

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL
MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
17 FEBRUARY 2010

PRESENT: **Maidstone Borough Council**

**Councillors J A Wilson (Chairman), English,
Hinder, Marchant, Parr, Ross, Sherreard and
J E Wilson**

Kent County Council

**County Councillors Chell, Chittenden, Cooke,
Daley, Robertson, Mrs Stockell and
Mrs Whittle**

Parish Council Representative

Councillor Butcher

ALSO PRESENT: **Councillors Horne and Yates**

37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

38. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

39. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Horne indicated his wish to speak on the report of the Head of Countywide Improvements relating to highway improvement schemes 2009/10.

Councillor Yates indicated his wish to speak on the report of the Interim Director of Kent Highway Services relating to highways and transport issues.

40. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

41. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Members stated that they had been lobbied regarding the speed limit review.

Councillor Hinder stated that he had been lobbied as a Member of Boxley Parish Council regarding the proposed road safety measures along Walderslade Woods Road.

42. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

43. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed.

44. QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr John Payne, C.Eng. MICE, addressed the Board regarding the proposed installation of a zebra crossing in Ware Street, Thurnham. He suggested that the original location in the vicinity of no.96 Ware Street was unsafe due to the volume of traffic and its proximity to a blind bend, the Bell Inn and the builders' merchants. The revised location at the western side of Edelin Road was preferable in the interests of highway safety and the convenience of pedestrians.

45. SPEED LIMIT REVIEW

The Board received a presentation by Kent Highway Services regarding the speed limit review. It was noted that:-

- Kent Highway Services had set up a Team specifically to review all of its speed limits on A and B roads to ensure that they met the standards set out in new national guidance for the setting of local speed limits. Speed limits should be consistent across the country, self explaining and evidence led. The indications were that 46% of existing speed limits would need to be changed and some might need to be increased. Improved signage would be required.
- The process provided a snapshot assessment of the speed limit of the road and a consistent network of speed limits across the country. It also identified additional highway works to enhance or support a speed limit. The process did not target local non-speed related issues, predict too far into the future, recommend speed limits that were not enforceable or achievable, or assess roads other than A or B roads.
- The process involved 8 key stages: a desk top review, an initial site review, an adjudication review and a statutory (Police) review; liaison with a Parish Council representative; consultation with Joint

Transportation Boards, County, District and Parish Councils; and a final review.

- Members played a key role in the process, representing the views of local residents; taking a strategic overview; assisting in collating feedback; and presenting this to the adjudicator. The adjudicator did not enter into any consultation with individuals.
- The final review involved consideration of the responses received, an assessment of comments by the adjudicator, revisiting sites, an assessment of any changes to the original recommendations by the Review Panel and the issue of the revision report.
- Subject to the availability of funding, the next stage involved the design of lines and signs, the making of Traffic Regulation Orders and the installation of signage etc.
- In terms of timescales, the review was at different stages of the process in each of the four areas, with signs being installed in the Demonstration Area and the initial review about to commence in Area 3.

Councillor Eileen Riden, the Chairman of Sutton Valence Parish Council, addressed the Board expressing concern about the proposal to revert to a 40 mph speed limit on the A274 at Sutton Valence.

The Chairman reminded the Board that the purpose of the presentation was to explain the background to the review and the methodology.

A Member sounded a note of caution about potential enforcement problems if there were changes to speed limits over short distances.

In response to questions by Members, the representative of Kent Highway Services confirmed that there would be a co-ordinated approach to the installation of signage and the replacement of roundels and that the adjudicator was independent from the initial Review Team and accountable.

RESOLVED: That the matters raised in the presentation be noted.

46. UPDATE ON PETITIONS SUBMITTED TO KENT HIGHWAY SERVICES

The Board considered a report by the Head of Transport and Development setting out details of the current position with regard to petitions submitted to Kent Highway Services and of a new petition received.

Councillor Tom Sams addressed the Board in his capacity as Chairman of the Residents' Association regarding the petition signed by over 600 residents of Harrietsham and Lenham in response to the review of the speed limit on the A20. He explained that the petitioners were calling for a new review to be carried out taking into account the intensification of use, the volume of traffic, the impact of Operation Stack, accident

statistics, the emotional and financial costs to the community of road traffic accidents, the road layout and surfacing, poor lighting and the incidence of flooding. He suggested that the review should look at the route in its entirety, rather than taking an adhoc, piecemeal approach.

