

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **9th December 2014**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Davey, Feacey, Mrs Martin, Robey, Sims, Yeo.
Mr M J Angell, Mr P M Hill, 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 Sims attended as a Substitute Member for Councillor Burgess.

Apologies:

Cllr. Burgess, Mr. D Smyth, Lisa Holder (Ashford District Manager – KCC).

Also Present:

Cllrs. Miss Martin, Shorter.

Andrew Loosemore (Head of Highway Operations – KCC), Mark Carty (Head of Culture & the Environment – ABC), Sheila Davison (Head of Health, Parking & Community Safety – ABC), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), Jo Fox (Assistant Health, Parking & Community Safety Manager – ABC), William Train (Technical Administrative Assistant – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Chairman advised that this would be the last Joint Transportation Board meeting for Ray Wilkinson who was retiring at the end of February after 40 years' service at Ashford Borough Council. Ray had been this Board's lead Officer for many years and had overseen so many positive changes to the local highways and public transport networks since the early 1970s. Ray had truly made a special contribution to the growth and development of the Borough as well as the championing of the Ashford Quality Bus Partnership and many other achievements too numerous to list. This would all be acknowledged by the presentation of a gift this evening and the Chairman asked the Board to join him in giving Ray their thanks and wishing him a wonderful retirement. Members applauded.

277 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Feacey	Made a Voluntary Announcement as he attends the Quality Bus Partnership meetings.	282, 283, 284
Heyes	Made a Voluntary Announcement as he attends the Quality Bus Partnership meetings.	282, 283, 284
Mr Simkins	Made a Voluntary Announcement as he attends the Quality Bus Partnership meetings.	282, 283, 284
Mr Wedgbury	Made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Kingsnorth Parish Council and the Park Farm South Ward.	282

278 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 9th September 2014 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

279 Transportation, Highways & Engineering Advisory Committee – 27th October 2014

In response to a question about the potential to resurface the M20 between Junctions 8 and 9 to relieve the impact of the noise for residents in the area, the Chairman of the Advisory Committee advised this was a Highways Agency issue and there was little either Council could do to influence this at present.

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Transportation, Highways & Engineering Advisory Committee held on the 27th October 2014 be received and noted.

280 Lorry Parking Update

Mr Loosemore introduced the report which brought Members up to date on KCC's work to address inappropriate overnight lorry parking and the impact of Operation Stack. It also advised of the joint work being undertaken with ABC on enforcement. He confirmed that the first of the proposed network of smaller scale lorry parks had been approved at Westenhanger at Junction 11 of the M20.

In response to a question Mrs Fox advised that ABC now had permission to clamp vehicles at specific agreed locations and clamping was expected to begin in January 2015. There would be a report back on this issue to the Board in March 2015.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

281 Tracker Report

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

A Member mentioned the highway safety scheme that had been implemented for Downs View Infant and Kennington Junior Schools back in February 2013 and asked for an approximate date for the post implementation review. Mr Wilkinson advised that this did appear on the prioritised list of works but there had been a number of hold ups on schemes on that list this year. There would be a decision to be taken in March when that list was reviewed about whether the Board wanted to pursue more new schemes or prioritise reviews of the schemes already in place.

Another Member raised the long standing issue of proposed traffic calming measures in Bluebell Road and Roman Way, Park Farm and Church Hill, Kingsnorth. He now understood that all of the Section 106 money had been spent, but not on the measures that local people wanted, and without consultation with the local Members. He asked for this issue to be investigated and that he receive a full breakdown of how the money had been spent and an explanation as to why this had not been discussed with local Members. Mr Loosemore said he would pass this issue on to Andy Corcoran and James Hammond as the Officers involved.

Resolved:

That the Tracker be received and noted.

282 Park Farm Order 2014 – (Bluebell Road and Violet Way) Update Report

Mr Train introduced the report which provided an update to the Park Farm Order 2014. The Board had taken the decision at its last meeting to defer a decision on the proposed parking controls for Bluebell Road, Ashford pending a Members' Site Visit. The report summarised the results of the previously held formal consultation on the proposals for Bluebell Road and presented details on the B-Line bus service, the intention behind extending the service into Park Farm South and East and assessments of two alternative bus routes. The Site Visit had taken place on the 4th December and a summary of that visit had been tabled as an Addendum paper. This summary included responses to three subsequent questions that had been raised by a Member.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Foreman, a local resident spoke in objection to the proposals. He also circulated some photographs to illustrate the points he was making. He said that the residents of Bluebell Road still had serious concerns over the proposals to introduce parking restrictions and a bus route extension via Bluebell Road and the accommodation bridge into Park Farm East.

