

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **10th September 2019**.

Present:

Cllr. B Heyes (Chairman);
Mr P W Bartlett (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Anckorn, Burgess, Forest, T Heyes, Michael,
Mr D Farrell, Mr P M Hill, Mr C Simkins

Mr. K Ashby – KALC Representative.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (c) Councillor Anckorn attended as a Substitute Member for Councillor Ward.

Apologies:

Cllr. Ward, Mr M J Angell, Mrs C L Bell, Mr S J G Koowaree

Also Present:

Cllrs. Campkin, Chilton, Rogers, Smith, White

Senior External Communications Manager – Southeastern Railway, Project Manager – J10A (Highways England), Stakeholder Liaison – J10A (Vinci Construction UK), Senior Highway Manager - (KCC), Ashford District Manager – (KCC), Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager – (ABC), Parking, Highways and Transportation Technical Officer - (ABC), Civil Enforcement Officer Team Leader - (ABC), Member Services Liaison Manager – (ABC).

114 Declarations of Interest

Mr Bartlett	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as he lived close to Junctions 10 and 10A of the M20.	119
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115 Minutes

The Chairman referred to Minute No. 30 – Operation Brock – M20, and advised that he had written to Chris Grayling MP and Grant Shapps MP (the former and current Secretary of State for Transport) requesting that the London bound section of the M20 between Junctions 9 and 8 be returned to three carriageways, however he said that he had not received a reply. He also said that he understood that with effect from 21st October 2019 the London bound carriageway between Junctions 9 and 8 would become contraflow.

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 11th June 2019 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

116 Southeastern Railway

The Senior External Communications Manager from Southeastern Railway gave a presentation on their current activities and particular operational issues.

He explained that recently the Department for Transport had cancelled the franchising exercise and Southeastern had had their current franchise extended to 1st April 2020. In terms of punctuality, he said that this was extremely important for commuters, which comprised 70% of their customers, and said that he was pleased that this had improved by 6% and which reflected close working with Network Rail. Timetable improvements would also reduce the journey time by 1 minute and 30 seconds between Canterbury and Ashford. The timetable would also shortly be adjusted to reflect the autumn leaf fall.

He also advised that Network Rail would be undertaking track, points and drainage work over the Christmas period and Ashford Station would be closed from the 25th to 30th December. Full details of the closure and alternative arrangements would be provided in due course.

Following the presentation the Senior External Communications Manager advised that he had received some questions in advance of the meeting and a summary of the responses to these and other questions/issues raised at the meeting is set out below:

- In terms of automatic delay payments for Key Card season ticket holders, this was not possible at the present time as it relied on key card tap in machines which were not in place at all stations. This issue, and other enhancements were, however, being looked at in conjunction with the Department for Transport. Claim forms on the web had been revised to pre-populate with the customer information details.
- The problem of traffic tailing back down Station Approach at peak times was acknowledged and it was the view of Southeastern that the whole station needed to be redesigned to enable it to cater for all modes of transport. The station was owned by Network Rail and HS1, with Southeastern being the franchise holder and he was considered that a Masterplan needed to be developed with the Borough Council. Interim discussions could be held with the Kent County Council regarding the timing of the traffic signals at the junction with Station Road. It was accepted that the International side of the station was quieter and perhaps this could be used for passenger drop offs. The Vice Chairman encouraged Southeastern to contribute to the forthcoming consultation exercise which would be undertaken by the Borough Council in terms of its proposals for a new multi storey car park on Station Road.

