

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **13th December 2016**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Bradford, Burgess, Chilton, Heyes, Mrs Martin, Mrs Webb.
Mr. M J Angell, Mr P M Hill, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr. D Smyth, Mr. J N Wedgbury.

Mr. K Ashby – KALC Representative.

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

Apologies:

Cllr. Feacey, Mr M A Wickham.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Smith, White.

Andy Moreton (Project Manager for Major Projects – KCC), Christopher Cordrey-Moore (Schemes Project Manager – KCC), Lisa Willoughby (Ashford District Manager – KCC), Richard Alderton (Director of Development – ABC), Sheila Davison (Head of Health, Parking and Community Safety – ABC), Jo Fox (Health, Parking & Community Safety Manager – ABC), Chris Miller (Team Leader – Parking – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services Officer – ABC).

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

232 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Bartlett	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as a Governor on the East Kent University Hospitals Trust and had discussed the matter of parking at the William Harvey Hospital with the Chief Executive.	236

233 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 13th September 2016 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

234 Barrey Road Junction with A2070 (Bad Münstereifel Road)

Mr Alderton advised that it had been agreed to add this matter to the Agenda in order to discuss the challenges at the Barrey Road junction. The traffic problems suffered by residents, businesses and shoppers were well known and, based on recent communications received by the Council, the delays had clearly been exacerbated in recent months by the stronger tenant mix in the retail units. In terms of the accident record, there was seemingly a growing problem of minor accidents, possibly caused by people getting frustrated with the delays and taking more risks when entering and exiting the junction. There was a concern that the more frustrated drivers became, the more dangerous the junction could become. He advised that Ashford Borough Council was trying to broker a solution, but the issue was not straight forward as there was a joint responsibility with Highways England 'Area 4' responsible for the southern orbital road (A2070) and Kent County Council responsible for Barrey Road as the local highway authority. ABC had set up a meeting before Christmas for officers from Highways England, KCC, ABC and Kent Police, to: - discuss the nature of the problem; what was required to establish a business case; to review potential options and what was achievable; and to look at potential funding routes. The outcomes of this meeting would then be brought back to a meeting being organised for representatives from businesses and residents in January.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Hanson of Ashbury Furniture on the Ashford Business Park spoke on this item. He said that just in the last week there had been 8 accidents and it was taking an average of 25 minutes to get to the junction. If there was an accident, fire, or major disaster on the Park the emergency services would not be able to get on and off the site. The last time he had spoken in this Chamber was at the Planning Committee to oppose the John Lewis at Home planning application. He considered it should have been built on the Ashford Business Park, rather than at a new site, and if it had, they may have also been able to have their roundabout. That planning application had facilitated a brand new store with new junction, car park and access all in three months whereas the problems at this location had been going on for 20 years with no solution in sight. He said that 13 years ago he had put a planning application in to extend his premises but had been told that the junction was not sufficient; however since then 50 new units had been provided at the park and the overall net floor space and number of businesses had almost doubled. This was also with Keel Toys only operating at 10% of their capacity. Despite all this, still nothing had been done to rectify the junction but one store at the other side of Ashford had met the criteria for a full dedicated junction. He considered that basic fair play suggested that something had to be done and he asked for somebody to stand up and do something.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Moyles of CCL Label on the Ashford Business Park spoke on this item. He said much of what he wanted to say had already been covered but over the last three months it was becoming untenable to run his business on the park. CCL Label was a 24 hour operation employing 170 people. The traffic situation caused by this junction was causing employees to arrive late for work which was affecting shift patterns and delivery vehicles were starting to charge extra waiting time. The business was a successful one, contributing approximately £800,000 a year in taxes in to the local economy, and he wanted to expand, but he did not feel that he could do that on this site in its current state. He said he wanted to ask why, when it was first recognised by this Board that something needed to be done in 2006 and subsequently in 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2016, they were still debating who was responsible, let alone implementing a solution. Mr Moyles said he wanted to see clarity over who was responsible and what was actually going to be done. This issue had been on the radar for at least 10 years and he wanted to see some accountability.

