

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **11th December 2018**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Bradford, Buchanan, Feacey, Howard-Smith, Michael, Wedgbury
Mr M J Angell, Mrs C L Bell, Mr D Farrell, Mr S J G Koowaree

Mr. K Ashby – KALC Representative.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (iii) Councillor Wedgbury attended as a Substitute Member for Councillor Mrs Martin.

Apologies:

Cllr. Mrs Martin, Mr P M Hill, Mr C Simkins.

Also Present:

Cllr. Burgess

Assistant Project Manager – J10A (Highways England), Stakeholder Liaison – J10A (Vinci Construction UK), Highway Manager East – (KCC), Ashford District Manager – (KCC), Deputy Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing (ABC), Parking, Highways and Transportation Technical Officer (ABC), Civil Enforcement Officer Supervisor (ABC), Head of Planning Policy (ABC), Member Services Liaison Manager – (ABC).

255 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Bartlett	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as he lived close to Junction 10 of the M20	260
Wedgbury	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as a Member of Kingsnorth Parish Council	259

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Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 11th September 2018 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

257 Strategic Transport Group Notes – 5th October 2018

The Chairman of the Strategic Transport Group explained that the meeting had received a presentation from the Rt Hon Damian Green MP. This had included information on funding for public transport; the new rail franchise and arrangements for the future operation of Operation Stack. The meeting had also received updates from South Eastern Railway, Ashford Driving Instructors Association and Stagecoach.

Resolved:

That the notes of the meeting of the Strategic Transport Group held on 5th October 2018 be received and noted.

258 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 Deputy Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing explained that the report also sought the Board's agreement to abide by a previous recommendation of the Board approved under Minute No. 253(i)/12/15 in terms of the future handling of amendments to Traffic Regulation Orders.

A Member, whilst supporting the proposed arrangements about the handling of future Traffic Regulation Orders, considered that reference to the Ward Member should be included in the recommendation. The Board supported this suggestion.

Resolved:

That (i) the update on schemes be noted.

(ii) the Board support the formalisation of an amended version of the decision made on 8th December 2015, to permit amendments to Traffic Regulation Orders to be approved by the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Ward Member and the ABC Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, to facilitate a swifter implementation of Traffic Regulation Orders, if

- Fewer than 10 unresolved objections (objections either to part or all of the proposal) are received related to the statement of reasons for proposing the Order, and**
- No objections are received from statutory consultees.**
- Amendments made will be reported to the Board at the subsequent meeting for information only.**
- If more than 10 unresolved objections are received related to the statement of reasons for proposing the Order**

(objections either to part or all of the proposal), or if any unresolved objection is received from a statutory consultee, a decision be deferred to the subsequent scheduled meeting of the Board.

- **This decision will apply to the current Amendment detailed in the report (Amendment 4, Park Street and Other) and future amendments, including those outlined in section 1.2 of Appendix 1 (Forthcoming Amendments).**

259 Kingsnorth Rail Halt

The report set out the background to the proposed rail halt at Park Farm and gave an update on the current position following recent planning applications in the area and upon discussions which had been held between developers and Network Rail.

The Head of Planning Policy explained that Network Rail had not been persuaded that there was a Business Case to support the provision of a Rail Halt. In terms of the original Section 106 funding, the Head of Planning Policy said that it was his understanding that if the rail halt was not delivered then the original funding could be used to support alternative forms of transport. This would be after taking into account the funds due to be paid to developers to reflect their forward funding of the Interim Junction 10 improvement scheme.

In response to a comment from a Member, the Chairman asked the Head of Planning Policy to circulate a note to the Board setting out how much of the original S106 funding was available. **Post Meeting Note: Note to be circulated to Board Members in due course.**

A Member commented that he hoped that Stagecoach would not reduce buses in other areas of the town to support the Bridgefield service. The Vice-Chairman also commented that the tracks could be used by trams.

Resolved:

That it be noted that the report concludes that there is no prospect of a Kingsnorth Rail Halt being delivered in the foreseeable future and that no reliance should be placed on it when considering the context of transportation matters in the area.

260 M20 J10A Construction Programme Update

The report advised on progress on the above scheme to the end of November 2018.

The Assistant Project Manager outlined the work undertaken to date which included the installation of Kingsford Street Bridge; the diversion of the Scotia Gas Networks high pressure gas main and that piling works to the east and west interchange bridge had been completed and were ready for installation in January.

