

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **3rd March 2009**

Present:

Mrs E Tweed (Chairman);
 Cllr. Burgess (Vice-Chairman);
 Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Clarkson, Claughton, Clokie, Cowley, Heyes, Wedgbury, Woodford
 Mr M J Angell, Mr R E King, Mr D Smyth.

Apologies:

Mr P M Hill, Mr S J G Koowaree.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Holland, Link, Naughton.

Jamie Watson (Project Implementation Manager – KCC), Graham Currie (Highways Agreements Manager – East Kent – KHS), Carol Valentine (Community Delivery Manager – KHS), Graham Tanner (Travel Plans Team Leader – KHS), Matt Hogben (Transportation Planner – KHS), Paul Jackson (Head of Environmental Services – ABC), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services and Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

434 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Cowley	Code of Conduct - Personal but not Prejudicial – As he worked for Stagecoach East Kent	436
Holland	Code of Conduct - Personal but not Prejudicial – Resident of The Limes	440

435 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting of this Board held on the 16th December 2008 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

436 Transport Forum

The Board received the report of the Chairman of the Transport Forum for the meeting held on the 13 February 2009 which had been tabled. The Forum had considered: - Industry Updates and Discussion (with particular attention to Bus and Rail Services); Ring Road and Shared Space Update; and Ashford's Future Update.

The Chairman of the Transport Forum said that concerns were expressed about Southeastern and in particular the 30% premium on prices for High Speed Services. He considered that by withdrawing some of the current services there was an element of commercial blackmail by forcing people to use the high speed trains and pay the extra premium. Another Member said he was pleased the majority of Southeastern services had been restored to their original train length, but there was still a number which had not and this had been an extremely bad move all round.

Resolved:

That the report of the Chairman of the Transport Forum for the meeting held on the 13th February 2009 be received and noted.

437 Tracker Report

Resolved:

That the Tracker Report be received and noted.

438 Orbital Park Parking Review

The report explained that on the 24th December 2008, Ashford Borough Council advertised its intention to introduce a series of new "No waiting at any time" restrictions in Orbital Park to deal with highway safety and inappropriate parking issues in Orbital Park. The report discussed the outcomes of the public consultation in respect of these proposals and recommended the implementation as advertised notwithstanding the objections received. Mr Wilkinson explained that one objection had been received about a loss of on street parking at the market and there had been numerous letters of support including a petition of support signed by 94 employees of one company. The objection had been considered within the report where it was considered that the proposals would only lead to a loss of unsafe parking, such parking the Council considered was undesirable. Mr Wilkinson directed Members attention to the plans of the scheme which were on display.

A Member asked if foreign lorry drivers would take any notice of the double yellow lines and if they didn't, asked why the Council could not clamp them. Mr Wilkinson said that unfortunately the issue of effective enforcement of foreign lorries remained unchanged. Until such time as current UK legislation was brought into line with that of other EU states or new multipartite agreements were reached, it would not be possible to pursue unpaid tickets on the continent. With regard to clamping, the Traffic Management Act stated that a vehicle had to have three outstanding unpaid

tickets issued within the last six months before it could be clamped when caught on the fourth occasion.

The Chairman said she would like to place on record the Board's thanks to Mr Wilkinson and all of the Officers who had worked on this scheme. It had been a long drawn out process and the people of Ashford had been very patient. She looked forward to its implementation.

Resolved:

- That (i) the waiting restrictions described in the Traffic Order and shown on the accompanying drawings be implemented.**
- (ii) the Kent County Council (Various Roads, Borough of Ashford) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) Amendment No. 11 Order 2009 be made and the objectors be informed as such.**

Recommended:

That the implementation of the scheme be funded through the Transport Initiatives Reserves (On-Street Parking Surplus Account).

439 Tenterden and St Michaels Parking Review

Mr Wilkinson explained that the report detailed the results of the recent consultation in respect of the interim Tenterden Parking Review. The package of proposals had been developed and agreed with a group including Ward Members, the County Councillor, Tenterden Town Council, Tenterden and District Residents Association and the Tenterden Chamber of Trade and Commerce. Plans and drawings of the proposed scheme had been displayed at the meeting. There had been 54 representations in total – approximately half in support or making general comments and the remainder objections. The report had collated the comments by street and issue.

