

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 14 OCTOBER
2020**

Present: Councillors Bird, Brindle, D Burton, Chittenden, Clark, Cooke, Cooper (Chairman), Cox, Cuming, Daley, English, Hinder, Hotson, Kimmance, Prendergast, T Sams and Wilson

Also Present: Councillor Springett

166. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Brown, Carter, Stockell and Wilby.

167. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor English was present as Substitute for Councillor Wilby.

168. URGENT ITEMS

An urgent update had been published prior to the meeting, in relation to Item 18 – Verbal Update, Progress on the Leeds/Langley Relief Road.

169. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Springett was present as a Visiting Member for Items 13 – Member Briefing – M20 Traffic Management, 17 – Verbal Update, Maidstone Integrated Transport Package, 18 – Verbal Update – Progress on the Leeds/Langley Relief Road and 19 – Verbal Update – Active Travel Schemes.

170. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

171. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Chittenden had been lobbied on Item 13 – Objections to Traffic Regulation Orders.

Councillor English had been lobbied on Item 14 – Upper Stone Street Air Quality Update.

Councillors D Burton, Cooper and English had been lobbied on Item 16 – B2246 Hermitage Lane/A26 Tonbridge Road Project.

Councillors D Burton, Clark, Cooke, Cox and Prendergast had been lobbied on Item 17 – Verbal Update – Maidstone Integrated Transport Package.

Councillors D Burton, Clark, Cooke, Cooper, Cox, Cuming, English, Kimmance, Prendergast and T Sams had been lobbied on Item 18 – Verbal Update – Progress on the Leeds/Langley Relief Road.

Councillors D Burton, Chittenden, Clark, Cooke, Cooper, Cox, Daley, English, Kimmance, Prendergast and Wilson had been lobbied on Item 19 – Verbal Update – Active Travel Schemes.

Councillor Hotson had been lobbied on all items.

172. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

173. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 JULY 2020

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed at a later date.

174. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

175. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was one question from a member of the public.

Question from Mr Christopher Webb to the Chairman of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

'Please could you explain when the 'success' and effect of the new cycle lane scheme and associated works in King Street, Maidstone, is to be reviewed in light of the traffic & safety problems that have arisen since its introduction?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

The full response was recorded on the webcast and were made available to view on the Maidstone Borough Council Website.

To access the webcast recording, please use the link below:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqyshyUssWI>

176. MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

An item would be added to the work programme that concerned a 20mph default speed limit in new housing developments.

A report on the A229 and A249 links would be presented to the Board at a later date, due to the ongoing discussions on the works conducted by Highways England. It would include comments from the public consultation process.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

177. MEMBER BRIEFING - M20 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

The Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport, Senior Highway Manager and Highways England's (HE) Head of Operational Integration gave a presentation to the Board.

The Corporate Director highlighted that the possible congestion throughout Kent depended on trader and freight readiness and the up-take of a web-portal designed to issue access permits; green for ready freight's or red for those unprepared. The work would apply to exports, as import controls were delayed until 1 July 2021. The modelling assumption provided was to prepare for up to 7,000 freight for up to two days at any given time. Five sites had been secured, with Super Development Plans provided to ensure planning regulations were obtained for the sites. Instruments for enforcement were to be reviewed shortly.

The importance of local partnerships and multi-agency co-operation was highlighted, with the draft traffic management plan having changed due to the addition of the Sevington site and removal of the M26. It was reiterated that the plan was subject to change, due to outstanding information. Concurrent emergencies were being planned for, due to the prevalence of Covid-19 and possible weather-based emergencies. The draft plans would be tested, which included compliance and enforcement plans, with local and national communication necessary.

The Senior Highway Manager outlined the plans drafted for different traffic management scenarios. From 1 January 2021, the Ebbsfleet and Sevington sites would be used as HMRS sites, with the permit system in place. Prioritised freight would be given a unique permit and be directed to use the A2, Detling Hill and follow the contraflow.

Several Members of the Board highlighted the importance of signage to prevent Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) from using and parking on ill-equipped local roads. The Corporate Director Growth, Environment and Transport referenced the compliance and enforcement plan, to confirm that HGVs would be fined for deviating from the approved route provided within the permit issued. Enforcement could be improved if KCC were informed of HGV whereabouts, with points of contact to be provided.

Central Government had been engaging with larger companies to convey the importance of the pre-approved routes, with freight readiness integral to successful traffic management. Effective national, local and partnership communication was reinforced throughout the discussion. It was confirmed that 7k vehicles was the highest holding capacity possible and that Operation STACK would be used if necessary.

The Head of Operational Integration (HE) confirmed that whilst highways work would continue to be scheduled, none would occur if there was existing traffic disruption. Minimal overnight closures could be considered. HE had a strategic signage plan in place to manage separate traffic incidents that may affect the traffic management plans.

