

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Hybrid Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in Committee Room No. 2, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **5th December 2023**.

Present:

Cllr. Heyes (Chairman) - ABC
Mr. P Bartlett (Vice Chairman) - KCC

Cllrs. Gathern, Forest, Feacey, Michael -- ABC

Mr D Robey, Mr C Simkins – KCC

Mr G Cosgrove – KALC Representative

Apologies:

Mrs C Bell, Mr M Hill – KCC

Mrs C Drury – KALC

Also present

Cllrs. Chilton, Wright – ABC

Assistant Director Planning & Development; Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development); Safety and Wellbeing Manager; Parking Team Leader; Technical and Transport Officer; Member Services Officer; Member Services and Ombudsman Complaints Officer

In Attendance (virtually):

Cllrs. Joseph, Meaden – ABC

Highway Manager Ashford, Community Engagement Officer – KCC

239 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 5th September 2023 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

240 A28 dualling update report

The Assistant Director Planning and Development introduced the report and drew Members' attention to the key points. The Chairman opened up the item for discussion

and the following points/questions were raised:

- A Member commented that the A28 dualling delays affected residents in his ward because it was a blight on their ability to sell their properties. He was grateful to the Assistant Director of Planning and Development for his efforts to hold firm and adhere to the original plan.
- In response to a question about representations at any planning appeal by the developer, the Assistant Director Planning and Development said it was conceivable that the Planning Inspectorate might be amenable to receiving representations from local groups, including KCC Members for the area.
- A Member noted that the costs of the project would be rising but that the bond was for a fixed amount, which may lead to a funding shortfall. The Assistant Director Planning and Development concurred that this might be the case but that it was hard to know at this stage and therefore it was important to deliver the scheme as soon as possible. The onus at this point remained with the lead developer. In response to a comment about LEP funding, he explained that the developer had taken a decision previously not to make use of the LEP opportunity, which was regrettable in his view, and the large majority of this facility had now fallen away.
- The Portfolio Holder for Climate, Environment and Transport said that he was still committed to the dualling of the A28, but that he also wished to see the development of a cycle and walking network alongside the dualling project. The Assistant Director Planning and Development said the Council remained committed to providing good links between Chilmington and the Town Centre. He said consideration had been given to including additional cycling and walking links within the dualling scheme but that if this was not successful such links should be delivered independently of the A28 improvements.
- A KALC representative said that the lack of delivery of strategic roads in the area was putting local distribution roads under greater strain. He suggested that a circular ring road around the south of Ashford could provide a possible solution.
- There was a question about the potential timing of the scheme. The Assistant Director Planning and Development advised that the timeline from procurement to delivery would be in the region of 18 months to two years. He estimated that 400 occupations at Chilmington Green could be reached early in 2024. However, the main question remained over the delivery of the bond by the developer and any subsequent Council response. He suggested that he should provide an update to a future JTB meeting, when more details were known.
- A KCC Board Member advised that the KCC Walking and Cycling Strategy was currently out for consultation, closing on 10th January 2024, and this would be a vehicle for commenting on additional routes required for Ashford.
- A Member noted that there were plans for providing a non-segregated pedestrian and cycle route either side of the dual carriageway. She asked whether there was now a case for making this a segregated route, in view of the increasing use of electric bicycles.

- A KCC Board Member asked about the progress on the planning appeal. The Assistant Director Planning and Development said he understood that the Planning Inspectorate was currently considering the issue and he speculated that more concrete information could be available by early to mid-January.
- A Member asked about the planning application for a McDonalds outlet on the tank roundabout. He asked for assurance that there would be no consequences to the free flow of traffic on the A28 when the new outlet was open. The Assistant Director Planning and Development said that he was reassured by the fact that KCC had not raised any concerns with planning officers on this point. However, he would have to check the file for this particular application to provide more detailed information.
- It was agreed that if there was any further substantive information available on this item, the Assistant Director Planning and Development would liaise with the Chair with a view to providing an update to a future meeting.

Resolved

That the report be received and noted and an update report be provided to a future Board meeting.

241 Parking restriction times in the town centre and residential zones

The Chairman introduced this item and suggested that parking restriction times, currently up to 10pm in the town centre, could be considered excessive and he questioned whether the restrictions should be stopped at an earlier time to allow for more on-street parking in the evenings. He asked the Safety and Wellbeing Manager to provide more information on the Council's Parking Strategy.

