

## 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> June 2014**.

### Present:

Mr C Simkins (Chairman);  
Cllr. Heyes (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Apps, Burgess, Mrs Martin, Robey, Yeo  
Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr J N Wedgbury, Mr M A Wickham

Mr K Ashby – KALC Representative

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (iii) Councillor Apps attended as Substitute Member for Councillor Feacey.

### Apologies:

Cllrs. Davey, Feacey, Mr M J Angell, Mr D Smyth.

### Also Present:

Cllr. Ovenden.

Toby Howe (Highway Manager – KCC), Lorna Day (Kent Parking & Enforcement Manager – KCC), Chris Hatcher (Project Manager – KCC), Sue Kinsella (Street Lighting Manager – KCC), Byron Lovell (Highway Engineer – KCC), Sheila Davison (Health, Parking & Community Safety Manager – ABC), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), Jo Fox (Assistant Health, Parking & Community Safety Manager – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

## 19 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Heyes	Made a Voluntary Announcement as he lived near the Godinton Road Bus Gate.	28
Yeo	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a member of the Transport Salaried Staff Association.	22, 28
Mr Ashby	Made a Voluntary Announcement as he owned land opposite a footpath in Kenardington that was mentioned in the report	21

## 20 Minutes

The Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer advised that there was an error in Minute No. 355 whereby references to measurements in 'feet' should be in 'yards'.

### Resolved:

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2014 be approved and confirmed as a correct record subject to clarifying that references to measurements in 'feet' in Minute No. 355 'Roadside Drainage' should be in 'yards'.**

## 21 Highway Works Programme 2014/15

The report updated Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2014/15. Mr Howe ran through the footway and carriageway improvement schemes in particular and gave timescales for completion.

A Member mentioned the replacement pump that was needed at the Mace Lane underpass to ensure that it could be re-opened. This was an important crossing point for many people, in particular children from the Ashford School, and its closure was also deterring people from using the Henwood car park which was losing the Council money. Mr Howe explained that the underpass would be made fit for purpose in time for the International Triathlon event, but there were no plans to permanently replace the pump due to the fact that there were three other safe crossing points in close proximity in Mace Lane and Hythe Road. The Board still considered that a permanent replacement should be made to the underpass on grounds of safety and it was agreed that a letter should be written to David Brazier, KCC Cabinet Member, accordingly.

In terms of drainage repairs and improvements, a Member said that he was concerned that only existing grips were to be made out again ahead of next winter. He considered it was quite clear that more needed to be done. Mr Howe advised that Katie Lewis, KCC's Drainage Engineer, was on the case and was looking at where grips needed to be dug out and these would be done ahead of next winter. There would be correspondence with Parish Councils on this matter.

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

- The status of the new footway and pedestrian crossing to a housing development at Appledore Road, Kenardington.

### Resolved:

**That the report be received and noted and the Board send a letter to David Brazier on the Mace Lane underpass issue.**

## **22 Transportation, Highways & Engineering Advisory Committee – 28<sup>th</sup> April 2014**

**Resolved:**

**That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Transportation, Highways & Engineering Advisory Committee held on the 28<sup>th</sup> April 2014 be received and noted.**

## **23 Petitions**

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.1 Mr Wickham presented a petition to the Chairman. The petition contained 234 signatures from residents of Mersham calling for the closure of Kingsford Street, Mersham from Highfield Lane so that it would become a cul-de-sac. The petition explained that the current proposals for M20 Junction 10A would close Highfield Lane access to the A20, but retain the connection to Kingsford Street, directing traffic to the centre of Mersham and creating a “rat run” along what was considered a totally unsuitable narrow country lane, with no pavements. It was considered that this would be extremely hazardous for pedestrians and residents. The petition further explained that traffic to the A20, wishing to use either Junction 10 or 10A roundabouts, would be able to use Kingsford Street as a “rat run”. In addition the current plans of AXA/DMI for a proposed warehouse development at Site U19 included the upgrading of Highfield Lane to a two lane highway leading on to the single track Kingsford Street, which was considered a totally unacceptable proposal. The residents of Mersham were totally opposed to this plan and wished Kingsford Street to be closed off from Highfield Lane and asked for the petition and concerns to be raised with KCC’s Planning Committee.