Residents were grateful to the Board for carrying out a Site Visit to assess their concerns but they had been disappointed that they had only been privy to the route in question rather than the alternative routes suggested, and did not have the opportunity to view the back of the houses as they would have hoped. However he hoped that the limited experience had enabled Members to visualise the reality residents were facing surrounding parking at their homes which was also in conflict with the current ABC Residential Parking and Design Guidance adopted in 2010. It was worth re-iterating those items they felt were relevant such as garages not being counted as a parking space in suburban areas, minimum garage sizes which were considerably wider than those at the rear of the properties and a minimum of two parking spaces needing to be provided for three and four bedroom houses. They had also previously highlighted issues relating to safety and the policing of the bridge and during their Site Visit Members would have witnessed three mopeds illegally using the bridge. This was a regular occurrence and thus remained a major concern. He said that residents who would be affected by the parking restrictions did need their cars. It seemed to be accepted from all sides that the parking restrictions would displace vehicles to other areas, but there was a real absence of any solution to deal with that displacement. He hoped that the Site Visit had allowed Members to appreciate the residents' concerns in this area. The Board had often been reminded that parking on the approach to the bridge was in contravention of the Highway Code but Officers did not appear to appreciate that these parking practices had been followed by all residents since the houses had been built without any incident or problems. He considered the parking practices would only become a problem with the introduction of a bus route.

Mr Foreman said that the case for implementation of the proposals seemed to be predominantly based on the fact that 'this was what was originally planned in 2003' prior to any families moving in. He said he would ask the Board if that was a sufficient argument. Just because that was what was originally planned did not mean that it was the correct thing to do in 2014. Whilst they understood that the Officers had a role to fulfil, residents reluctantly found themselves questioning their motivation when the wellbeing and safety of the Borough's residents were put second to the desires of large companies like Stagecoach. In the report itself Stagecoach had admitted that the design of the road was odd for a bus route, which seemed to suggest that the original designs did not necessarily completely consider the practicalities of the proposed bus route or the evolution of the road once the properties became occupied. At the previous meeting residents had proposed two alternative bus routes which had been considered and dismissed by Stagecoach. Whilst it was acknowledged that the route via Poppy Mead would have more frontages affected, both Poppy Mead and Finn Farm Road already had off road parking at the front of the houses, which would not be provided to the residents of Bluebell Road. The report argued that re-routing the buses via Finn Farm Road would require several trees to be cut back which would alter the character of the road, however this was not a residential road like the quiet cul-de-sac of Bluebell Road which would also be significantly altered should the bus route be approved. Additionally, the route via Poppy Mead was currently the main access road. Finn Farm Road was also currently the only route for the residents of Park Farm East to access the estate and their homes. Therefore they believed that there would be added benefits to other residents of Park Farm if parking restrictions allowed the bus to use this route, something that would not be the case by using the accommodation

bridge. He said that there had been incidents relating to the current parking arrangements on this busier through road and residents there did have major safety concerns. Therefore he considered those issues would need to be addressed by this Board in the near future even if the accommodation bridge route was adopted. That is why he considered that this route should be considered further rather than being dismissed for financial reasons, not only for the benefits of the extended bus route, but also for the benefit of residents on both sides of the estate. In conclusion Mr Foreman said he would like to make the Board aware that a social media group had been set up for residents of Bridgefield to discuss the proposed route, and whilst most people on both sides understood the need for a bus service, most were concerned that this was not the correct solution and many were bemused by the lack of consideration of other routes and the lack of discussion and debate with affected residents. He asked the Board to not overlook the concerns of residents and completely satisfy themselves that the accommodation bridge was the correct and safe option, something that the residents who would have to live with this decision on a day to day basis could not. He said that the impact of the decision made tonight would make the difference between many staying, or having little choice but to sell their homes. He therefore asked the Board to vote to refuse the proposals.

