

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **8th September 2015**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Burgess, Heyes, Mrs Martin, Sims, Mrs Webb.
Mr. M J Angell, Mr. D Smyth, 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 Feacey.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Bradford, Feacey, Mr P M Hill, Mr S J G Koowaree.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Hicks, Michael, Ovenden.

John Farmer (Project Manager, Major Projects – KCC), Barry Stiff (Project Manager, Major Projects – KCC), Toby Howe (Highway Manager (East) KCC), Lisa Holder (Ashford District Manager – KCC), Lorna Day (Kent Parking & Enforcement Manager – KCC), Sheila Davison (Head of Health, Parking & Community Safety – ABC), Jo Fox (Health, Parking & Community Safety Manager – ABC), Tracey Butler (Environmental Protection & Parking Admin Team Leader – ABC), William Train (Technical Officer – ABC), Jeremy Baker (Principal Solicitor – Strategic Development – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

Paul Best (Senior Strategic Planner – Network Rail), Laura Kerrigan (Strategic Planner – Network Rail).

At the commencement of the meeting the Chairman advised of a change of order to the Agenda.

105 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Bartlett	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as he lived close to the proposed M20 Junction 10A.	115

Hicks Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as she had a 112
relative who lived in the Godinton area.

106 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 9th June 2015 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

107 Network Rail Kent Route Study

Laura Kerrigan from Network Rail gave a presentation on the Kent Route Study which was part of Network Rail's Long Term Planning Process. Kent was one of 10 national geographic routes that would be included. The studies would look to the next 30 years to allow the rail industry to begin to plan now for the forecast growth in demand. She ran through the different phases of the process, medium and longer term actions, the geographical scope of the Kent Route Study and the governance structure for the study. Following the initial study a Draft for Consultation document would be produced. This was anticipated for September 2016 and there would be a 90 day consultation period. Following that a final document was expected to be published in March 2017. In terms of this Board and Elected Members generally, she explained that Network Rail was keen to work with Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships throughout the study period, through their Regional Working Groups, so there was an opportunity for them to be able to input and feedback on the process.

The item was then opened up to the Board and the following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- The cross boundary issues relevant to Ashford such as the potential electrification of the Hastings line and the possibility of a direct Ashford to Gatwick service were noted.
- Network Rail would liaise with Tracey Butler over appointing an Ashford Borough Council representative to attend the Regional Working Group meetings.
- Pricing and ticketing were not in the jurisdiction of this study or of Network Rail. This was an issue between the DfT and the individual operators.
- Particular comments and suggestions for routes, including growth numbers and projections would be welcomed and could be sent to kentroutestudy@networkrail.co.uk
- There were currently no plans in place to link the HS1 and proposed HS2 lines. This may be a longer term aspiration but there was a lot to consider before a viable plan could even begin to be looked at.

- The line to Dungeness Power Station was currently only used for freight. Any potential use for passengers would require significant upgrading.
- There was obviously a desire to add to and improve the network in order to meet local aspirations, but ultimately affordability was the main driver and any new infrastructure would require the right business case, promotion and Government backing. The issue of the Park Farm Rail Halt would be discussed as the next item on the Agenda.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from Network Rail for attending and said this was a useful and interesting exercise. Both Councils would like to be fully engaged in the whole process. He encouraged them to remain to hear the discussion on the next Agenda item.

Post Meeting Note: The first Regional Working Group meeting will be on 21st October at the Network Rail HQ at the Cotton Centre, London Bridge.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

108 Park Farm Rail Halt - Update

Mr Train gave an update on progress to date regarding the Park Farm Rail Halt, which had originally been identified in planning application 01/01155/AS. The ABC Planning Committee had further resolved to grant planning application 10/01711/AS in February 2012, subject to a revised Section 106 agreement which required the developer to pay across a total of £35,000 to ABC in two tranches for an independent Rail Halt consultant. The first tranche of £10,000 had been received and ABC Planning was currently in the process of procuring a consultant to carry out the stage 1 tasks of a process to procure a Rail Halt.

The Chairman said that this was something that was very much wanted by the community of Kingsnorth and Park Farm and it would be a major asset to the town as a whole. The Rail Halt site was protected from other development until 31st July 2021 and the Kent Route Study did seem to provide an opportunity for Network Rail to look at this project more seriously. Kingsnorth and the surrounding areas would only continue to grow in the coming years, so it was worth putting this in to future plans. He encouraged everyone present to support this in whatever way they could. One of the ABC Ward Members for the area said that it was important for Network Rail to take this issue more seriously as he considered that the failure to get it off the ground before now was stunting the growth of Ashford. The ABC Portfolio Holder said that there was incredible potential for a suburban station in this location (as there was not such a thing as a Rail Halt any longer) and possibilities to link in with improvements to the Hastings line.