The Safety and Wellbeing Manager explained that there was currently a cross-party working group to consider the Parking Strategy. The aim of the Strategy was to support sustainable business growth in the town, to provide safe and convenient car parks and on-street parking, to provide customer-focused service and consider best use of council land. This was also an ideal time to reconsider and refresh residential parking zones, which had now been in place for over 20 years. The aim is to provide a draft strategy to Cabinet in March 2024, followed by a period of public consultation before formal sign off.

A KCC Board Member advised that the Parking Strategy had been recently discussed at the Central Forum and officers had been invited to attend the next Forum meeting on 8th January with feedback. The Member said he would report back to the next JTB Board meeting.

Resolved

That the report be received and noted.

242 Highway Works Programme update report

The Highway Manager – Ashford introduced this item. The Chairman opened up the

item for discussion and the following questions/points were raised:

- A Member asked a number of questions relating to highways issues within his Ward. The Highway Manager – Ashford explained that these issues were not on the current highways works programme, and any new enquiries/reports should be raised via the online reporting process. It may be that the team was already aware of some of the issues, but the correct process was to log any new issues online.
- A KALC rep raised the issue of dangerous layout and occurrences at the A2070 Finberry Park junction. He also noted motorists turning right out of the McDonalds road. He mentioned that the cycling instructions in the area appeared to be inconsistent, and he asked whether the traffic lights at the Inland Border Facility could be triggered instead of timed. The Highway Manager – Ashford replied that these were National Highways networks matters and any reports/issues should be directed to their online reporting system.
- A Member asked about the Strategy Report provided at Appendix F. The Highway Manager – Ashford said that she would seek more information on this report and feedback to the Member concerned offline.
- A Member pointed out that the lane system at Drivers Roundabout was confusing and created dangerous conditions. He questioned whether enforcement cameras could be introduced. The Highway Manager – Ashford advised that there were no plans to install camera enforcement at the roundabout at present.
- A Member asked for clarification over who was responsible for clearing wet leaves on the footpath to Eureka. It was not clear whether this was KCC and ABC. The Highway Manager – Ashford replied that this was a Public Rights of Way issue. The Member asked her to make arrangements for someone from that team to contact him.
- A Member asked whether the bus gates were currently operational, and, if so, when had this commenced. He also asked whether the cameras detected motorists driving on the wrong side of the road when coming out of Sackville Crescent. The Highway Manager – Ashford said she would have to ask colleagues for more information on this and feedback to the Member concerned offline.

Resolved

That the report be received and noted.

243 Parking and Waiting Restrictions update report

The Technical and Transport Officer introduced this item and drew attention to the key points within the report. The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following questions/points were raised:

- A Member noted that cars were generally becoming larger and asked whether there were plans to increase the size of parking bays. He also asked about provision of electric vehicle charging points for taxi use. The Technical and

Transport Officer advised that the size of parking bays could be discussed at the next Parking Strategy meeting, but he pointed out that bigger parking bays would result in a smaller number of bays available. Regarding a charging point for electric taxis, there was currently only one electric taxi in Ashford but the Technical and Transport officer was liaising with KCC in relation to the possibility of installing a fast EVCP at the taxi feeder rank.

Resolved

That the report be received and noted.

244 Ashford HGV Enforcement update report

The Parking Team Leader introduced this report and highlighted the main points. The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following questions/points were raised:

- A Member noted point 5 in the report and said he thought that the varying times were confusing for HGV drivers. The Parking Team Leader replied that variable times were desirable so that the visits of the enforcement contractor were not predictable. The Safety and Wellbeing Manager advised that the order was in place at all times overnight, but that enforcement visits were varied.
- A KCC Board Member asked whether there were any plans to increase HGV parking locally. The Parking Team Leader said she was not aware of any plans and added that a number of companies were using the pre-booking facility to ensure parking for their drivers at the Ashford Truckstop so they could avoid road-side parking. A Member pointed out that there were only restrictions on certain roads.
- A Member asked whether parking restrictions were suspended during Operation Brock and the Parking Team Leader replied that this was not the case. Restrictions had been suspended during Operation Stack, but they were kept in place for Operation Brock.

Resolved

That the report be received and noted.

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