The ABC Ward Member for part of the area spoke in objection to the proposals. He said that when the facts changed, people should change their minds. He understood that the proposed route was part of the original Smartlink Rapid Bus Transit Scheme which had been defunct for at least five years now. He also understood that residents on both sides of the A2070 needed a bus route, but one using the accommodation bridge was not the answer. It was not fair to the residents of Bluebell Road who had been living there quite happily for some years and deserved to be able to access the front of their properties safely from the road. He proposed that the scheme be refused and for alternative bus routes to be looked at properly.

The KCC Divisional Member for the area said he would like to second refusal. Firstly, he said the issue of a potential Rail Halt at Park Farm should be dismissed as Network Rail had made it quite clear that this was not going to happen. With regard to the accommodation bridge itself, he considered this should be re-classified as a byway or bridleway to protect it from inappropriate uses such as buses and heavy traffic, which should then use alternative routes such as Finn Farm Road. He knew the residents of Bridgefield had concerns over the way their development had come forward and they did need a bus service, but he did not consider that this was the correct route and in his view Officers had to deal with the realities of the situation as it was today and consider the alternative routes as put forward by the residents.

Councillor Shorter advised that he had attended to speak as a Kingsnorth Parish Councillor who covered the area the other side of the bridge (Bridgefield/Park Farm East) and he knew that residents there had a lot of concerns over transport issues including bus routes and services. He said that the crux of the problems was that bus routes were not coming forward quickly enough. They had been so slow in coming forward that many had already got used to having to use their cars and then it had been difficult to get bus services up and running. He advised that the ABC Ward Member for the area supported the proposals and he asked the Board to support and promote this bus service to Bridgefield as he considered the benefits of the

proposed scheme outweighed the merits of the objections received, so implementation of the proposed restrictions should go ahead.

In the course of the debate a Member said that the issue should be about amenity over profit. The area had been poorly designed and they had to now make the best of what they had. It had to be accepted that people wanted to own cars and the bus was not a suitable alternative for all or indeed many at all. The garages were too small and there was a need for parking at the front of the properties to enable people, especially the disabled, those with young children or even those with bulky shopping, to access their houses safely and easily. Therefore she considered the parking should remain and an alternative route found for the buses. If prohibited, the parking would just spill in to other areas and cause chaos there which was short sighted and if it was to be properly enforced, Officers would have to be there almost permanently which was unrealistic. She said they had to be fair and deal with the situation as it was today, not what was on paper some 15/20 years ago. Another Member said that as far as he was aware nobody bought these properties because of the bus services and the number of people who had to use buses was minimal. Bus patronage was low and the Board should consider the wishes of the majority not the minority. A Member said that special dispensations had been made in other areas such as Greenwich to allow parking on the pavement where it was safe and suitable to do so and he believed there was a case to allow that here.

Other Members said it was important to consider the broader picture. A Member said that this bus service had been long in the planning and was a part of the important planned strategic bus route linking the town centre, Park Farm and the William Harvey Hospital. It would be of enormous benefit to a number of people and whilst he sympathised with the points made by the residents this bus route was always planned and parking in front of the houses had never officially been permitted. With regard to the Council's current Residential Parking and Design Guidance, he advised that this was adopted in 2010 and the building of this part of Park Farm did meet the relevant standards at that time, which were unfortunately much less than now. If the estate was built today, it would be built to very different standards. Another Member said that thinking strategically there were an enormous amount of people who were being deprived of a bus service and another large group who would be inconvenienced if the proposed bus route were to be moved somewhere else. He said it was important to note that roads were for people to move around on rather than park on and it was important to consider all residents. He said there was potentially an argument to move the actual proposed bus stop out of that part of Bluebell Road to minimise the impact, but he considered the bus route should go through as proposed.

