

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 December 2015**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Burgess, Feacey, Heyes, Mrs Martin, Mrs Webb.
Mr. M J Angell, Mr. S J G Koowaree, Mr. J N Wedgbury.

Mr. K Ashby – KALC Representative.

Apologies:

Mr P M Hill, Mr D Smyth, Mr M A Wickham.

Also Present:

Cllr. Ovenden.

James Flannery (Senior Counter Fraud Officer, KCC), Shelley Etherton (Auditor (Fraud), KCC), Sue Kinsella (Street Lighting Manager, KCC), Chris Hatcher (Project Engineer, KCC), Toby Howe (Highway Manager (East), KCC), Lorna Day (Parking Enforcement Manager – KCC), James Hammond (Development Planner – KCC), Wendy Cooper-Wolfe (Independent Living Support Services Officer – KCC), Jeremy Baker (Principal Solicitor – Strategic Development – ABC), Sheila Davison (Head of Health, Parking and Community Safety – ABC), Jo Fox (Health, Parking & Community Safety Manager – ABC), Mike Cook (Civil Enforcement Officer Team Leader - ABC), Roland Mills (Strategic Applications Team Leader – ABC), Keith Fearon (Member Services & Scrutiny Manager – ABC).

248 Declarations of Interest

| Councillor | Interest | Minute No. |
|------------|---|------------|
| Wedgbury | Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as he was a Member of Kingsnorth Parish Council | 251 |

249 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 8th September 2015 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

250 Public Transport Liaison Task Group – 9th October 2015

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Public Transport Liaison Task Group held on the 9th October 2015 be received and noted.

251 Park Farm South and East Proposed Parking Controls

The report detailed the outcome of a formal consultation on parking controls for areas of Park South and East for consideration by the Board. Tabled at the meeting as an Update Report, were comments from residents of the area, namely Philip Gager, Joe Bergin and Sam Wiggins and neighbours.

A Member raised two Points of Order. Firstly there was new legislation planned which could affect the scheme, and secondly he stated that in his view this item should not be chaired by the Chairman as the Member considered that he was biased. The Principal Solicitor – Strategic Development advised that the first issue regarding possible new legislation was not a Point of Order but was a matter of substance which the Board could address during its consideration of the item. In terms of the conduct of the Chairman he advised that no matters of concern had been brought to his attention, and that the item should proceed.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Mockford, a local resident spoke in objection to the proposals. A copy of his comments, together with photographs had been distributed to Members of the Board prior to the meeting. Mr Mockford explained that he and other residents had attended the Board Meetings in September and December 2014 when, after careful consideration and a site visit, the conclusion had been reached that the planned parking restrictions were impractical and unworkable and had been abandoned. He considered that this decision had not been made lightly and was the right decision to make. However, twelve months later he said that the matter had been raised again. He explained that residents accepted that a bus service had always been planned for the area and the route was also planned during the initial development of the estate. The provision of public transport to serve Park Farm South and East formed part of the agreed planning permission for the development and both the Borough Council and the Kent County Council had been working for many years to deliver bus services in the development in line with the planning approval. He explained that residents also accepted that those residents who lived on the other side of the accommodation bridge at Bridgefield 2 wanted a bus service and believed that their Local Councillor was sympathetic to their views. He said that he could not understand why Stagecoach were not prepared to look at any other route but assumed that their reasons were motivated by the amount of funding they stood to receive. Furthermore he said that they had not heard or seen any sensible or practical answer to the concerns that residents had that if the “on-street” parking on Bluebell Road was removed, where would those vehicles be re-located to? He considered that the displacement of up to 35 vehicles would have disastrous and catastrophic consequences on the neighbourhood and explained that the reason residents parked on the road was

because there was simply nowhere else to park. The courtyards to the rear of the properties were often full to capacity and most homes had only been provided with one allotted space and a garage and he stressed that these areas were not under used. He further explained that the homes on the development housed families that nearly all had at least two cars, which he believed were essential in terms of modern day living. He also referred to the recent installation of restrictions in Kennington, near the Downsview School, which he said had displaced vehicles to other roads nearby. Mr Mockford then said that following the JTB meeting twelve months ago, it was advised that an alternative route would need to be found and he said that to his knowledge four meetings had been held behind closed doors to discuss alternative routes, however no other routes were deemed profitable by Stagecoach.

In conclusion he said that he did not wish to deny neighbours or the community a bus service and he referred to the survey carried out by the Parish Council which he considered underlined that residents on the approach to the bridge were clearly concerned about the safety aspects of the route and the residents on the other side wanted a bus service irrespective of the route.