The Chairman advised that the petition would be referred to KCC as the responsible authority.

## **24 Tracker Report**

The Chairman drew Members’ attention to the Tracker of Decisions.

**Resolved:**

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

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

Councillor Burgess gave a short update of recent activity from the Group. He advised that on the 29th May, Consultants Amey had sent a letter stating that they were undertaking a noise and air quality scoping assessment in relation to the suitability of three proposed truck stop sites for KCC; one in the Ashford Borough; one in the Shepway District; and one in the Dover District. The one in Ashford was named as the Ashford Park site area. They required a reply to this consultation by 18th June. Currently they had not progressed with any firm ideas on the future of the

Waterbrook site or any other alternative site, but they were working hard on the subject. The wheel clamping of illegally parked lorries would soon be carried out as long as there were legal parking spaces for them close by. The signs placed in the laybys on the A20 did seem to be having some effect.

A Member said that there was increasing concern about lorry parking spilling in to certain residential streets so it was important to get the new truck stops as soon as possible. Another Member said that whatever action was to be taken against illegal lorry parking, the sanctions had to be firm as she was aware of companies who ignored tickets etc and thought they were untouchable.

Mrs Fox advised that ABC and KCC Officers were working well together to find solutions on the whole issue of inappropriate lorry parking. She wanted to re-assure Members that there was a lot going on behind the scenes. There was much to do but they were aware of all of the issues and concerns. She agreed that the sanctions needed to be firmer and she asked Members to keep her informed of particular problem hotspots at [parkingcustomercare@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:parkingcustomercare@ashford.gov.uk)

**Resolved:**

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

## **26 Pot Holes and Weather Damaged Roads**

The report gave an update on the progress of pothole repairs and the repairs to weather damaged roads. Mr Howe explained that there had been a blitz of repairs over the spring and this would continue throughout June with the additional funding allocated by KCC and Government. To date there had been 2500 pot hole repairs in the Ashford Borough since the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2014. This number did not include surface repairs. The pot holes were identified and then scheduled by priority. The targets were 2-24 hours for emergency repairs and 28 days for non-emergency. He encouraged Members to continue to report any pot holes they were aware of to the KCC call centre.

A Member said that although they might not meet the criteria of 'emergency' pot holes, there were a number appearing towards the centre of roads that were being left, but these did cause safety issues for motorcyclists, particularly at night as they may not see them. Mr Howe said that those in the middle of carriageways did tend to take a bit longer as they may need both lanes of traffic to be closed, but the point was noted.

In response to questions about why not all pot holes in an area were repaired at once, Mr Howe explained that it was generally about prioritising within budget constraints. However the issue of repairing some in a road and leaving others was a personal bug bear of his and with the extra money available if a crew were out they were now being encouraged to repair all of those marked up in an area if possible. This was a change to the previous procedure and was welcomed by the Board.

**Resolved:**

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

## **27 Safe and Sensible Street Lighting - Update**

The report provided an update to Board Members on the County Council's implementation of various measures to reduce energy costs, carbon emissions and light pollution associated with its street lights, to deliver savings to support frontline services. This included both a trial switch-off of surplus lights and the introduction of part-night lighting.

A Member said that there were real mixed views on this subject. Some residents had been delighted by the changes and preferred the lights being off, whilst others had already complained. This demonstrated the difficult position Members were in. He considered this also showed that each area should be taken on its own merits and where there were concerns about crime and safety those areas should be looked at again.

There was a discussion about the two different aspects to the scheme: - the complete switch off of some surplus lights which was on a trial basis and would be reviewed after 12 months (this related to approximately 12 sites in the Borough); and the part night lighting which was now permanent and based on agreed exclusion criteria and part of KCC policy. Members expressed concern that they may not be able to call for a review of part night lighting in their area if they had particular concerns over crime and safety. County Members considered they had been given an assurance by the Leader and the Cabinet Member of KCC that in these circumstances they would have that ability. One Member in particular mentioned an email he had sent to Officers referring to his concerns about the part-night lighting in Maunsell Place, Newtown, to which he had yet to receive a response. Mrs Kinsella agreed to look in to this and ensure the Member received a response.