The Leader of Ashford Borough Council said this had been a lengthy process and the current proposals were very much scaled down from the original ones. It had been generally agreed that this was the most appropriate way forward until such time when a location for a permanent new car park could be found. He said he thought the scheme would be supported by a majority and create better parking options for the disabled. However ongoing monitoring would be important along with a 12 month review and he hoped that parts of the scheme that had caused concern in Homewood Road and Ingleden Park Road/Wealden Avenue would be particularly reviewed after 12 months. Mr Wilkinson confirmed it was standard practice to review the whole scheme after a year but reassignment of parking from Homewood Road was difficult to predict and there would be regular inspections there.

In response to questions Mr Wilkinson explained that the Friday Market would be unaffected as there was a restriction from 6am to 10am on Friday mornings to allow the setting up of stalls.

It was agreed that Homewood School should be written to, to see if anything could be done to encourage their staff and pupils to all park within the school grounds.

A Member asked about Pittlesden and if anything could be done to stop people parking on the green. Could rocks be put around the edge of the green? Mr Wilkinson said that something could be done, but there would need to be investigations over health and safety issues and land ownership first. This would be looked into.

Resolved:

- That (i) the waiting restrictions shown on the drawings and outlined in the report be implemented.**
- (ii) the Kent County Council (Various Roads, Borough of Ashford) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) Amendment No. 10 Order 2009 be made and the objectors be informed as such.**

Recommended:

That the implementation of the scheme be funded through the Transport Initiatives Reserves (On-Street Parking Surplus Account).

440 Highway Adoptions – Cold Case Project

Mr Currie introduced the report which provided an overview of the Highway Adoption Cold Case Project. He explained that all schemes outstanding had been called “Cold Cases” and Phase 1 of the project to deal with them had concentrated on approximately 170 schemes that started before 2002. The project was initiated in spring 2008 with an aim to clear them all by 31st March 2009. Unfortunately there had been a number of issues which had resulted in this not being possible, and the project would continue after this date, but it was predicted that approximately 60% of cases would be complete. With regard to Ashford, there had been 28 pre 2002 cases and about 50% of those should be achieved by the end of March.

A Member referred to a recent site meeting at Goat Lees, involving County and Borough Officers which had been extremely productive. He was now much more confident at the ability to deal with this than in the past. When he had taken Goat Lees over he had been appalled that people had been living in houses for four or five years without having had their roads adopted. There was still concern about the maintenance and cleanliness of the highways on new developments as it seemed to fall between Authorities until they were adopted. He knew the Borough Council were attempting to do what they could in terms of cleanliness but hoped they would continue to keep a close eye on things. He said he would like to congratulate Officers on being able to move the problem forward but did not want the momentum to be lost.

In response to a question about calling in bonds, Mr Currie said this was difficult because often on long-standing developments the developer was not around any more and the process became extremely protracted. They were looking at ways of

encouraging developers to remain involved with their developments but that was difficult in the current economic climate. Developers signed Section 38 Agreements, but they were not contracts so there were no penalties. They had to have the co-operation of the developer, which was often problematic.

A Member said he understood the problems, but considered Development Control should keep in better contact with Members about such issues. He had experienced some of the worst adoption sagas in his area and he considered that if somebody sold something there should be an after sales service. In this way the developers should appoint a nominated individual for residents and Members to contact with problems and perhaps there should also be someone in Development Control. What had to be understood was even if roads had not been adopted, residents were still paying full Council Tax but they were not getting the same service. Grass was not being cut, streets were not being cleaned, play areas not maintained etc. and something needed to be done to help keep the peace on the new estates.

One of the areas that seemed to have the highest concentration of unadopted roads was the Trinity Road area and a Member said that there were already numerous developments granted planning permission on Eureka Park and complaints were already being received from residents that workers were spilling out and parking on the residential streets. She hoped that the area could be adopted as soon as possible to help alleviate the problems there. Mr Currie said that once one road was adopted in the Trinity Road area, it was expected to be a domino effect where others would follow. It was hoped that the first road would be adopted before the end of March.