- The Passenger Information Team provided service updates via Twitter, Facebook and the App and steps had been taken to provide more information on departure boards such as the number of coaches and on onward journeys.
- He was pleased to explain that 24 hour notice was not required in terms of passengers requiring assistance, but if this was known in advance it helped in terms of ensuring that staff were in place to help. Specific training was also being provided for on board train conductors in terms of guiding passengers and upon how to deal with other disabilities.
- In terms of the availability of toilets on HS1, data showed these to be at between 98% and 99%, with a slight drop off by less than 1% by the evening. If the accessible toilet was unavailable, this would be indicated on the departure board. Although the 98% figure was contested by the Chairman, the Senior External Communications Manager said that he had personally examined the data with the Head of Engineering and he could assure the Board that the information was correct.
- The HS1 service had been in service since 2009 and over the 10 years they had carried in the region of 100m passengers. Average annual growth was 11%, which compared to 3.8% nationally. This demand therefore created a challenge, and Southeastern worked with Hitachi to ensure that more of the fleet was put into traffic. At weekends demand was less predictable, but they took into account events such as football matches and the weather and if possible adjusted the service accordingly. In terms of the future, Network Rail had examined the proposed housing growth figures for Kent and how this would be dealt with in terms of increases in rolling stock would need to be part of the franchise process and ultimately this was a matter for the Secretary of State as the rolling stock had a life far beyond the usual extent of the lengths of the rail franchises.
- The Journey Planner app now contained information about the number of coaches forming the trains and from May 2018 two morning peak trains had been extended from 6 to 12 coaches. In terms of the ticket machines at Ashford Station, and whether they could be increased, this would be raised with the relevant team at Southeastern. It was clarified that passengers did need a ticket before travel, however, if that had not been possible – for example, station ticket vending machines out-of-order - tickets could be purchased on board from the conductor. Details of the policy on this was set out on the website as part of the National Rail Conditions of Carriage.
- In terms of using a mobile phone for tickets, the technology did not currently cater for this but it was being explored. Smart tickets were available via the Key smart card. Tickets could be purchased in advance using a mobile phone or online, and then loaded onto the Key by tapping at a station ticket office, ticket machine or ticket gate. If this has not been possible, then conductors also had the technology to load pre-purchased tickets onto a passenger's Key.

- The car park on the International side of the station was owned and operated by HS1.

The Chairman thanked the Senior External Communications Manager for the presentation.

Resolved:

That the presentation be received and noted.

117 Parking and Waiting Restrictions – Update Summary

The report provided an update and summarised parking and waiting restriction schemes that had been through the Joint Transportation Board. The Parking, Highways and Transportation Technical Officer explained that Amendment Orders 6 and 7 had been made and Order 8 had now completed the consultation process and was now in force. He also drew attention to other proposed amendments.

The Ward Member for the Highfield Ward referred to problems with parking in the vicinity of the school on Church Road and asked whether more could be done to deal with parking in the area, including vehicles parked across residential driveways and dropped kerbs.

The Parking, Highways and Transportation Technical Officer explained that civil enforcement around schools was hampered as exemptions existed for the dropping off and collection of passengers, especially young children, on most parking restrictions; this included areas where the footway was lowered.

He further explained that it was not possible to enforce against vehicles parked across residential driveways. Genuine obstruction should be reported to the police. He also said that enforcement could push the problem further down Church Road and said that he also understood that buses regularly experienced problems using Church Road.

The Ward Member explained that there were regular problems for public transport and referred to an incident where a bus driver had been assaulted by another motorist.

The Ward Member suggested that a dedicated parking area for the school needed to be investigated, to try to keep vehicle movement away from the school sites and Church Road.

Resolved:

That the update on schemes be noted.

118 Overnight HGV Enforcement and Clamping

The report gave details of the operation of the permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to manage the overnight parking of HGV's on the A20 Ashford between Charing and Ashford and four Industrial Estates in the Borough.

The Civil Enforcement Officer Team Leader explained that the permanent Order had been sealed on 15th July and would be enforced from 16th September 2019. Furthermore the Department for Transport had agreed to allow clamping on the first offence with a release fee of £150.00. In future it was proposed that an Annual report be submitted to the Board.

The Vice Chairman said that local residents were very grateful for the action and he said that he wished to congratulate the team of officers for all their work.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted and in future the operation of the scheme be the subject of an annual monitoring report to the Board with intervening reports in the event that decisions are needed from the Board on the running of the scheme,

119 M20 J10A Construction Programme Update

The report advised on progress on the above scheme since the last meeting in June 2019.

The Project Manager outlined the work undertaken and advised that:- the construction of the new junction and 4 slip roads was progressing and the key South-East Water diversion through the new bridge was in place and commissioned; the installation of the overhead gantries had been undertaken; Kingsford footbridge had opened following the demolition of the old Highfield Lane bridge; the new roundabout on the A2070 had opened allowing traffic to return back towards Orbital Park Roundabout; improvements to traffic flow on the M20 and the installation of a 60mph speed limit through the road works in both directions had been introduced.