In response to a question about night closures and the standard of diversion signing on the A2070, the Assistant Project Manager explained that traffic management arrangements were regularly reviewed but she undertook to check the respective diversion route. In terms of the impact of the closures diversion route on the Truck Stop, the Assistant Project Manager advised that she had not been made aware of any issues, but said that she would talk to the Manager of that facility after the meeting. She also advised that the Ambulance Service was represented at the regular traffic management meetings held with all emergency services.

In terms of the second weekend closure in January, it was noted that the date in the report needed to be amended to read 'Friday 25 January to Monday 28 January'.

The Chairman referred to the information within the report about ecology and the translocation of species and asked that a map be circulated to show where they had been relocated to. He said that this issue was particularly relevant as he understood that Highways England had written to local landowners as part of a study into additional lorry parking provision.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from Highways England for attending the meeting.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

261 Experimental Overnight HGV Enforcement and Clamping Trial 2017

The report provided an update on the operation of the pilot clamping scheme on the A20 between Charing and the Drivers roundabout which had been introduced on the 30th October 2017.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3, Christine Drury, Chairman of Westwell Parish Council spoke on this item. Mrs Drury said that although the comments were from Westwell Parish Council she was also representing the views of both Hothfield and Charing Parish Councils. Mrs Drury explained that the improvement in overnight and over weekend conditions along the A20 was transformative for residents and for road users. The road was much safer because there was less turning across it, especially at night. The noise, vibration and air quality were also much improved by the absence of overnight and over weekend chiller trucks parking up.

Mrs Drury also said that all the parishes along the A20 appreciated the Borough Council's work on this and residents were reminded of this as currently there was a lot of HGV traffic at night due to M20 roadwork closures which were most nights after 9pm in either or both directions.

Mrs Drury also thanked the Borough Council and Ashford International Truck Stop for progress on the expansion of the Truckstop and explained that this went some

way to meeting the Parishes concerns that the trial could stop at the end of April 2019 if the expansion was delayed.

The Parish Council were, however concerned that the Freight Transport Association (FTA) were misrepresenting the trial by saying that there was displacement, and indeed this had been reflected in articles in the local press. The data showed that this was not the case. Lorries were overnighing in other parts of the Borough because that was the scale of the issue, which could not be addressed, until lorry parking capacity had been increased. This was why the trial was limited. Mrs Drury considered that it was high time the FTA came back on board and supported the provision of more truck stops for their drivers. This was about working conditions and the comments she had made were also applicable in terms of the Road Haulage Association.

Mrs Drury also said that the Parish Council would like confirmation from the DfT, ideally for the next Joint Transportation Board, that the variation to the regulations would continue past April 2019 to enable the trial to continue.

There was also concern that the truck stop should be able to be used, without interruption, through the period of junction 10A road works. If not drivers could genuinely say that they had nowhere else to go and push back on the trial. Mrs Drury said that Darren Smith would say more on this point, and Mrs Drury considered that he should be invited to the traffic management meetings with Highways England.

As Kent prepared for whatever Brexit brought in 2019, Mrs Drury asked that could the operational planning – Operation Fennel – make sure that drivers were still able to use the Truck Stop and commented that everybody might have to be heroes as drivers need to be looked after as well as residents.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3, Darren Smith spoke on this item. Mr Smith explained that he was the Senior Business Manager for Ashford International Truckstop. Firstly, he said he would like to thank the Board for allowing him to speak and said that he would like to quickly touch on three subjects.

Firstly, he felt that it was very important to keep the clamping trial going as this was keeping Ashford's roads clear and the area less cluttered with rubbish. He said that this had been successful for his business, keeping the Truckstop at full capacity almost every night, and the general feeling from the drivers was that it forced their companies to provide them with secure and safe facilities overnight. Mr Smith considered that this should be kept going especially now it was to double in size. Working together to keep the Borough's roads clear had to be the answer especially with uncertainty on the horizon.

Secondly, Mr Smith spoke about the Junction 10A works and the ill-effects this had had by taking trucks off at junction 9 and sending them towards the A2/M2 via Chartham and Charing. He said that this not only hurt the Truckstop as a business, leaving the park half full, but it also left many drivers who had reservations or needed to have their rest breaks being unable to get to the Truck Stop and they were forced to park on A roads, such as the A2 near Lydden, without facilities. The main bug bear for the Truckstop and drivers alike was the works were after junction 10 (coast

bound), so allowing them to travel down one more junction surely made more sense than diverting them completely out of the way. Mr Smith understood that Sellindge Parish Council did not want these trucks driving through their village, but he said that surely, it was much more sensible than the option being used currently, as all the main parking areas were down the M20/ A20, ie the Airport Café, and not the A2. The works at Junction10A were coming along nicely but there would always be times when certain areas needed to be closed to complete the required works. With this in mind he considered that the county needed to share the burden.

