

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 JANUARY 2019

Present: Councillors Bird, D Burton, Chittenden, Clark, Cooke, Cox, Cuming, Daley, Mrs Gooch, Hinder, Hotson, D Mortimer, Prendergast, Spooner, Mrs Stockell, Wilby and Wilson

Also Present: Councillors McKay and Perry

70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor T Sams
- Councillor Springett
- Councillor Cooper (Chairman)
- Councillor Brown
- Councillor Fermor
- Councillor Carter

71. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that the following Substitute Members were present:

- Councillor Cox for Councillor Fermor
- Councillor Gooch for Councillor T Sams
- Councillor Spooner for Councillor Springett

72. AMENDMENT TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

It was explained that Item 12. Verbal Update – Operation Brock, Smart Motorway Work and Future Management of M20 Closures overlapped with Item 14. Verbal Update – M26/M20 Traffic Congestion. It was therefore appropriate to consider these items consecutively.

RESOLVED: That Item 14. Verbal Update – M26/M20 Traffic Congestion was to be discussed before Item 13. Verbal Update – KCC Big Conversation.

73. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

74. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor McKay was present as a Visiting Member, and indicated that he wished to speak on Item 15. Verbal Update - Bridges Gyrotory - Performance Review.

It was noted that Councillor Perry was present as a Visiting Member, but did not register to speak.

75. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

76. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Gooch stated that she had been lobbied on Item 16. Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP).

Councillors Spooner and Cuming stated that they had been lobbied on Item 19. Highway and Pedestrian Safety - Roundwell, Bearsted.

77. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

78. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 OCTOBER 2018

The Board commented that there was an omission regarding Item 60. Maidstone Joint Transportation Board Work Programme. The Board had requested that a response to the B2246 Hermitage Lane Petition was added to the Work Programme.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the following addition to Item 60. Maidstone Joint Transportation Board Work Programme:

"It was requested that an update on the B2246 Hermitage Lane Petition be added to the Work Programme."

79. PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

80. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)

There were no questions from members of the public.

81. MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

It was suggested that the description of Item 7. Re-submission of the proposals for improvements to the Sutton Road/Willington Street junction be updated. This was to clarify that Councillor Chittenden had requested that the topic be considered by the Board as soon as possible, and not that he had requested amendments to the original scheme.

The Board noted that Item 8. Proposed Improvements to A229/A249 links between the M2/A2 and M20 Corridors lacked a defined timeframe for the topic to be considered by the Board. The Board stated that it was important to consider this promptly, in light of plans for the Lower Thames Crossing and proposals for improvements to the M2 Junction 5.

The Board requested that an item regarding "Hermitage Lane Capacity" be added to the Work Programme.

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

82. VERBAL UPDATE - OPERATION BROCK, SMART MOTORWAY WORK AND FUTURE MANAGEMENT OF M20 CLOSURES

Mr John Kerner, Special Projects Director (Highways England), detailed that Operation Brock was a multi-agency operation which encompassed the M20, M26 and Manston Airport. This operation was organised by the Kent Resilience Forum, which comprised of organisations such as Kent Police, Highways England, Kent County Council and the Department for Transport. Mr Kerner explained the Kent Corridor Coordination Group had been established to address concerns relating to Operation Brock. The Board were encouraged to raise concerns with the Kent Corridor Coordination Group to ensure these were considered in a joined up manner.

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

- Avoiding closures to Junction 8 and 9 of the M20 was a key planning consideration for Operation Brock. Furthermore, the plans ensured that there would be a negligible impact to Junction 7.
- Improved visibility of signage had led to an increased number of road users complying with diversions arising from closures to Junction 7 to Junction 6 and improvements to Junction 10A of the M20. Highways England were, however, reliant on organisations such as Kent Police and Kent County Council for enforcement matters once vehicles left the Highways England network.
- Collaborative work had taken place, via the Kent Corridor Coordination Group, to ensure for the effective use of traffic management signage. Adherence to diversions was, however,

reliant on effective communication and the promotion of behavioural change.

- Work had been undertaken, where appropriate, to increase the speed limit from 50 mph to 60 mph where road works were present. This aimed to minimise instances of the carriageway being blocked by speed-restricted Heavy Goods Vehicles slowly overtaking other vehicles.
- A number of sites had been considered as potential lorry parks. The shortlisted sites, however, could not be shared until they been ratified by Highways England. This process had been delayed following a change in shortlisting requirements.
- When Operation Brock was "active", appropriate control measures would be implemented to ensure for the safety of road users.
- Following the public information events in the summer of 2018, stakeholder engagement would continue, and representatives were to attend public meetings, subject to availability.