Mr Currie confirmed that the report had originally been submitted to the Highways Advisory Board in November 2008 so the situation had moved on somewhat since then. All 170 sites had now been visited and there had been progress on all of them. None remained at 0% complete.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

441 Ashford's Future Update

Mr Watson introduced the report of the Head of Transport (Ashford's Future Company) which explained that the company would be leading on four major transport schemes over the next few years which were:- Victoria Way; M20 Junction 9/Drovers Roundabout; Ashford Station Improvements; and the SMARTLINK Bus Rapid Transit System incorporating Park and Ride. The report ran through each of these projects in turn.

A Member mentioned the Ashford Station improvements and said that at the last meeting he said that the ticket barriers should be moved allowing for a genuine pedestrian thoroughfare from the south to north side of the station. He again reiterated the importance of this and thought that any ticket barriers should be placed at the platform entrances but should not prevent having a clear route through the 'subway' area. Mr Watson said he would pass this point on.

In response to a question about whether Victoria Way would include a cycle path, Mr Watson said there was no provision of a cycleway on the highway during the initial phase. They were intending to encourage people to use the good links in Victoria Park. The final vision for the scheme however did have a cycleway along the whole stretch of highway.

A Member expressed concern about the proposed work at Drovers Roundabout / Junction 9 clashing with the construction of the BUPA Care Home at the top of Warren Lane. It would be important to co-ordinate these works carefully otherwise it would cause major problems at the Drovers Roundabout. Mr Watson agreed it would be important to be aware of all such issues and manage the works as best as possible. There were timing issues though as all work in the Junction 9 area had to be completed before work on Junction 10a started.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

442 Highways Works Programme 2008/09

The report updated Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2008/09.

A Member asked about the crossroads at Benenden Road, which it stated in the report was designed and waiting to be programmed, but he considered work had been finished and hoped there would be no further work at the same location. Mrs Valentine agreed to check if this was an error in the report and report back to Councillors Mrs Blanford and Clokie.

With regard to the amount of lighting schemes that were awaiting action from EDF, the Chairman said that there finally seemed to be some progress in that at the Highways Advisory Board earlier that day it had been reported that a Service Level Agreement had been reached between Ofgem, KCC and EDF that would enable the outstanding schemes to be progressed by qualified Officers from organisations other than EDF and should speed up the process. It would therefore be sensible to keep a close eye on the crossings near Drovers roundabout to see if there was any progress.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

443 Godinton Road Bus Gate

The Chairman clarified that the report was for decision not information as stated on the Agenda.

Mr Hogben introduced his report which explained that the Godinton Road Bus Gate had been opened to allow through traffic during the ring road works and set out details of a petition that had been received requesting the permanent opening of the gate to general traffic. The report covered Kent Highway Services' summary of the key issues affecting the Bus Gate and a recommendation as to the future of the gate.

The Ward Member said whilst he understood the need for the Bus Gate as it did stop Godinton Road being used as a rat run, he also appreciated the frustration of local residents. Despite the extra 10 seconds being put on the green light at Forge Lane it had still taken 7 to 10 minutes to travel 150 yards recently. Additionally, whilst the aims of the Bus Gate were fine the fact that it was not enforced by cameras made it a bit of a mockery. He could not understand why camera enforcement had not been implemented because money was available from the CTRL and legislation was there for KCC to enforce. He proposed that camera enforcement be implemented at the Godinton Road Bus Gate which would recognise the vehicles of local residents and allow them to pass. He considered this would be relatively easy to implement. Mr Hogben said that there was a proposal in the recommendation to make a bid to introduce Bus Gate camera enforcement for the year 2010/11. With regard to giving priority to local people he considered this would be difficult to develop as no other Bus Gates in the country operated a tagging system for local residents, but it could be investigated if that was the desire of this Board.

Members generally considered that the Bus Gate should remain closed to through traffic. A Member said that Godinton Road was a residential area and was never designed to take the levels of traffic it would be subject to if it was a through road. It would also ensure that future improvements to bus services could run without significant delay from private cars.

A Member said that Gas Works Lane was also being used as a rat run and he was concerned that this would increase if the bus gate remained closed. Mr Wilkinson said that this movement had been permitted whilst the bus gate was open but it was illegal again now and the Police would have to give this attention if it was continuing to happen.

On the subject of Bus Gates, a Member mentioned the chequered history of the Beaver Road Bus Gate and asked that a bid be made for camera enforcement there also in 2010/11.

