

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held on Microsoft Teams on the **15th September 2020**

Present:

Mr M J Angell (Chairman);
Cllr B Heyes (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Burgess, Cornish, Feacey, T Heyes, Spain
Mr P W Bartlett, Mrs C L Bell, Mr D Farrell, Mr C Simkins.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (c) Councillor Spain attended as Substitute Member for the Labour Vacancy.

Apologies: Mr Koowaree.

Also present: Councillors Blanford, Michael and Wright.

In Attendance:

Stakeholder Engagement Manager – Southeastern Railway, Senior Highway Manager (EU Exit Highway Lead) – (KCC), Highway Manager East Kent – (KCC), Principal Transport Planner – Transport Innovations – (KCC), Senior Schemes Programme Manager – (KCC), Parking, Highways and Transportation Team Leader – (ABC), Parking, Highways and Transportation Technical Officer - (ABC), Community Projects Manager – (ABC), Member Services Liaison Manager – (ABC), Member Services Manager (Operational) - (ABC)

49 Declarations of Interest

Mr Bartlett	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as he lived close to Junctions 10 and 10A of the M20.	53 and 55
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50 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 3rd March 2020 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

51 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 the proposals which

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had been held in abeyance during the initial lockdown period, had now all been made and arrangements were in hand for the lining works to take place.

Resolved:

That the update on schemes be noted.

52 Ashford Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

The report introduced the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2020 – 2029 (LCWIP) which had been adopted by the ABC Cabinet on 28 May 2020. The purpose of this report was to enable the LCWIP to be formally approved by KCC.

The Community Projects Manager (ABC) explained that by approving the plan it would enable Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council to access funding from the Department for Transport and he was pleased to report that Ashford had been the only authority in the country to be awarded funding to enable Sustrans to undertake feasibility work.

The Vice Chairman read a letter from the Ward Member for Ashford Park Farm South which advised that he objected to the proposed Mace Lane Scheme as he considered that if it was implemented it would not only increase congestion on the Hythe Road but would cause congestion on the Newtown Road, the A2070, Church Road and Highfield Road. He also considered that it would affect the entire town and cause more congestion and pollution leading to premature deaths from respiratory disease. It would also have a direct impact on the residents of his ward and therefore he urged the Board to reject this scheme.

The Community Projects Manager explained that the report contained a number of recommendations for schemes but said that the Hythe Road/Mace Lane project was not feasible and that Sustrans were looking at improving the links to the town from South Ashford as a priority.

The Vice Chairman expressed concern over the proposals for Highworth/Barrow Hill and the 20mph restriction and considered that the removal of a lane would have a detrimental effect on traffic. In terms of the Godinton Road proposal he also said that the scheme was not clear to him and that he would need further information. The Community Projects Manager said that projects for South Ashford were the top priority and therefore it was unlikely that all the schemes set out in the report would go ahead. No funding was currently available and no schemes would be taken forward until Sustrans had completed their feasibility work. If schemes were likely to progress he undertook to report back to the JTB in more detail.

In response to a question about the Active Travel Plan proposal for Somerset Road, the Community Projects Manager said that this was a different initiative and he said that he would ask Kent Highways to provide more information and forward it to the Member concerned.

In terms of a question about the level of costs of the LCWIP projects, the Community Projects Manager said that he had sought external advice on these and explained

that they included the costs of new bridges, crossings and other civil engineering works, together with professional fees.

A Board Member commented about the scheme for Jemmett Road and said that he had concerns over the potential for parking restrictions being introduced which would potentially cause parking problems in that area of South Ashford. The Community Projects Manager confirmed that Ward Members would be consulted on proposals as schemes were developed.

The Chairman said that he had a concern about the wording of the recommendation requesting KCC to adopt the Plan and suggested a revised form of wording which was agreed by the Board.

Post Meeting Note: KALC Representatives were unable to join the meeting, however, Mr T Bartlett had supplied the following comments on this report:-

'This LCWIP sets a good model for encouraging healthy cycling and walking in the urban part of the Borough but I believe there must also be a complementary initiative that recognises that the Ashford Borough is geographically a largely rural area. The needs of cyclists and walkers in the rural areas are currently overlooked.

TRA5 and TRA6 in the Adopted Local Plan identifies their needs in new developments and stresses their connectivity to the "existing networks". These networks do not always exist in isolated developments in the rural area. Most recreational cycling and walking, whether done by urban or rural residents, takes place in the countryside, yet COM2 in the Local Plan fails to recognise this fact.

The rural parishes have been asked by KCC to prepare Highway Improvement Plans, many identified projects to make the "shared space" of rural roads in their villages and on semi urban roads like Sandyhurst Lane, safer for all their users. We are now told that these HIPs are on the back-burner whilst resources are devoted to delivering the Emergency Activity Transport Fund projects. All of which are targeted in the metropolitan and urban areas. The needs of the rural community cannot be ignored as we take the new "healthier living" agenda forward'

Resolved:

That the planning arrangements for the Ashford Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2020 - 2029 be approved and further details be reported back to the Board in due course.

53 M20 J10A Construction Programme Update

The report advised on progress on the above scheme since the last meeting in March 2020.

The report advised that work on the project was due to be completed in October 2020 and that this included the finishing off the drainage balancing ponds and the

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Church Road footbridge and correcting snags such as damaged kerbs and chipped paint from the steel bridges. Following completion in October the remaining tree planting would commence in conjunction with the planting season for winter 2020/21.

The report advised that this would be the last update from the Junction 10a Team and it thanked the Joint Transportation Board for the support it had given throughout the construction of the project.