Mr Train said he would speak to Planning and feedback some more detail on the conclusions of the Cannon Consulting Engineers documents of 2008 and 2011. He further advised that once the stage 1 tasks had been completed a written report and

non-technical summary would be provided to this Board. The Board was keen for the consultant to be engaged and complete their work as soon as possible.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted and the outcome of the stage 1 tasks be presented to a future meeting.

109 Wye Traffic Management Proposals

The report introduced a proposed traffic management scheme for Wye following requests from the Parish Council to address safety concerns within the village.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Cooling, Secretary of the Wye Business Association spoke on the proposals. He advised that he ran a business in Wye and lived in Bridge Street in the heart of the village. He wanted to firstly thank Officers for the time and trouble they had taken over this matter. They had gone beyond the minimum consultation standards established under statute for which all were grateful.

He advised that the proposals were far reaching as they would affect both residents and visitors to Wye. There was already a chronic shortage of parking places in Wye and these proposals would remove 12-15 spaces which would be a significant loss. He said that there were a number of aspects that were unclear from the proposals: - had the problems been defined before a solution was offered and were consultees asked if they had parking problems in Wye; was the consultation extended to surrounding Parish Councils and the Kent Downs AONB; double yellow lines which were in force 24/7 seemed to be a draconian measure for pinch points that were only an issue for a few minutes once or twice a month; were other measures considered; safety measures needed to be proportionate and only 14 accidents had been recorded in the area between 2000 and 2010 – none of which were attributable to parked cars; had a road safety audit been conducted for the WYE1 and WYE2 development sites; had any new parking spaces been considered; and he stated that the Wye Business Association had been denied access to the results of the consultation.

Mr Cooling then made some more specific comments about the report, the objections that had been received and the proposed bus stop clearways. He said that the proposals were contradictory to Local Government's stated aim of supporting rural businesses and the refusal to release the results of the consultation contradicted the more open policies of some other Council departments. To help clarify the several areas of uncertainty he had already mentioned, the Wye Business Association had submitted a Freedom of Information Request to ABC and awaited papers from KCC. In conclusion he said that good decisions were well informed decisions and as such he asked that a decision on this item be deferred to the next meeting to give them time to receive and assess the results from their FOI request to clarify the various unknowns in the report.

Mrs Fox advised that this was a joint report from KCC and ABC in response to a longstanding request from the Parish Council. As had been mentioned they had

gone above and beyond during the consultation and worked closely with the ABC Ward Member throughout the process. Officers had met with the Wye Business Association on the 16th July and believed they had covered all of the points of concern. With regard to the double yellow lines in Bridge Street, she advised that they had agreed to remove those outside 149 and 150 Bridge Street which would free up further parking spaces. The removal of restrictions outside the College would also free up another 10/11 spaces. The issue at the Bridge Street pinch point was one of safety and free flow of traffic rather than providing parking and this had been raised previously. The bus stop clearways had been included in these proposals for completeness and efficiency however this was a KCC function and could be implemented without consultation. The reason they were being put in was to ensure that both the buses and the stops were Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant. The bus companies had a duty to provide DDA compliant buses over the next two years and these would only work with DDA compliant bus stops. Further double yellow lines had been considered for the interim period before the bus stop clearways were put in place by KCC however this was not the correct tool for the job and would involve unnecessary work and costs to deliver on Traffic Regulation Orders in order to put the restrictions on the ground and then having to remove them in a few months' time. The bus stop clearways needed to be implemented in any case and doing that as part of the wider lining job would save time and money. She said that the bus stop clearway was the right tool for the job. Double yellow lines allowed loading and unloading and parking for disabled blue badge holders, whilst bus stop clearways were for buses only, ensuring the area was kept clear at all times to allow buses to pull up safely.

The ABC Ward Member said both he and the Parish Council supported the proposed scheme entirely. With regard to the proposed waiting restrictions in Bridge Street, he said that on one side of the road it was not possible to park safely anyway without using the pavement, so in reality only 3/4 parking spaces were being lost there. He felt the scheme had been dealt with very well by Officers and urged the Board to support it.

The KCC Divisional Member said that he also supported the scheme. There had been an enormous amount of discussion on this and he felt the village were united in favour. This was a minimal scheme that would address safety concerns held by many.

Another Member said that he would find it very difficult to oppose a scheme that had the support of both the Ward Member and the Parish Council and in his view schemes that did not have that support should not make it as far as this Board.

Resolved:

That the Joint Transportation Board supports the implementation of the proposed Traffic Management Scheme.

110 Lorry Parking Update - Clamping

Mrs Fox introduced the report which updated the Board on the lorry clamping pilot running from April to October 2015. She advised that research indicated that

Operation Stack had not increased the number of illegally parked lorries however, following the lifting of Operation Stack there had been an increase. She advised that clamping had taken place in recent weeks, but the overall picture was positive with increased compliance, reduced litter and anti-social behaviour and a positive outcome for local businesses since the start of the trial. Henwood Industrial Estate was a particular success story. She was aware that there had been some displacement to other areas (e.g. Hothfield and Ellingham). These had been reported to them and they would continue to carry out nightly checks. From the start of the operation 445 PCNs had been issued to HGVs parking in contravention of the overnight waiting ban. There was a two stage process in collecting the fines, firstly from the driver themselves and then going to Euro Parking Collections (EPC). Of the 445 PCNs, 120 (27%) had been paid after stage 1 which was a significant increase from the 17% paid after stage 2 prior to the clamping pilot. It was hoped that the activity would continue beyond the period of the trial and neighbouring Districts were keen to be involved and tackle the wider issues of lorry parking across the county.