The Board was informed that the petition had been passed to the Speed Limit Review Team who would respond to the issues raised.

Councillor Geraldine Brown, the Chairman of Yalding Parish Council, addressed the Board on the request for a weight restriction through Yalding and for surveys of lorry movements through Yalding and East Farleigh to be undertaken. She reiterated that Yalding Parish Council had campaigned for at least thirteen years for a weight restriction and she was disappointed that the final draft of the Integrated Transport Strategy included one sentence on the lorry strategy for Kent. She was pleased that a meeting had been arranged to look at the scope and costs of the traffic surveys, but would like to point out that, in the meantime, two planning applications had been approved which would lead to an increase in HGVs in the Yalding area.

The Chairman advised the Board that he had met with the Director of Integrated Strategy and Planning at Kent Highway Services who had indicated that a 'vision statement' would be incorporated into the final Integrated Transport Strategy covering the need for, and possible solutions, further investigation of a freight transport strategy specifically to cover the use by HGVs of inappropriate roads in Kent. The Director had said that he would discuss with the Cabinet Member the possibility and feasibility of some additional work for the south Maidstone area to try to determine the origin and destination of HGVs in the area to see if there was a cost effective way of mitigating the problems. The Board agreed with the Chairman that it would be necessary to maintain pressure on the County Council to tackle the issue. It was suggested that since a significant number of the HGVs were registered abroad, and made no contribution towards the cost of road repairs and improvements etc, Brit Disc should be a core part of the strategy.

With regard to the proposed road safety measures in Walderslade Woods Road, a Member requested that consideration be given to the provision of traffic islands at the junction with Wildfell Close which provided access to housing and the Parish Hall. The representatives of Kent Highway Services undertook to look into this request.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a copy of the 'Growth without Gridlock' document should be circulated to each Member of the Board.

47. HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEME 2009-10

The Board considered the report of the Head of Countywide Improvements detailing the progress of each scheme in the highway improvement programme, including previous years' schemes that were not completed by April 2009. The Highway Schemes Manager advised the Board that he wished to amend his report to the effect that highway improvements associated with the redevelopment of Oldborough Manor School would commence on 1 March 2010. In response to Members' comments, the representatives of Kent Highway Services undertook to:-

- Liaise with the Traffic Police regarding the provision of enhanced signage to deter the use of the proposed Mote Park to Detling cycle route by motorcyclists.
- Take into account Members' comments about the need for enhanced signage and regular trimming of vegetation along the Hockers Lane section of the cycle route.
- Look at the point raised by a Member about the previously reported difficulties in improving the crossing at New Cut Road for cyclists given the route proposed for the Mote Park to Detling cycle path.
- Look at the possibility of extending the cycle route into Mote Park.

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress of the highway improvement programme be noted.
2. That the proposed Mote Park to Detling cycle route be endorsed and that public consultation be carried out on the three sections of proposed shared use footway/cycleway illustrated in Appendix B to the report of the Head of Countywide Improvements.
3. That the construction of a zebra crossing in Ware Street, Thurnham, as illustrated in Appendix C to the report of the Head of Countywide Improvements, be endorsed.
4. That subject to the balance of the scheme cost being secured, the construction of a zebra crossing in Castle Road, Allington, as illustrated in Appendix D to the report of the Head of Countywide Improvements, be endorsed.

48. HIGHWAY SERVICES UPDATE

The Board considered a report by the Interim Director of Kent Highway Services updating the position with regard to a number of highways and transport issues including the response to the adverse winter weather conditions; the use of a new carriageway repair method called 'jetpatcher' in rural and quieter areas; the introduction of the Kent Permit Scheme aimed at cutting congestion on Kent's roads by better co-ordinating

roadworks carried out by utility companies; and the extension of the Freedom Pass to allow students in years 7 to 11 to travel beyond the County boundary.

In response to comments and questions by Members, the representative of Kent Highway Services confirmed that consideration was being given to the introduction of management arrangements to enable Districts to assist with snow and ice clearance. He also explained the procedure for reporting the incidence of potholes and the arrangements in place for repairing the large number of potholes that had arisen recently.

The Chairman advised the Board that discussions were taking place regarding the role and function of Joint Transportation Boards following the dissolution of the Highways Advisory Board. He was particularly concerned about the position with regard to Pipkin.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

49. DURATION OF MEETING

5.00 p.m. to 6.50 p.m.