The Vice Chairman congratulated the team for all their work over the past few months and said that he was pleased that the recent traffic management measures during the latest motorway closure had been much improved from previous ones. He also said that in view of the recent announcement by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) that they wanted to use a site at Waterbrook for Custom Clearance, it was imperative that the new junction was completed by 31 October 2019.

The Project Manager advised that based on the current programme it was not possible for the new junction to be open to traffic by 31 October and he said that he had not received any instructions to accelerate the scheme. If lorries were to use the new junction to access the truck stop it would need to be under controlled conditions.

The Senior Highway Manager explained that he was part of the Kent Resilience Team who was working with the Department for Transport (DfT) and said that it was essential that Junction 10A was available for freight to use to access the Truck Stop and he agreed to raise this issue with both the DfT and HMRC as a matter of urgency.

The Ward Member for the Highfield Ward referred to the residents of Nightingale and Kingfisher Close and explained that they were experiencing noise from the new roundabout and headlights were shining in their bedroom windows. He said that a resident had been advised by the contactor to purchase a blackout blind. Furthermore, trees had been removed which made the situation worse. Businesses in Barrey Road and Foster Road were also suffering and had seen a loss of 47% of their trade and he considered that compensation should be made available to them.

The Project Manager said that he had difficulty in believing that the contractor had made such a comment about blackout blinds and explained that he had visited residents of Nightingale Close and explained to them the need to clear the trees and drainage runs. He also said that some residents had moved the fence onto land being used for the junction works. He was also due to meet with the Managing Director of Ashbury Furniture in the next two weeks to discuss the works being undertaken on Barrey Road and advised that he did not believe that compensation would be payable under the Development Order process. The Ward Member asked to be invited to that meeting. The Vice Chairman advised that the Chief Executive of ABC had written to the relevant government department seeking business rate relief in view of the likely impact of the customs clearance facility at Waterbrook.

In response to a question about whether the balancing ponds were filling up, the Project Manager said that they were not yet complete. In terms of when the resurfacing works to the M20 between Junctions 9 and 10 would be completed, he explained that these were not part of the contract he was managing, but he undertook to arrange for details of that resurfacing programme to be made available to members of the Board.

The Ward Member for Highfield enquired about the background to the proposed works to remove a grass verge on Canterbury Road and the Ashford District Manager undertook to respond to the Member direct.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

120 Department for Transport Acoustic Camera Trial

The report advised that the Department for Transport (DfT) had commissioned a prototype noise camera to be tested at several locations over the next 7 months. The cameras were designed to measure the sound levels of passing vehicles to detect those that were breaking legal noise limits and could use automated number plate recognition to help enforce the law.

A further report would be submitted to the Board following the conclusion of the trial and a review of the trial recommendations.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

121 Aylesford Place and Newtown Road Underpass Repairs

The report advised of concerns raised by residents in respect of the repair of the lighting and the overgrowth of the paths leading into the subway and explained that Network Rail, HS1, KCC and ABC had been working together to seek a resolution to ensure the work was completed and the future responsibility confirmed.

One of the Ward Members for the Aylesford and East Stour Ward gave the background to the current situation as he understood it and explained that five attempted muggings had taken place and the adjacent shop had been subject to a robbery. He therefore welcomed the report and the situation being resolved.

In response to a question the Senior Highway Manager explained that KCC would receive the quotations for the work and he also undertook to advise Members when the works were likely to be completed.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

122 Highway Forward Works Programme 2019/20 onwards

The report updated Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2019/20.

Mr Ashby referred to the Appledore Road/Bench Hill/Woodchurch Road works and asked why this was now shown as 'to be programmed' when in June the work had been programmed to take place in August. The Ashford District Manager explained that it was not unusual for works to be reprogrammed, although she did not have a revised commencement date. In terms of whether the remaining section of Appledore Road would be resurfaced, the Ashford District Manager said that the overall works programme had scope for it to be added in the future.

The Vice Chairman also referred to the bridge strengthening works at Flood Street, Mersham and asked that future reports contain information on all bridge strengthening works in the Borough.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

123 Strategic Transport Group

The Chairman said that he wished to draw to Members attention the forthcoming meeting of the Strategic Transport Group to be held at 9.30am on Friday 20th September when they would receive presentations from Kent County Council and the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders on electric vehicles. He encouraged Members to attend what he believed would be an interesting meeting.

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