Board Members fully recognised the need for action at this junction in the light of the growing problems recently and felt that the lack of progress to date had been frustrating. During the course of the debate the following points/suggestions were raised: -

- A roundabout had been proposed to the north of Barrey Road. Was there an option to move it slightly to take into account the problems at this junction? Mr Alderton advised that this suggestion had been put to Highways England previously and the response had been that there was not sufficient space.
- It was not only businesses affected but also a number of residential properties for which Barrey Road was the only way in and out of their properties. There was also the issue of nuisance lorry parking near these properties and the anti-social behaviour that occurred as a result so it was considered that width restrictions were needed in Church Road.
- ABC's response to the Planning Inspectorate on M20 Junction 10a had expressed its disappointment that the scheme did not include plans for a signalised junction at Barrey Road, as this had appeared in earlier iterations of the scheme.
- It was important that the inter-agency meetings continued apace and that this Board receive an update at each meeting so that it can track progress.
- Whilst there was some sympathy on the points made about the John Lewis store, this was a completely new build scheme so was difficult to compare to the situation at the Ashford Business Park.
- Some years ago a petition containing over 1000 signatures had been compiled and Damian Green MP had recognised the need for action but this had been ignored by Highways England. It only seemed to have been judged on the basis of cost, but what was the cost of a human life if there was a serious accident? There was clearly the potential for serious injuries and it

was seen as a 'minor miracle' that one had not already occurred. All involved must keep putting the pressure on.

- A big issue was the speed of traffic on the A2070 and how that did not allow traffic to access and egress Barrey Road safely. One Member suggested that in the short term there should be a 40mph limit on this stretch of road and enforcement cameras installed as this was something that could be done fairly quickly and would help the situation. Longer term there clearly needed to be traffic lights or a roundabout. Mr Alderton explained that the Police had previously felt that such a speed limit would prove very difficult to enforce given the geometry of this piece of road. Any speed camera would have to be installed by Highways England.
- One Member said that statistically there were more accidents at traffic lights than anywhere else so he was not convinced that this was the solution.
- The fact that traffic could turn right across a dual carriageway in to Barrey Road was a concern and one Member suggested that this turn should be closed for health and safety reasons.
- The ABC Planning Committee routinely received advice from KCC Highways when determining planning applications and in light of the issues being experienced at the Ashford Business Park perhaps some of that advice should be reviewed.
- One potential temporary solution was opening up the blocked exit at Sevington Lane at peak times to allow more traffic to escape the park. Some Members expressed concern for the potential of rat-running.
- There did appear to be space for a proper slip road out of Barrey Road on to the A2070 and up to the Junction 10 roundabout and this could be part of a wider solution.
- Many years ago there had been an application for a licence to build a bridge from Barrey Road, crossing the railway line in to the Orbital Park. At the time it had been refused but was there an option to re-visit this?
- It was regrettable that a representative from Highways England was not present at the meeting. The Chairman advised that they had not been specifically invited as discussions had developed quite rapidly since publication of the agenda.

Mr Moreton, Project Manager for Major Projects - KCC, advised that he had been keeping track of all of the comments made. The aforementioned inter-agency meeting had been arranged to take place this side of Christmas, on the 19th December, and they would look at all previous decisions, modelling and funding options for this junction. Highways England had been asked to provide all of the historical information they had on this issue so the meeting could examine what measures had previously been discussed and why some had been discounted. There was a collective responsibility, but ultimately it was for Highways England to

resolve as the issue involved traffic joining the southern orbital road. He said that funding was always an issue but the recent Autumn Budget Statement had announced that £175m was to be made available for road safety projects to upgrade some of England's most dangerous local roads where the risk of fatal or serious collisions was highest. They would be seeking bids from Local Highway Authorities and he considered this matter clearly fell in to that description and they would be exploring how they could access that package of funding. Mr Moreton endeavoured to keep this Board updated following the meeting on the 19th December and report back on progress at each of the Board's meetings every quarter.

In the circumstances the Chairman agreed that the two public speakers could speak again in order to sum up the points they had made.