Resolved:

- That (i) the Godinton Road Bus Gate remain for use solely for buses, taxis and emergency services vehicles.**
- (ii) that a bid be made to introduce Bus Gate camera enforcement for the year 2010/11.**

444 Ashford Town Centre Streets – Scheme Update

Mr Watson introduced his report which updated on progress with proposals to reconfigure the one-way A292 Ashford Ring Road into a series of two-way quality

streets as well as providing an update on the Bank Street and Elwick Road shared space projects. He updated on progress since the last Joint Transportation Board meeting in December and upcoming work including:- the Bank Street defects list that was being worked up; marking the raised bus kerbs in Bank Street when the weather improved; Apsley Street/Regents Place; Church Road/Station Road/Elwick Road; landscaping; installation of finger post signs between the Station and Town Centre; and the pedestrian ramp to the Station from Romney Marsh Road. He also gave details of speed monitoring on the Shared Space and the Shared Space workshop that had taken place with the disability groups.

A Member said that if Ashford was not already on the map, Shared Space had certainly put it there. Other areas around the Country were showing an interest in Shared Space such as Staines, Hereford and Newcastle-Under-Lyme. There had been a lot of pessimism and scepticism since the start a lot of which came from the media, but there had been no reported accidents so far. This was not a cause for complacency and there was room for a number of improvements but he was pleased there seemed to be more positivity now. He also said that the workshop with disability groups had been invaluable and was something that should have happened from the start.

In response to a point about the flume in Bank Street getting blocked up with rubbish, Mr Watson said he was aware that it attracted rubbish but he did not think it was getting blocked to an extent where it was not doing its job (i.e. taking run-off water from the highway). However he would endeavour to check this point.

Members said there had been a number of comments about poor levels of lighting particularly at the courtesy crossing at the Church Road entrance to the Shared Space, especially in bad weather. Mr Watson said he was assessing the results of the Stage 3 safety audit but it should be pointed out that the lighting was still not complete in terms of focusing in the right directions. He endeavoured to make Members aware of the results of the safety audit.

With regard to any future art works in the Public Realm, Mr Watson said if this was proposed he would ensure that Members were involved at the design stage.

Councillor Holland asked for it to be recorded that he had not taken part in any discussions about this item due to possible litigation.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

445 Integrated Transport Programme 2009/10

The report introduced the Integrated Transport Programme for 2009/10 for the Ashford Borough.

A Member said that for the last six years he had been pressing for a bus service to serve Brisley Farm and now West Hawk Farm as there were lots of older people who had concessionary bus passes but could not use them. He had suggested the A-

Line from Stanhope be extended to serve those areas. The stock answer was that this could not be incorporated by Stagecoach without a subsidy such as at Park Farm. Other Members said they would support bus services being provided for these areas but that should not be at the expense of the frequency of the A-Line services for Stanhope. KCC Members said they would take this issue up at County Hall and suggest that a tendered service be considered for the area.

Another Member said he felt he should speak up for non bus-pass holders. Young families of four had found it was cheaper to catch a taxi into town than a bus and young families on low incomes were subsidising one sector of the community to have free bus passes and he considered this extremely unfair. He also considered there were some good ideas in the report but more needed to be done to educate young people about road safety and he was disappointed that no money appeared to be being spent on that. Mr Tanner said that an educational scheme for young people 'Bike It' had been running for 18 months in Ashford around 12 schools about safety and road awareness including an Officer from Sustrans. In 2009/10 they were looking to roll out additional road safety schemes at schools.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

446 Ashford Station Travel Plan Pilot

The report summarised progress and outlined proposals in respect of the Ashford Station Travel Plan – part of a national pilot of Rail Station Travel Plans, led by the Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) on behalf of the DfT. Mrs Valentine also updated Members on the appointment of a new cycling officer at KHS who was looking to work with Sustrans to encourage volunteers to get involved with keeping cycleways clear etc.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

447 Dates of Meetings for 2009/10

These were confirmed as:

Tuesday, 30th June 2009 (later because of KCC Elections);
Tuesday, 1st September 2009;
Tuesday, 8th December 2009;
Tuesday, 9th March 2010.

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Danny Sheppard:
Telephone: 01233 330349 Email: danny.sheppard@ashford.gov.uk
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: www.ashford.gov.uk/committees