Board Members said they were extremely encouraged by the report and the results of the pilot so far and thanked the Officers for the work they had undertaken. It seemed to be having the desired effect and was improving the day to day lives of both residents and businesses in the Borough. It was hoped that activity would continue beyond the pilot and Members were pleased that Ashford was leading the way on this issue. New HGV parks were considered a must and this had to continue to be looked at on a countywide basis. If others followed Ashford's example it was hoped that this would be a further influence and support for the longer term development of lorry parks.

The ABC Portfolio Holder asked if the percentage of fines paid could be kept under review and monitored by this Board in its update report at each meeting.

In response to a question about what co-operation the Council could get from the entry points to the country, Mrs Fox advised that at the moment Operation Stack discussions had taken priority but there may be more possibilities in the future. It would be an ideal situation if lorries paid for their overnight parking before they entered the country and many businesses had taken this on board.

The Chairman thanked Officers and said that both Councils should be rightly proud of what had been achieved so far. He urged everybody to continue to feedback regarding the pilot and particularly displacement to the engineering@ashford.gov.uk email address.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

111 Progress on Recent Traffic Management Proposals

The report provided an update and summarised schemes that had been brought through the Joint Transportation Board.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

112 A28 Chart Road Dualling

John Farmer from KCC gave a presentation on the project to improve the A28 Chart Road between the Tank and Matalan roundabouts, including the outline plans prepared by consultants. It outlined progress in developing the outline design as they moved towards anticipated public engagement in November. The need for improvements had long been recognised in terms of the existing roads and junctions being regularly congested, the route lacking continuity of footway and cycle provision and the poor vertical alignment over the railway bridge, and the proposed development at Chilmington had given added emphasis and importance to actively promoting the improvements. The presentation outlined the general design principles, a detailed description of the scheme, environmental aspects and potential mitigation measures and the programme.

The item was then opened up to the Board and the following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- In terms of planning, while it was a significant scheme, it did follow and overlay much of the existing corridor and while there would be environmental impacts that would need to be considered, a formal screening opinion had determined that it could proceed as permitted development.
- The potential mitigation measures to protect residents from noise and pollution from the new road did have to be discussed further, although they were at the forefront of everyone's minds and the consultants were already working to identify possible options. Mrs Butler advised that this work was being supported by ABC's Environmental Protection Team.
- The possibility for extra congestion on the Great Chart by-pass as a knock on result of this scheme had been noted and passed on to Officers.
- The main constraint for new path and cycle ways was available width and there was not enough space for a continuous segregated path. Asking pedestrians to use one side of the road and cyclists the other did not appear to be a good way forward as users would have destinations along both sides of the road.

Members were encouraged to get involved during the public engagement in November and feed in any comments they may have on the scheme. It was hoped that this would be widely publicised in the press and by both Councils.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

113 Highway Works Programme 2015/16

The report updated Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2015/16.

Mrs Holder agreed to feedback more information to Members on the following matters surrounding the Highway Works Programme: -

- Interactive warning signs at Ashford Road/Magpie Hall Road, Kingsnorth.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

114 LED Street Lighting Project Update

The report provided an update on the LED conversion project, the trial switch off sites review and the consultation on street lighting. The Chairman advised that an important consultation would be running from the 21st September until 29th November which would allow Kent residents and stakeholders to have their say on the street lighting policy. The consultation would cover the three options – part night lighting (current level of service), all night lighting, and all night lighting but dimmed when less busy. Members were encouraged to let their residents know about this consultation as it was important that all views were heard from all areas as there did not appear to be a ‘one size fits all’ countywide solution.

A Member said that he was concerned over some of the definitions in the project as some lights appeared to be part of the trial, whilst others already appeared to have been classed as ‘permanent switch offs’. This was a question he would be asking as part of the consultation.

In response to a question Mrs Fox advised that ABC was responsible for 1578 lights, although these were maintained by KCC under contract. They would be reviewing their own provision when the results of KCC’s trial were known.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

115 M20 Junction 10A Scheme Update

The report provided an update on the M20 Junction 10A scheme progress and timetable from Highways England.

The Chairman advised that he had raised some environmental issues about the land proposed to be used for the scheme and he hoped these had been taken on board by Highways England. He looked forward to future meetings of the Community Stakeholder Group and encouraged the ABC Portfolio Holder to attend so that questions could be addressed to Highways England.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

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Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Danny Sheppard:
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