In response to some of the points raised Mr Wilkinson advised that they had fully examined all of the proposed bus routes and in their opinion the one via the accommodation bridge was the only realistic and viable option. Indeed it had always been the intention to run a bus service on this route. It was vital to minimise the length of the route to provide the most frequent and cost effective service possible and it was important to bear in mind that KCC were not prepared to provide ongoing financial support for this service so, after the initial three year developer funding had run out, the bus service would have to be self-supporting. Additionally, diverting the service elsewhere would also force buses in to other residential roads without any

prior notice or warning to those residents. As had already been mentioned there was a strong desire to retain and improve east/west and west/east bus links through Park Farm to the hospital and other upcoming developments near Junctions 10 and 10A of the M20. At the moment there was additional funding from the hospital to run the K-Line service but that would also run out in three years and the proposed extension of the B-Line would include the William Harvey Hospital and help to solve that issue. It did take time to establish bus routes which is why the developers were prepared to provide funding for this purpose and the figures for that were in the public domain. In terms of loading and unloading of vehicles, there was an exemption to do this on double yellow lines so residents would still have that option. In terms of enforcement he said that use of the bridge would be limited to buses, taxis, emergency services, cyclists, pedestrians and equestrians. The bridge itself was owned by the Highways Agency and Officers had received assurances from them that buses could safely negotiate the bridge and that they were assessing the parapet heights to allow equestrian use. He said that he understood that this was a difficult issue, but assured Members that they had fully examined all of the options and this was the optimal link for a quick and frequent bus service in that area.

Being the only motion proposed and seconded, the motion to refuse was then put to the vote whereby it was: -

Resolved:

That after considering the results of the formal consultation and the findings of the Members' Site Visit of the 4th December 2014, the Board rejects the implementation of the proposed restrictions and asks Officers to look at alternative bus routes that do not impact this part of Bluebell Road.

283 Godinton Ward Order 2014

Mr Wilkinson introduced the report which detailed the results of a formal consultation conducted between 23rd October and 14th November 2014 on a proposed scheme of parking controls for certain roads within the Repton Park residential estate, Cobbs Wood industrial estate and Godinton Park residential estate (Loudon Way), presenting Officer's analysis and further recommendations. He ran through the results of the consultation and advised that full details of the representations were appended to the report, and he outlined the detail of the proposed schemes for the Board using maps and plans.

The two ABC Ward Members for the area spoke in support of the proposals. They advised that the proposals had the support of the local residents' association who had been asking for the measures around Repton Park in particular for some time and the businesses on Cobbs Wood. They did request two small amendments to the plans in that the restrictions in Loudon Way opposite the junction with East Lodge Road be lifted to retain some additional parking, and that one of the proposed parking bays in Carlton Road be removed and the existing single yellow lines retained to allow large vehicles to be able to turn into a business yard.

Mr Wilkinson advised that on the first point the police had confirmed that they would object to the scheme if it did not prohibit parking opposite a junction like East Lodge

Road which was prohibited under both the Highway Code and the Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations (1989), however it was up to the Board to decide on these matters. The Vice-Chairman said that there were other areas where parking opposite junctions took place and there had never been any incidents at this location which required a solution. It did appear overkill.

Resolved:

That after considering the results of the formal consultation, the proposed restrictions be implemented subject to the lifting of the restrictions in Loudon Way opposite the junction with East Lodge Road and that one of the proposed parking bays in Carlton Road be removed and the existing single yellow lines retained.

284 Informal Consultation on the Introduction of Bus Stop Clearways for the H-Line

The report detailed the results of an informal consultation conducted between the 10th September and 17th October 2014 regarding the introduction or extension of bus stop clearways in various locations within Willesborough and Kennington, Ashford, presenting Officer's analysis and recommendations. Mr Wilkinson introduced the report and explained that whilst there was no statutory requirement to consult on bus stop clearways, it was considered good practice and Members were asked to consider the two contested sites of the original 15 that had been consulted upon. These two consisted of existing stops that had not been put in at the appropriate length and thus needed to be extended to allow buses to pull up parallel to the kerb. In response to questions he advised that there would be no changes to either any bus routes or the location of any bus stops.

Resolved:

That having the considered the results of the informal consultation the Board recommends implementation of the extended bus stop clearway markings.

285 Bank Street and Shared Space Works – Statement from the Chairman

The Chairman read out a statement giving an update on the latest situation. He advised that KCC Officers were investigating various options relating to the relaying of the footway paving on the east side of Bank Street and part of Elwick Road and Tufton Street.

Trial holes were being dug to establish the sub surface ground conditions, underground services that may be encountered and to establish whether the 'as constructed' drawings were accurate. Alternative materials similar to the existing granite placed were also being investigated as well as the impact of the re-laying operation on businesses, residents and service providers such as bus companies.