The Chairman spoke in support of the Officer's Recommendation and advised that the provision of public transport to Bridgefield had formed part of the Local Plan approved in 2000 and included a dedicated bus bridge over the A2070. This provision had furthermore been taken forward in the decisions taken at two Planning Committees when determining the planning applications for the development of Park Farm. He explained that there was an aim to ensure that all properties were located within 400 metres of a bus route. The intention was that the B and K Lines would form a loop service to serve Finberry, William Harvey Hospital and Ashford and would help improve public transport within the area. He also commented that the parking of vehicles on footways was illegal. In terms of other routes considered since December 2014, he advised that the village route via the Queens Head was not suitable due to the nature of the turn from Kingsnorth Road into Church Road and also the difficulties which would be encountered with parking associated with the school. In terms of another alternative route via Violet Road/Poppy Way, he said that the necessary restrictions there would affect six times as many properties as would be affected in Bluebell Road.

A Member said that less than 7% of the population travelled by bus and he referred to new legislation which he said would permit parking on pavements. He also stated that residents in Bridgefield had in the region of 2.4 cars per property. He also said that 96% of residents opposed the proposed route and neither the Parish Council nor the Ward Member supported the proposal. He considered the proposal was a safety concern and referred to potential conflict between horses, pedestrians and buses. He also said that he believed that the proposal breached the Human Rights Act in terms of the rights of residents to enjoy their properties and also the Disability Discrimination Act as, at the rear of properties, there was a need to climb steps to gain access to properties. In conclusion he said that if the current proposals were rejected he was sure the bus company would find an alternative route to serve the area.

The Divisional Member referred to the previous decision of the Board that alternative routes be investigated, and commented that no elected Members had taken part in

any of these discussions. He considered that money set aside for the rail halt, which was unlikely now to happen, could be used as a subsidy to take the route via Finn Farm.

A Member suggested that smaller buses should be examined, and a further Member referred to the danger to pedestrians from the proposed route.

The Chairman explained that work on examining alternative routes had been undertaken and said that the route via the Queen's Head was considered dangerous and the Finn Farm route would cause more problems in terms of displacing car parking.

Another Member referred to the possibility of future legislation which may permit the parking of vehicles on pavements and advised that this was contained within a Private Members' Bill and therefore there was no certainty that it would become law.

A motion to support the Officer's recommendation resulted in a tied vote and the Chairman used his casting vote in favour of the motion.

Resolved:

That the JTB support the implementation of the proposed parking controls, which would facilitate the introduction of bus services to Park Farm South and East to aid a modal shift towards bus travel in line with the agreed transport policy of Ashford Borough Council.

252 HGV Clamping Trial and Overnight HGV Parking Survey Results and Recommendations

The report gave an update and summary of the pilot scheme to clamp persistently evading illegally parked HGV's in the Ashford Borough.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3, Mr Inglis who represented a company in the Wotton Road Industrial Estate spoke on behalf of himself and other businesses located there. Mr Inglis said he had raised this issue three years ago and at that time he had been told that there was no funding available to help resolve the issue and initially had been advised that it was a matter for the Police. The Police had in turn advised that it was a matter for the Council. He said that properties had been damaged and the estate roads were more dangerous and explained that in the region of 26 lorries regularly parked in the area and anti-social behaviour such as drivers urinating against properties regularly occurred. He explained that he had recently spoken to one driver about the matter and had been confronted by five other drivers in an intimidating manner outside his own property. In conclusion he asked what the Council intended to do in terms of Wotton Road and for any ways in which his company could work with the Council to help resolve the situation.

The Health, Parking and Community Safety Manager said that Officers were aware that Wotton Road was a problem location and explained that this matter was being discussed with the Kent County Council, along with other locations. On a

countywide basis Operation Kindle was a scheme involving Local Authorities, Kent County Council and others to examine the general issue of lorry parking. She said that it was clear that there was not enough parking provision for lorries and explained that the recent decision of Shepway District Council to ban overnight, weekend parking could have a detrimental effect on the roads within the Ashford area. She further explained that measures to help alleviate the situation in Wotton Road would be subject to a report to the March 2016 meeting of the Joint Transportation Board.

A Member thanked the Officer for the report and said that following the conclusion of the trial period, the Kent County Council were pleased with the outcome. He believed that the issue of anti-social behaviour would improve as parking for lorries became more controlled. However, he considered that discussions in terms of a lorry park to help alleviate Operation Stack would not solve the issue of overnight parking of lorries generally. The Vice-Chairman advised that the Chairman of the Westwell Parish Council welcomed the report and wanted Westwell to receive attention as well.

A further Member expressed concern that the proposed investigation planned for the Cobbs Wood Industrial Estate might cause problems in terms of displacement of lorries on to residential roads. He also expressed surprise that only three offenders had been clamped during the exercise.