A Member said that as with any other issue, KCC Members could review any decision made, but it had to be based on evidence gathered over a certain period of time. He was sure that there would be a future review, but the trial had to be allowed to continue for a reasonable length of time to be able to draw proper conclusions. Another Member agreed and said that the point to note was that they were only 6 months in to a trial and it was too early to make any judgments. What was clear was that there was already a dichotomy of views with some in favour of the proposals and some seemingly against. Quite often people were resistant to change and jumped to conclusions too soon before they gave something a chance. She considered the changes needed to be allowed to run for at least a year before any judgments were made.

Mr Hatcher advised that in terms of the county wide picture, since the measures had begun in December 2013 there had been less than 1500 enquires received, which had included 110 formal complaints and only 8 from the Borough of Ashford. Although not dismissing those complaints that had been made, he considered this showed there was clearly a good level of support for the proposals.

The Board thanked Mr Hatcher for attending this meeting as they knew there was a lot of demand on his time across the county at this time.

**Resolved:**

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

## **28 Bus Gate Camera Enforcement**

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 Vice-Chairman said that this matter had been discussed on numerous occasions, over at least 11 years, and the continued delays were extremely frustrating. The money and the legislation to install the cameras were all in place. The recent development whereby KCC did not now intend to make a decision regarding bus camera enforcement until the results of a pilot currently taking place within Tunbridge Wells and due to be completed in November 2015, appeared to be a red herring. The trial at Tonbridge Wells was based on a mobile camera that occasionally visited the bus gate. This proposal was for fixed cameras so in his view the two were unrelated. He had heard the matter referred to as an enforcement issue but it more about safety. There was also the emerging issue of a third bus gate in Ashford at Park Farm. It was expected that this may prove very attractive to people willing to take a chance as it would cut a mile or five minutes off of a journey time, so enforcement had to be strong. The Board agreed to write to David Brazier, KCC Cabinet Member, expressing its concerns and re-iterating strongly that this was a matter of safety not enforcement and that the cameras should be put in place as soon as possible.

**Resolved:**

**That the current position regarding Bus Gate Camera Enforcement be noted and the Board send a letter to David Brazier expressing its concerns and asking for the cameras to be put in place as soon as possible.**

## **29 Somerset Road/North Street, Ashford – Pedestrian Safety Improvements**

The report updated Members on the recent scheme consultation for pedestrian safety improvements at the Somerset Road/North Street junction.

A Member said he welcomed the proposals in terms of the safety aspects however he was not entirely clear how the improvements would also increase the capacity of the junction and improve traffic flow at busy times as stated in the report. He was also concerned that human nature would mean there would always be those pedestrians who would take a risk and try to cross the whole road in one go, and the proposed addition of a central pedestrian refuge may make the road more

dangerous. Mr Howe explained that this had been taken into account, but the main concern had been to improve safety for a majority. In terms of traffic flows, at present there could be up to 42 cars queuing at the Eastern end at peak times, blocking the junction with Station Road. Traffic modelling had shown that changes to the sequencing should reduce this to a maximum of 13 cars.

One of the ABC Ward Members for the area thanked Officers for bringing this scheme forward. He said it was a difficult junction and he had personally had issues there, so he would be pleased to see this progressed.

**Resolved:**

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

### **30 Direct Rail Service to Gatwick**

The report traced the history of attempts to secure a direct Kent to Gatwick Airport rail service as part of KCC's Rail Action Plan for Kent 2011. The issue had been supported by ABC Members through the Transportation, Highways & Engineering Advisory Committee however following the production of an independent business case KCC had recommended not to pursue the scheme. Whilst it had been reluctantly accepted that a direct rail service was not going to come forward, Members considered there were other options that could be taken forward to improve the service, that had not yet been examined. The report recommended supporting the suggestion of pursuing some adjustment to the timings of the existing Tonbridge to Redhill service as part of the new TSGN Franchise post July 2015.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be received and noted and the Board support KCC's suggestion of pursuing some adjustment to the timings of the existing Tonbridge to Redhill service as part of the new TSGN Franchise post July 2015.**

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