A meeting was planned for January 2015 at which time KCC Officers would present the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Joint Transportation Board and ABC Officers with their proposals, with a view to finalising a solution and way forward. A report would then be submitted to the Board in March 2015 to update on progress. In the event that a solution was not agreed upon at the January 2015 meeting, it was recommended that a special meeting of this Board be convened later in January to progress any outstanding issues. It was anticipated that work could still commence in May 2015 subject to the necessary agreement being reached.

The Board was therefore requested to agree the above arrangements and delegate power to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Joint Transportation Board to agree a solution if possible.

Resolved:

That the update be received and noted and the Board delegate power to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Joint Transportation Board to agree a solution if possible at their meeting with Officers on January 2015.

286 Highway Works Programme 2014/15

The report updated Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2014/15. Mr Loosemore drew Members' attention to two issues – the installation of a new pumping station at the Henwood Industrial Estate, and the installation of new catchpits at Willesborough Road, Ashford, where there had been delays due to work of a higher risk having to take place, but both of these should be resolved by the end of February 2015.

Mr Loosemore agreed to feed back more information to Members on the following matters surrounding the Highway Works Programme: -

- Members understood that a new pedestrian crossing at the junction of Church Road/Bentley Road/Osborne Road was proposed but they were surprised not to see it in the programme.
- Requests for the effective clearance of drains and gullies in Kenardington had not been referenced in the report.

In response to a question about grips and gullies Mr Loosemore advised that a report on this issue had been presented to the KCC Cabinet Committee on 5th December 2014 and a copy could be sent to the KALC Representative. He understood that work was in progress to draw up definitive plans of drains and gullies across the County and that was being undertaken by KCC's Drainage Manager Katie Lewis.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

287 Local Winter Service Plan

The report outlined the arrangements that had been made by KCC to provide a local winter service in the event of an operational snow alert in the District. Mr Loosemore advised of KCC's budget for winter service and the arrangements for salting and gritting. He said that each District had its own District based winter service plan as a supplement to the wider plan and Ashford's was attached for information. It was a working document which would evolve and be revised as necessary throughout the year.

The following responses were given to questions and comments: -

- Mr Loosemore would find out and report back on whether all bus routes were classed as priority routes.
- Pavements were not routinely cleared as part of KCC's primary salting programme. There was an arrangement whereby ABC staff could be called upon to assist, but this was only in the most extreme cases and when they were not needed elsewhere.
- The local salt depots were all fully stocked and ready to go.
- A Member considered there should be more consultation with local Members over the salting routes in the plan given their knowledge of the local areas. Mr Loosemore agreed to feed that back to the Cabinet Member.
- Precipitation in all its forms caused flooding. Last year it was extreme rain but this could happen if there was heavy snow as well. The KALC Representative said he was concerned that new grips had still not been made in the rural areas and there was still nowhere for the precipitation to go. There were options to use machinery to do this that was not resource intensive and he could not understand why requests to do this continued to be ignored. He said that if they were not able to get the water off roads in the rural areas there would be huge problems again.

A Member said he would like to publicly thank the Officers for the hard work they put in on this issue. There was a difficult balance to strike as the area did not always get snow. Last winter was a good example of this, but the right arrangements had been in place.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

288 Disabled Persons Parking Bay – Lockholt Close, Ashford

The report gave an update on the progress of an application for a disabled persons parking bay at Lockholt Close, Ashford.

Mr Loosemore read an email from the report author Lorna Day. She stated that she understood some Members may have some queries with regard to the due process required for the appeals relating to the introduction of a disabled persons parking bay but she considered that this Board and in particular, this agenda item was not the correct forum for those queries. The decision with regard to the disabled bay at Lockholt Close had been reached by the KCC Cabinet Member, Mr. David Brazier and the report was purely to update Members of Ashford's JTB on progress.

Members said that they considered that this whole issue called into question the governance of the Joint Transportation Boards. A Sub-Committee of the Board had made a decision on this appeal which was upheld by the full Board. For that decision to then be overturned by the KCC Cabinet Member seemed un-democratic and against the principles of Localism.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

289 Councillor Paul Clokie

The Chairman advised that ABC Member Paul Clokie was currently seriously ill in hospital and asked Members to keep Paul in their thoughts at this time.

DS

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Danny Sheppard:
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