There was concern expressed about the suitability of Detling Hill for prioritised freight, with the Senior Highways Manager confirming that Kent Police had favoured its use. In reference to comments on the shared responsibility for diversion routes, the Senior Highway Manager highlighted the creation of the Kent Corridor Co-Ordination Group.

The importance of satellite navigation system was highlighted in preventing unapproved route usage.

The Board expressed thanks for the presentation provided.

RESOLVED: That the information provided within the Member Briefing be noted.

178. OBJECTIONS TO TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS

The Operations Engineer introduced the report that would be presented to the Council's Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 18 November 2020. The Council had previously received a petition from the residents in Northdown Close to introduce waiting restrictions.

In total, proposed restrictions were advertised in 14 locations with representations received for Loose Road and Northdown Close. Of the 39 houses consulted in Northdown Close, 30 were in support of restrictions between 1-1.30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

During the formal consultation process, fourteen representations were received in support, with seven against the times proposed. The objections arose from the potential impact on residents, visitors and vehicle dispersion onto neighbouring streets. The officer stated that any vehicle dispersion would be monitored.

RESOLVED: That the proposed parking regulations for Northdown Close be proceeded.

179. UPPER STONE STREET AIR QUALITY UPDATE

The Director of Regeneration and Place introduced the report which had been presented to the Council's Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (SPI) Committee on 7 October 2020 and the five resolutions agreed. Upper Stone Street had the poorest air quality readings in the borough.

As the SPI Committee had expressed a preference for a Red Route during the July 2019 meeting, a working party between officers from KCC and the Council was created to explore its feasibility. KCC had supplied the

Council with data on the incident levels on Upper Stone Street. Whilst legally possible, the Red Route would be expensive to introduce and enforce as it would be the only Red Route within the County. The alternative option proposed would be implemented with greater ease. A specialist environmental consultancy had been commissioned to assess the benefits of introducing new green infrastructure measures.

The Board expressed support for the proposals outlined and felt that improvements would be made as a result of the actions taken.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations of the Council's Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee be noted.

180. UPDATE ON HERMITAGE LANE CYCLE FACILITY BETWEEN BARMING RAIL STATION AND MAIDSTONE HOSPITAL AND FOOTWAY-CYCLEWAY WITHIN THE WHITEPOST FIELDS DEVELOPMENT

The Programme Manager introduced the report. The Hermitage lane cycle facility was partially funded through Section 106 agreements to a total of £81.5k, with an approximate £277k overall cost. Additional sources of funding were being examined by KCC. The designs for the cycle facility were shown in the first five appendices to the report.

The facility would be 2.5 metres wide on the east side of Hermitage Lane, as the minimum sub-standard requirement. The carriageway would have to be narrowed in places, with the centre-line markings changed and a 30mph speed limit enforced where the cycle lane follows the carriageway.

The shared pedestrian/cycle facility between Barming Rail Station and the A20 would be directly implemented by the Whitepost Fields Developer.

The Board expressed concerns with the designs in relation to the sub-standard width. In response, the Programme Manager offered to liaise with Members and the interested parties to discuss the designs in greater detail. Clarification on the implementation of barriers at a certain point along the proposed cycle-lane would be provided.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted.

181. B2246 HERMITAGE LANE/A26 TONBRIDGE ROAD PROJECT

The Assistant Project Manager introduced the scheme that had been drafted by the working group in response to the previous scheme's unsuitability. The dual roundabout proposed was shown in Appendix 1 to the report and would replace the current traffic signals in operation. It was confirmed that the only land necessary for purchase was site K299483 – as shown in Appendix 2 to the report and negotiations had begun with the freeholder and leaseholder. If necessary, a compulsory purchase order would be considered if negotiations were unsuccessful.

The three-arm roundabout would be situated at the existing junction, with the third arm acting as a link road to the smaller, second roundabout on

Farleigh Lane. This roundabout would not be complete, with vehicles to complete a U-turn movement by driving round the large roundabout and turning left into Farleigh Lane. Signalised pedestrian crossings would be implemented, with the designs proposed to achieve less than a 75% degree of saturation (DoS) on all arms of the roundabout, during peak times. If unchanged, there would be queues on each arm in excess of 100 vehicles by 2031.

The Assistant Project Manager confirmed that the scheme would cost just under £3.2million, with a pinch-point bid of £2.5million submitted in addition to the £620k in Section 106 monies earmarked for the scheme. Further design work would be undertaken in order to reduce the overall cost of the scheme. Previous S106 monies had not been earmarked for this junction as there was no viable scheme available, but future S106 monies may be used. The development planning teams in Ashford had seen the proposed scheme design.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that no formal public consultation would be undertaken until the funding for the scheme was available. The pinch-point funding was provided by the Department for Transport for junctions that experienced over-capacity and high congestion.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted.

Note: Councillor Prendergast exited the meeting during this item.

