

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER
2017**

Present: Councillor D Burton (Chairman) and Councillors Bird, Brown, Chittenden, Clark, Cooke, Cooper, Cuming, Daley, Garten, Hastie, Hotson, Prendergast, Springett, Mrs Stockell, Wilby and Willis

Also Present: Councillors M Burton and Lewins

17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies were received from Councillors Carter and T Sams.

18. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

19. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Lewins attended the meeting as an observer in support of the petition relating to Hermitage Lane.

Councillor M Burton attended the meeting as an observer.

20. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

21. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

It was noted that all Members were lobbied on Agenda Item 8 - the petition relating to Hermitage Lane and matters included in Agenda Item 13 - Highway Improvement Schemes Update.

22. EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

23. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 JULY 2017

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

24. PETITIONS

Mr Keith Young presented a petition to the Board with the following wording:

Hermitage Lane SOS: Action Needed Now!

The B2246, Hermitage Lane, is a vital artery for residents and is the sole access route to the Maidstone Hospital. The capacity of the road is already under severe pressure and the situation will deteriorate as further planned housing is completed.

Local residents, passing motorists and hospital users have had to put up with an unrelenting sequence of road works in Hermitage Lane causing unacceptable congestion and delays.

We therefore call upon Kent Highways:

- 1. To declare that the B2246 has now reached its absolute traffic capacity.*
- 2. To do everything within its powers to minimise the disruption caused by road works in B2246 and the surrounding area.*
- 3. To classify the B2246 as a high priority route and include it in the Kent Lane Rental Scheme with immediate effect.*
- 4. To carry out an urgent Air Quality investigation for both noxious fume and particulate levels along Hermitage Lane.*

Mr Young addressed the Board on the petition and stated that he was concerned that:

- Thousands of people were directly impacted by traffic chaos on Hermitage Lane;
- Heavy goods vehicles were ignoring the weight limit of the road;
- There was a huge impact on Maidstone Hospital, which included outpatients missing appointments because of the traffic;
- There was a huge impact on local commerce and industry due to the lost hours spent waiting in queues; and
- The situation would only get worse when the houses being built were fully occupied.

Mr Young requested a quick and integrated solution to the problem.

RESOLVED: That a report be brought back to a future meeting of this Board.

25. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions.

26. MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Board requested that a report relating to the A20 through Harrietsham be placed back on the Board's Work Programme.

RESOLVED: That the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board Work Programme be noted.

27. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH ARRIVA: CHANGES TO BUS SERVICES AND THEIR EFFECT ON RURAL AREAS

Mr Kevin Root, Arriva Maidstone General Manager, updated the Board on the implementation of new bus services in the Borough. Mr Root had first addressed the Board on this issue at the meeting held on 21 March 2017.

The Chairman informed the Board that he had received correspondence from Mr Peter Wiles, the petitioner from the meeting held on 21 March 2017, who commented on the improved service of the Number 9 (formally the Number 19) bus.

The Board noted that, since changing the practice of buses travelling across the town centre, there had been a 14% increase in buses getting to their destinations on time and a 28% decrease in lost mileage. There had also been a significant decrease in the number of customer complaints and a 3% increase in passenger numbers during the period of April to September this year.

Mr Root informed the Board that congestion in the Borough was becoming a very serious problem and causing huge unpredictability for bus services. Some services were taking 4 times longer than planned to get to their destination, even with extra time added to the schedule as a precaution.

It was noted that:

- The Number 9 bus service had seen a massive improvement;
- The changes to bus services in Bearsted had made a big difference and buses were now getting students to school on time;
- Bus timetables in the foyer of the Gateway were very useful and the Committee requested that their presence be continued and that the racks be refilled regularly;
- Electronic signs had not been in use on the main bus routes for some time, but the facility was present in some bus shelters, although the funding was not available several years ago when the shelters were updated;

In response to questions from the Board, Mr Root stated that:

- If the infrastructure was improved, more buses would be able to go to and from Langley; he welcomed any discussions or proposals on the matter.
- The Arriva UK Bus App could be used by customers to determine whether a bus was running late or cancelled using the live map which was updated frequently.

The Board expressed its thanks to Mr Root for attending the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board on both occasions and for the improvements that had been made to bus services in the Borough.

