent further accidents. As well as the serious accident that had occurred in February he said there had been numerous near misses and unreported minor accidents.
- As part of the A28/A292 junction scheme, were there still plans to close off one end of Oak Grove Lane?
- What was the estimated timescale for the proposal to allow all traffic to turn right from Elwick Road at the Station Road/Elwick Road junction?
- There were two separate issues with roadside drains in Appledore Road that needed remedying and would benefit from some joined up working when they were both fully repaired.

On a more general point a Member said that the sheer amount of re-surfacing work going on in the District was good and should be applauded.

In response to a question about the number of street lighting columns that had been identified as high risk, Mrs Holder explained that similar surveys had been undertaken in all Districts and the level identified in Ashford was not unusually high.

A Member wondered if this Board could be kept informed with works on the road system for the Chilmington Green development. Preliminary works seemed to have commenced already and he did not want local Members to be the last to find out what was going on. Perhaps the Chilmington Green Project Team could keep this Board updated as part of the Highway Works Programme reports.

**Resolved:**

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

## **126 Ashford District Winter Plan 2013/14**

The report presented KCC's Winter Service Handbook 2013/14 for the Ashford District for information.

In response to questions Mrs Holder explained that the appendices had not been included within the agenda because they were vast. They were however available on KCC's website and could be provided on CD to any Member who wanted them. One Member requested a CD copy. She also advised that there were snow plough agreements with 22 farmers covering approximately 35 routes across the Ashford District. In terms of salt bags they would still be on offer this year and KCC were trying to encourage all Parish Councils to take advantage of these. They were now available in smaller 25kg bags for those that did not want to take the larger amounts. In terms of the salt bins, if they had been purchased by the Parish Councils through KCC, the agreement involved the cost of the bin plus three refills. After that they became the responsibility of the Parish Council. The remaining KCC bins were the full responsibility of KCC to check and fill.

**Resolved:**

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

## **127 Pothole 'Find and Fix' Update**

The report provided an update on the progress with the 'Find and Fix' programme, which was tackling the pothole damage caused by the severe winter weather.

**Resolved:**

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

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