182. VERBAL UPDATE - MAIDSTONE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT PACKAGE

The Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager informed the Board that the KCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport had not yet been provided with the recommendations from the previously presented Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP) report. It was expected that an update on the recommendations would be provided to the next meeting of the Board, if not sooner to the affected Ward Members.

KCC officers had engaged with the consultants to produce redesigned proposals for the Cripple Street and Boughton Lane Junctions. The Wheatsheaf Junction proposal had been updated to incorporate higher stacking capacity from the A229, travelling back up the A274.

If the proposals were approved by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, the recommendations would be presented to the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee. If approved, construction on the Coldharbour Roundabout, including the A20 Hall Road Scheme, would begin in early 2021 and last between 18-24 months.

The Loose Road Corridor works would commence in the Summer of 2021, to allow the necessary surveys to be completed prior to construction and further engagement with the local Members, residents and businesses. In relation to the A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street, works on the A249 had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The works

would start in November, with the highways works to begin in April to May 2021. Further consultation on the Ragstone Wall would occur and a planning application would be submitted to the Council. KCC would work in conjunction with the Council's Mote Park and Environmental Teams to lessen the impact of any vegetation removal. An alternative proposal to the A274 Sutton Road/Willington Street/Wallace Street junction had not been designed.

In regard to the A249 Scheme, the Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager confirmed that the future contractor would be obligated to erect signage prohibiting their vehicles from and encouraging other vehicles against using local routes to avoid traffic. An agricultural survey had been commissioned for the trees identified for removal on the Coldharbour roundabout, which highlighted the risk posed from high winds due to the likely inability to take to new positions if relocated. KCC and the Royal British Legion were in discussion to achieve the planting of 100 trees on the roundabout, with commemorative planting on the Hall Road roundabout. The potential to implement traffic signals on the Coldharbour roundabout retrospectively was highlighted.

RESOLVED: That the verbal update provided be noted.

183. VERBAL UPDATE - PROGRESS ON THE LEEDS/LANGLEY RELIEF ROAD AND URGENT UPDATE - ITEM 18 - VERBAL UPDATE, PROGRESS ON THE LEEDS/LANGLEY RELIEF ROAD

The Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager provided a verbal update to the Board and referenced the letter published as an urgent update. KCC would not progress the Leeds/Langley Relief Road as a singular scheme and would wait until such a time that the Council was able to review the area as part of its ongoing Local Plan Review process. A substantial number of houses would likely be necessary to the project's delivery.

The Interim Local Plan Review Director highlighted that several of the sites submitted along the Leeds/Langley corridor failed to progress as a garden community due to a lack of developer confidence that the necessary infrastructure support would be provided. It was confirmed that the delivery of the relief road was more likely to be considered during the next Local Plan Period. The increase in housing figures proposed under the new standard methodology was highlighted, in reference to the risk of independent infrastructure provision and development by developers. The Interim Local Plan Review Director and KCC's Principal Transport and Development Planner were meeting with developers on 15 October 2020 for further discussion.

The Head of Planning and Development stated that a strategic case for the relief road had been submitted by KCC. The impact, cost-benefit analysis and financial resources as would be included in the strategic case were highlighted.

The lack of information that had been provided to Members concerning the amount of housing, the traffic survey and modelling work previously conducted and the results detailed within a KCC report, the benefit-cost ratio and the effects on the surrounding areas were mentioned. Further requests for this information were made.

Several Members of the Board highlighted that the provision of a Relief Road had been considered for many years and felt that a more formalised approach was necessary moving forward.

RESOLVED: That

1. The letter from the KCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to the Leader of Maidstone Borough Council be acknowledged and thanks be given for the details provided; and
2. The Cabinet Member be requested to formalise the proposals within the letter by way of a Cabinet Member Decision.

184. VERBAL UPDATE - ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEMES

The Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager addressed the Board to provide an update on the Active Travel schemes in force; the pop-up cycle lane in King Street and the increased pedestrianised zone from Fremlin walk to Earl Street.

An active travel schemes email inbox had been created and was monitored daily, with ongoing communication being undertaken with businesses, transport providers and the public to amend the schemes as necessary. Usage surveys would be conducted in the near future, with the results examined in December 2020. There had been some feedback received which indicated a desire for the King Street scheme to become permanent. Additional disability parking bays would be provided within both locations due to the feedback received.

The Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager referenced the Bus Station Improvement Project to be carried out by the Council in February 2021, with discussions on how to maintain the King Street scheme during this time to take place.

The Board referenced the importance of communication with local stakeholders in improving the schemes and expressed support for the increase in disability parking bays. It was confirmed that the landing areas present within the King Street scheme and Bus Stop area would be increased in size to enable pedestrians to board and disembark from buses.

RESOLVED: That the verbal update provided be noted.

Note: Councillors Daley and Hinder exited the meeting during this item.

185. MAIDSTONE HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

186. DURATION OF MEETING

5.00 p.m. to 9.08 p.m.