Thirdly, Mr Smith called for the Highway Authority to speak with him and other truck park operators as promised, with regard to using them to help alleviate the problem on the motorways when or if Brexit started. The main issue would be when holding trucks between J8 and J9 coast bound, and any trucks which wanted to come to Truckstop, Stop24, Motis etc would not be able to, as they would be made to re-enter the back of the queue at Maidstone. Mr Smith asked what would this mean for Truck Stop, a brand new 600 to 650 lorry park being less than half full would be such a waste with drivers being unable to use proper facilities and to have much needed rest and sleep which could result in tiredness and more dangerous roads. Finally, a rolling 3-400 trucks more on Kent roads (this figure was only the Truckstop park). Mr Smith said that he had provided options of where Truckstop could work alongside the highway authorities to control the number leaving their park and coming off at J10 heading towards the tunnel and ferry. Sadly, there was still no response. This would benefit everybody and Mr Smith considered that the truck park operators needed to be involved.

The Chairman said that the Board was very appreciative of the work of the Truckstop, and commented that in terms of the signed diversions he said that they were advisory only and therefore lorry drivers were able to leave the M20 at Junction 9. The Chairman also asked whether Ashford residents who wished to travel to Eurotunnel when Stack was in place would be required to join the queue in Maidstone? The Highway Manager East explained that Operation Fennel was still being discussed and the works currently underway on the M20 would provide for two way contraflow on both carriages and therefore there would not be a need for Ashford residents to travel to Maidstone to join a queue. The Kent Resilience Forum were heavily involved in work associated with planning for issues arising from Brexit.

The Deputy Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing referred to the table on page 53 of the report and said that this showed that there was very little displacement of lorries parking in other areas. She said that this trial was principally about increasing compliance. In response to a question about whether the trial would be made permanent, she explained that at present 12 months of an 18 month trial had been completed and that the exercise would be reviewed with the Department of Transport. A decision on whether to continue would be taken after that review.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

262 Highway Works Programme 2018/19

The report updated Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2018/19.

The Chairman drew the Boards attention to the requirement for a further closure of Newtown Road for 10 weeks in the spring. He also asked for an update on the A252 safety scheme. The Ashford District Manager said that a Project Team had yet to be confirmed and that further details would follow once the Project Team was in place. The Chairman also asked for information on the works to the footbridge at the end of Essella Road to be included.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

263 Local Winter Plan Service Plan 2018/19

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 borough/district.

The Chairman asked the Head of Planning Policy to remind developers that it was their responsibility to grit roads which were yet to be adopted. In response to a question, the Ashford District Manager said that there had been no change in respect of the policy on treating secondary routes, the focus was principally on keeping the primary routes clear.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

264 Well-managed Highway Infrastructure – Implementing the Code of Practice

The report outlined the County Council's strategy for implementing the new Code of Practice for highway maintenance management which became fully effective in October 2018.

In response to a question about the frequency of highway inspections, the Ashford District Manager explained that main roads were inspected on a monthly basis and minor roads on a six monthly basis. However, if problems were reported in between these times, a Highway Inspector would investigate.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

265 Pedestrian Crossing on the A2070 - Ashford

Further to the discussion at the June and September 2018 meetings, enclosed with the agenda papers was a copy of a letter dated 15 October 2018 from Highways England, which advised that they had visited the site and observed the safety improvement measures already in place.

Highways England had also discussed the site with the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership who had confirmed that cameras had to be installed in accordance with a strict criteria which were not met at this location. For a camera to be put in place there had to be both evidence of offences and a history of fatal injury crashes at the site in question. As there was no such evidence the responsibility for enforcing the law remained with Kent Police and Highways England had no power or responsibility.

A Member expressed concern at the response from Highways England, particularly as incidents had been reported on numerous occasions. In response to a suggestion from a Member, the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing said that he would ask Officers to investigate the feasibility of placing a camera at this location.

Resolved:

That the letter be received and noted.

266 – Next Meeting

The Vice Chairman asked that an item on Operation Brock be added to the agenda for the next meeting on 12th March 2019.

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