The Chairman advised that it was Road Safety Week and in relation to the A2070, he had received an email from the Police inviting him to attend a meeting with ABC, KCC and Highways England to explore issues in respect of the use of this road by speeding motorcycles and vehicles and in particular on the stretch between Ashford and Brenzett.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

54 Highway Forward Works Programme 2020/21 Onwards

The report updated Members on the identified schemes which had been programmed for delivery in 2020/21.

In response to a question about the footway improvement scheme at Godinton Road/Sackville Crescent, the Highway Manager- East Kent explained that the normal material had been used but said that the scheme was subject to inspection and if it did not meet the required standard the contractor would need to remedy the work at their own expense. She undertook to provide an update on this in due course.

A Member referred to the scheme at the junction of Magpie Hall Road with Ashford Road and asked what further measures were being considered. The Highway Manager said that she would ask the contact officer to provide that information.

Another Member referred to the Combined Member Grant Programme, and in particular to the Bybrook Road and The Pasture scheme and said that he was concerned that if delivery was delayed the deadline for the spending of such grants might be passed. The Senior Schemes Programme Manager – KCC agreed to speak to the engineer concerned and said he would reply to the Member later in the week.

In terms of the surface dressing scheme at Maidstone Road (Ashford Road), a Member said that he had concerns about the quality of the repair. The Highway Manager agreed to investigate and report back to the Member concerned. The Highway Manager also said that in terms of a comment about traffic problems in Willesborough with 'rat running' by drivers trying to avoid the new roundabouts on the A2070, that these concerns would need to be logged and examined in due course.

A further Member also advised that the scheme for Sparrow Hatch Lane was in Pluckley and not in Smarden as stated in the report.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

55 Mojo Site – M20 Junction10a – Update Report

The Senior Highway Manager (EU Exit Highway Lead) – Kent County Council gave a presentation about the Sevington Inland Border Facility (as the site was now being called), progress on the development and the future plans for the site. The presentation also updated on the overall traffic management planning which was ongoing for the end of transition on 31 December 2020. A copy of the slides used during the presentation had been circulated to JTB Members after the meeting and had been added to the published agenda on the Modern Gov pages on the ABC web site.

The Senior Highway Manager explained that all freight traffic would be required to use Junction 10A of the M20 to gain access to the site to avoid local impacts on Junction 10 and the A2070 and from July 2021 it was intended that the site would only be used for customs checks by Defra and the HMRC. He displayed a plan taken from an ABC Planning Committee report in 2016 for the Stour Park Project and said that the green areas and water features included as part of that project would still be provided as part of the current scheme.

In conclusion the Senior Highway Manager confirmed that; the site area was 27 hectares (not acres); did not include a Saxon wall; it was to be used as a Customs Clearance Site and the maximum capacity was for between 1300 and 1500 (not 10,000) lorries.

A Member said that an incredible amount of work had been achieved on site in just 8 weeks and he enquired about the existing footpath which crossed the site and the timeline for works to the Church. The Senior Highway Manager said that in terms of the public footpath on the site there would be only specific points where lorries would be able to cross but he agreed to take this issue up with the designer of the scheme. Works to the Church included the creation of a car park and work would commence when the reptiles were relocated from the site.

In response to a question, the Senior Highway Manager said that a new traffic signal controlled junction would be constructed to enable lorries to turn right from the site to ensure that all movements were via Junction 10A. For the first 3 months of operation measures would be put in place to ensure that lorries only used designated routes and fines of £300 could be issued if these routes were not followed. Beyond the initial 3 month period the situation would need to be monitored. The Smart Freight App was also intended to be in operation by the time the site was due to commence operation. HMRC and Defra were currently planning on using the site for a 5 year period.

The Chairman thanked the Senior Highway Manager for the very informative presentation and said that it would be helpful if the Board could be kept updated on progress.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

56 Update from Transport Service Providers

The agenda enclosed service updates from the Stakeholder Engagement Manager – Southeastern Railway and the Business Development Director – Stagecoach South East.

The Stakeholder Engagement Manager said that he was pleased to report that the previous week Southeastern had operated at 98% of its services provided prior to lockdown with more direct services to London. The Safety Travel Plan was a high priority and he explained that the service was being operated under emergency measures and close oversight by the government. The Company was being paid a management fee for operating its services as the current franchising arrangements were suspended.

In response to a question about flexible fares and capacity, the Stakeholder Engagement Manager explained that services were being used at about 20% of capacity although the trend was increasing week by week. Some promotional fares had been marketed during the summer for trips to seaside destinations and advanced fare offers had been promoted. The issue of flexible fares was being looked at but he suggested that it might take some time for firm proposals to come forward. The discussion on this was subject to commercial confidentiality at the moment but he said that it might be based on two or three days of travel a week. In response to a question he agreed to raise the issue of whether car parking changes would also be based on similar travel arrangements.

The Parking, Highways and Transportation Team Leader – ABC, explained that her team were looking at flexible car parking in conjunction with the private sector operators and RingGo which were based on a three day week.

A Member said that encouraging modal shift was welcomed but asked whether any measures were being considered to encourage the use of trains when they were less busy. The Stakeholder Engagement Manager said that the point was well made and it was one that the industry was aware of and reflected the fact that the current fare system was in need of an overhaul. In terms of the short term the principal strategy of the rail industry was recovery but in the long term he said that it was likely that the franchise arrangements would change and operators would be paid a small fee based on overall revenue to run the services.

The Chairman thanked the Stakeholder Engagement Manager for his report and his attendance at the meeting.

57 Date of Next Meeting

8th December 2020

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