RESOLVED: That the verbal update be noted.

28. PETITION REPORT - QUEENS AVENUE, MAIDSTONE

On 21 March 2017, a petition was presented to this Board regarding traffic safety and congestion issues in Queens Avenue.

The Senior Schemes Programme Manager for KCC presented the item to the Board and informed them that Paragraph 5.2.2 of the report should have stated:

Part One Way System

This would limit the one-way operation to the section from Queens Road to approximately 30m into Queens Avenue with a build-out at the junction and no entry signs.

Advantages:

This would prevent vehicles using Queens Avenue as a cut through from Queens Road to London Road. This option would also prevent vehicles parking too close to the junction (corner protection) and improve visibility for drivers.

Disadvantages:

This may inconvenience local residents who may experience longer journey times, although less so than a full one way system. There will be more traffic using Queens Road which will increase congestion and cause additional delays at the traffic lights that cannot be fully quantified at this stage.

It should be noted that Queens Road junction would have increased traffic and the Traffic and Network Solutions Manager has confirmed that there is no scope to increase the extra green time from Queens Road as the priority would be on the A20 London Road.

Costs:

This scheme would require a legal consultation and the imposition of a Traffic Regulation Order and illuminated signs, changes to road markings and a build out at an approximate cost of £10,000 - £15,000.

The Board noted that:

- A traffic survey was undertaken in June. This indicated that traffic volumes were generally low, but that it did get busy at school times.
- There were no recorded issues found in the Personal Injury Accident data that had been analysed for Queens Avenue for the latest available three year period.
- At Paragraph 6.1 of the report, KCC Officers recommended a part one way system and corner protection to the junctions at Queens Avenue/London Road and Queens Avenue/Queens Road. However, there was currently no funding source available to progress any scheme.

In response to a question from a Member, the Senior Schemes Project Manager stated that he was unsure whether there was any scope to implement highway schemes on Queens Avenue through existing Section 278 agreements.

The Board raised concerns about the Personal Injury Accident data as it only showed accidents that involved serious injury and it was therefore not appropriate to justify the need to do works based on this data.

The Board wished to support the recommendations in Paragraph 6.1 of the report and requested that officers look into all funding options available in order that the proposed recommendations be implemented.

RESOLVED:

1. That this Board supports the recommendations in Paragraph 6.1 of the report;
2. That the scheme is placed onto a highway works programme; and
3. That all possible sources of funding be investigated.

29. **HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES UPDATE**

The Principal Transport and Development Planner for Kent County Council updated the Board on highway improvement schemes in the Borough. The Officer confirmed that further updates would be brought back to the Board as work progressed.

The Officer highlighted the following points set out in the report:

- Leeds Langley Relief Road

Work on the business case to support the Leeds Langley Relief Road was in hand;

- A274 Sutton Road/Willington Street/Wallis Avenue

Public consultation had taken place on 18 August 2017, which allowed the project team to identify the main concerns of the residents. Additional design work was being undertaken to address and mitigate these concerns where possible.

- B2246 Hermitage Lane

Junction improvements commenced at the retail park junction on 29 August 2017 and good progress had been made to date. The scheme remained on programme to be completed prior to the Christmas period.

Feasibility designs had been completed on the Fountain Lane improvements identified at the St Andrews Road and Tonbridge Road junctions.

- A20 Harrietsham

KCC had assigned the scheme to an in-house project engineer.

In response to questions from the Board, the Principal Transport and Development Planner stated that:

- Design work for the A229 corridor was continuing and that he hoped to share the proposals in the spring of next year.
- In regard to the B2246 Hermitage Lane, the County Council's consultants were looking at junctions collectively as part of a comprehensive review of improvement options.
- Work to establish the extent of modelling required for the Leeds Langley Relief Road was being progressed.

The Board expressed its thanks for the updates and looked forward to receiving further updates on all the schemes noted.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

30. MAIDSTONE HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME 2017/18

The Board considered the Maidstone Highways Works Programme 2017/18.

Councillor Clark noted that, as the housing development was no longer going ahead, the scheme at Boughton Lane on page 29 could be removed from the list.

RESOLVED: That the Maidstone Highways Works Programme 2017/18 be noted.

31. DURATION OF MEETING

5.00 p.m. to 6.50 p.m.