The Health, Parking and Community Safety Manager said that the drivers were aware of the rules in that the Borough Council could only clamp persistent offenders and that in terms of the three offenders who had been clamped it was hoped that this would act as a deterrent. She also explained that the exercise had not seen a trend in the displacement of lorries to parking in residential areas.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) permission both to continue clamping persistent offending HGV's and to extend the scheme to include all necessary locations across the Borough be requested from KCC.**
 - (ii) ABC in partnership with KCC use the results of the pilot scheme to draw up a county wide process, procedure and protocol that can be used by all other Local Authorities in Kent.**
 - (iii) further investigation by means of meetings with HGV drivers to educate and ascertain what is needed to prevent anti-social behaviour problems be carried out, and additional litter bins be placed and methods of enforcement investigated.**
 - (iv) as a result of observations, complaints received and the recent announcement from Central Government regarding investment in a large lorry parking facility in the county, some changes and amendments be made to existing parking restrictions in the areas that were subject to the clamping trial; i.e. Ashford Orbital Park; Sevington Business Park; and Henwood Business Park.**

- (v) **the implementation of HGV and other parking restrictions be investigated in Wotton Road, Ashford; and Ellingham Industrial Estate, Ashford.**
- (vi) **additional no waiting at any time restrictions be investigated for Cobbs Wood Industrial Estate, Ashford.**
- (vii) **ABC and KCC continue to further investigate those other locations set out in the report in order to deliver the best solutions for each individual area.**

253 Parking and Waiting Restrictions - Update Summary

The report provided an update and summarised parking and waiting restrictions and any schemes which had been through the Joint Transportation Board and what stage in the process they had reached since the last meeting.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) **the Board support the introduction of controls which formed part of the Amendment 5 Consultation, which would address safety concerns by preventing obstructive and dangerous parking in locations defined as unsuitable under the Highway Code.**
 - (ii) **the Board delegate a decision on Amendment 7 to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and ABC Portfolio Holder for Highways, Wellbeing and Safety if fewer than 10 objections are received related to the statement of reasons for proposing The Order; or if 10 or more such objections are received or any objection is received from any statutory consultee, then to convene a special meeting of the Board in early 2016.**

254 Kent County Council Blue Badge Service

The Board received a presentation from Wendy Cooper-Wolfe, the Independent Living Support Services Officer for Kent County Council regarding the Kent County Council Blue Badge Service. A copy of the presentation slide had been included within the Agenda Papers for the Board. Wendy Cooper-Wolfe explained the two different types of eligibility criteria and how they were applied, and explained that the Government had issued a Blue Badge Guidance Tool which could be applied when assessing applications.

A Member commented that it appeared to him that many of the Blue Badge holders who used supermarkets' disabled bays were able to walk significant distances around the store which he believed should not make them eligible for a Blue Badge.

Wendy Cooper-Wolfe advised that people who had received eight points or more under the "Moving Around" activity of the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP) were granted Blue Badges automatically and were not

assessed by Kent County Council. Although she accepted that there may be cases of Blue Badge holders being able to walk in excess of 80 metres, they still could be eligible if they could demonstrate that such movement generated extreme pain, breathlessness or considerable difficulty in walking or had a significant impact on their health. She also explained that prior to 2012 General Practitioners were responsible for assessing people for Blue Badges and in certain cases, even if the person's health improved, GP's were reluctant to take away the Blue Badge facility. The Kent County Council now applied an independent and impartial process to this scheme.

The Chairman thanked Wendy Cooper-Wolfe for the presentation.

Resolved:

That the presentation and report be received and noted.

255 Safe and Sensible Street Lighting – Update

The report provided an update to Members about Phase 1 of the Safe and Sensible Street Lighting Project – Trial Switch Off. In response to a question from a Member, Sue Kinsella confirmed that the report dealt solely with Phase 1, which was a trial switch off of lights.

The Divisional Member referred to the removal of some street lights in Hamstreet, which he believed belonged to the Borough Council, with the fittings belonging to the Parish Council, and asked for their return.

The Health, Parking and Community Safety Manager explained that the Borough Council owned over 1,800 lights and that the Kent County Council was contracted to undertake all inspections on the Borough Council's behalf. Twenty of those lights had been made safe and steps would be taken to assess whether they needed to be replaced or totally removed. A report would be presented to the Board in March 2016 with suggested criteria to be used when determining replacement.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

256 Highway Works Programme 2015/16

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

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

257 Local Winter Service Plan

The report outlined the arrangements that had been made by Kent County Council to provide a local winter service in the event of an operational snow alert in the district.

In response to a question Toby Howe explained that the Kent County Council's priorities were to clear primary routes, followed by secondary routes if necessary. On occasions of more severe snow and ice, pathways around Doctors Surgeries for example, would also be cleared.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

KRF/VS
JTB Minutes - 08.12.15