Mr Moyles said that this matter had been being discussed for 20 years and it was clearly now time for someone to be accountable and make a decision. He was pleased that Mr Moreton had endeavoured to be that point of contact but he hoped that the businesses would be able to have more input in to the meetings that were taking place and ideally attend them. He said he would personally be holding people to account from here on.

Mr Hanson said that the small tweaks that had been suggested tonight were not the answer. They needed to properly sort out the junction and not gerrymander a solution. There should be plenty of funding available and lack of funding should not be used as an excuse.

The Vice-Chairman proposed a motion, which after some discussion was put to the meeting and carried.

Resolved:

That the Board notes the references in ABC's letter to the Planning Inspectorate requesting a signalised junction from Barrey Road on to the A2070. The Board encourages KCC and Highways England to take a similar approach to this, or a roundabout and a bridge over the railway line. The Board requires a written report at each future meeting so that it can assess progress on funding, design, planning and delivery.

**235 Public and Voluntary Transport Liaison Task Group –
14th October 2016**

A Member asked about Wealden Wheels and whether they had the ability to expand. He also made reference to a similar initiative run by KCC – Kent Hopper. The ABC Cabinet Member advised that Wealden Wheels itself was not really able to expand but ABC did want to support the development of a similar, although slightly different, model of community transport that might work across the Borough. He would examine Kent Hopper as part of that and said that he hoped to report back on the wider issue at a later date.

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Public and Voluntary Transport Task Group held on the 14th October 2016 be received and noted.

236 Parking and Waiting Restrictions

The report provided an update and summarised parking and waiting restriction schemes that had been brought through the Joint Transportation Board. It also asked the Board to agree recommendations regarding the recent consultation on the 'Amendment 4 and 5' orders.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3 Mr Taylor of Home Group spoke on this item. He said that Home Group was a national not-for-profit organisation that was based in Parking Zone E in Canterbury Road. They administered 21 units for vulnerable young people aged 16-24 and received funding support from both ABC and KCC. They were a 24 hour, 365 day a year operation and their staff worked shifts and parked in Zone E. The proposed introduction of 'no return to zone' would make it difficult for their staff who were currently able to park on street and move their vehicles around every two hours within the same area. Of the three car parks that were suggested as alternatives, two shut at 19.30 hours and the third was a 20/25 minute walk away so they were not suitable options for shift workers and lone workers in the evening. He said he understood the views of local residents, and their staff would be happy to pay for parking, but it was vitally important that they could continue to park near the site and he hoped some compromise could be reached, otherwise the project could be at risk and this would be to the detriment of some extremely vulnerable young people.

Mrs Fox introduced the report and responded to the points made by the public speaker. With regard to Amendment 4 she advised that the 'no return to zone' was covered in the new guidance within the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 and would be a big change for ABC going forward. The amendment would seek to prevent motorists returning to the same zone within four hours, improving the amenity by increasing the turnover of a finite number of bays. The proposal was in response to a request from 108 local residents with parking permits who said they had difficulty parking near their homes, a number of whom had identified the specific problem of vehicles moving around the bays within the zone as a problem that contributed to this. This was seen by many as an abuse of the order as originally conceived. Mrs Fox advised that this was a long awaited scheme amendment which she hoped Members would support, but in light of the comments from Mr Taylor suggested that authority be delegated to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Officers to proceed but to seek a potential possible alternative solution to accommodate Home Group. She advised that the report also detailed the results of the recent consultation on Amendment 5 – Lees Road.

One Member said he thought the amendment was unnecessary. In his view if commuters were always able to move their cars from one space to another, then there was not a significant parking shortage. He also did not think a significant number of town centre businesses would allow their staff to spend 20 minutes every two hours moving their cars. Unfortunately there was no given right to park on street

outside your house and he considered the proposed response was disproportionate to the problem.

The KCC Division Member for Willesborough said he was very pleased to see Amendment 5 finally going ahead. There were obviously wider parking issues in the vicinity of the William Harvey Hospital, but this was purely about safety and the potential for there to be an accident on the bend. With regard to the wider issue of parking in the area he said he continued to monitor the problem on a daily basis and local residents had indicated that the general position had improved. The Vice-Chairman advised that dialogue with the Hospital continued and they had agreed to meet the North Willesborough Community Forum in January. Some of their plans appeared quite innovative and it was still planned to provide an update on the situation to this Board at its next meeting in March.

In response to a question about the barrier that had been installed at the access road to the International Station, Mrs Fox advised that ABC had only been made aware of this during the previous week and would be keeping a watching brief to assess its impact.

Resolved:

- That (i) the update on schemes that have been brought through the Joint Transportation Board be noted.**
- (ii) the implementation of the recently advertised Amendment 4 order be supported, with authority delegated to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, in conjunction with the Head of Health, Parking and Community Safety, to seek a potential possible alternative solution to accommodate Home Group.**
- (iii) the implementation of the recently advertised Amendment 5 order be supported.**

In accordance with Procedure Rule 15.5 Mr Wedgbury asked for it to be recorded that he had voted against resolution (ii).

237 ABC/KCC Responses to Consultation by Highways England on Development Consent Order Application for M20 Junction 10a

The report outlined the responses from both Councils to the Planning Inspectorate on the consultation on the Development Consent Order Application for M20 Junction 10a. The Board noted that this item had been partly covered in the earlier discussion on Barrey Road. A3 copies of a plan of the scheme had been tabled for Members' information.

The Vice-Chairman said he wanted to draw attention to two further issues raised in the consultation responses. Firstly, in its letter ABC had asked for low noise surfacing to be installed throughout the scheme which he considered was extremely

important for the residents of North Willersborough. Secondly, KCC had requested that Highways England address the closure of the vehicular link between Kingsford Street and Highfield Lane and in his view this was vitally important to prevent unreasonable levels of rat-running through Mersham village. He said there had been some doubt from Highways England at the Community Group meetings as to whether they were responsible, so he guarded against a similar situation as at Barrey Road with no Authority taking responsibility. He therefore proposed a motion requesting that ABC and KCC developed a strategy to achieve the prompt closure of this link at the time the construction works begun. A plan had been circulated to Members outlining the location of this closure.

A Member asked if the points made in previous discussions on Barrey Road would be included in future discussions on this matter. He considered the points were very closely linked and he didn't want those comments to be lost. Mr Moreton assured the Board that the dialogue between KCC and Highways England was ongoing and there would be ample opportunity to make additional points as the process progressed. In addition, the Planning Inspectorate did review all points made.

Resolved:

- That (i) the consultation responses of both Councils be received and noted.**
- (ii) the Board noted KCC's request that Highways England should address the closure of Kingsford Street and Highfield Lane, but to avoid delay requests that ABC and KCC develop a strategy to achieve a prompt closure at the time the construction works start.**

238 Highway Works Programme 2016/17

The report updated Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2016/17.

The following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- There was no confirmed date as yet for the commencement of bus services at Bridgefield. There were more surveys planned for January with regard to the accommodation bridge.
- The main works for the road widening scheme at the A2070 Conningbrook Bends, Willersborough would take place from the end of July 2017, in the school summer holidays. The delays had been due to a resource availability issue with the utilities company.
- An issue had been identified with the proposed pedestrian crossing at the Church Road junction with Bentley Road. The proposed location for the crossing itself was considered by KCC Highways as unsafe so some more work needed to be done to assess a correct location for a crossing as well as whether it would be used. It had not been rejected, but KCC Officers did need to make sure it was in the right place.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

239 KCC Local Winter Service Plan

The report outlined the arrangements that had been made between Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council to provide a local winter service in the event of an operational snow alert in the district. A copy of the full Plan had been tabled.

In response to questions Mrs Willoughby advised that the plans of both primary and secondary salting routes and locations of KCC owned salt bins could be found on KCC's website. Details of pedestrian areas that may be treated could be emailed directly to Members if interested. On occasions of more severe snow and ice, pathways around Hospitals and Doctors Surgeries for example may also be cleared but Kent County Council's priorities were to clear primary routes, followed by secondary routes if necessary.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.