The Board commented that attention needed to be given to ensuring that drivers had access to facilities, food and water. Consideration of the waste left behind by drivers was a further key consideration.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

83. VERBAL UPDATE - M26/M20 TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Mrs Susan Laporte, District Manager, Maidstone (Kent County Council), stated that Officers had liaised with Highways England to minimise traffic congestion as a result of planned closures. Furthermore, Mr Simon Jones, Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste (Kent County Council) had contacted Officers at Highways England to ensure that congestion was minimised and that the night-time closures were effectively managed. In Bearsted, Highways England had agreed not to use New Cut Road as a diversion route, with traffic signage instead following the main A249 Sittingbourne Road.

The Board commented that there was excessive traffic on New Cut Road. This prevented drivers from easily exiting residential estates.

Mrs Laporte advised that the Kent Corridor Coordination Group would consider the issue of New Cut Road on 22 January 2019, and further information was to be shared with the Board.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

84. VERBAL UPDATE - KCC BIG CONVERSATION

Mrs Laporte informed the Board that the rural transport pilot schemes had generally been well received. Officers were investigating the feasibility of

changes to improve the scheme, following suggestions made by the Working Group. The improvements included the creation of feeder services to connect Hollingbourne, Leeds, Langley, Grafty Green, Kingswood, Ulcombe and Chart Sutton with the commercial network at Park Wood, rather than providing a direct connection to the Town Centre. A draft timetable and route had been devised, while plans to improve the infrastructure at Park Wood Morrisons had been considered. The key advantages included a higher frequency service and greater journey opportunities, however, this required the use of connections. School journeys were unaffected by the changes. A consultation process was due to be undertaken to ensure stakeholders had the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes. A dedicated email address had been set up to enable residents to communicate directly with Kent County Council on this matter.

In response to questions from the Board, Mrs Laporte stated that a quarterly review of the pilot was scheduled, and that there were opportunities for refinement as part of the review.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

85. VERBAL UPDATE - BRIDGES GYRATORY - PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Mr Russell Boorman, Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager (Kent County Council), informed the Board that the Bridges Gyratory – Performance Review report was not yet ready to be presented to the Board. Mr Boorman explained that, as a result of the A26 sinkhole, data collection at the site had not been possible. It had been agreed with the Chairman, however, that a report would be ready for the next Board meeting on 17 April 2019.

Councillor McKay spoke as a Visiting Member on this item.

Mr Boorman stated that the future report would include performance information regarding pedestrians and cyclists.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

86. MAIDSTONE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT PACKAGE (MITP)

Mr Boorman updated the Board on the progress of the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP). Mr Boorman highlighted that good progress had been made on a number of projects, however, there were issues with the A20 Coldharbour Roundabout and B2246 Hermitage Lane schemes. A conversation with the Secretary of State was due to take place in January 2019 to resolve an overage issue with the A20 Coldharbour Roundabout, while the B2246 Hermitage Land had been postponed as it did not demonstrate a satisfactory cost-benefit ratio. Further time was needed to devise a scheme that met the needs of stakeholders while also adhering to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) criteria. Alternative opportunities had been explored should issues remain unresolved. Mr Boorman explained that the

business cases had been completed, however, these had not been submitted to SELEP in November 2018. Instead, the business cases were to be combined into a Phase 3 Business Case. This was judged to better present the qualitative and quantitative benefits of the schemes. This would be submitted in February 2019, with a funding decision made by SELEP between March and April 2019. Members and the Board were to be updated with the risks associated with the projects at regular intervals.

The Board commented that:

- The capacity to deliver highways works was significantly impacted by housing developments being completed before supporting infrastructure was ready.
- The removal of traffic lights at the B2246 Hermitage Lane site meant that there were safety considerations for pedestrians and cyclists crossing the road.
- The report demonstrated that progress had been made since the previous Board meeting, however, it was regrettable that the schemes had taken so long to reach this stage.
- It was crucial for basic elements of the Hermitage Lane scheme, such as pedestrian crossings, to be delivered.

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

- Despite the postponement to the B2246 Hermitage Lane project, the scheme was still deliverable within the required timeframes.
- The B2246 Hermitage Lane scheme needed to demonstrate value for money to remain a part of the SELEP programme. If this was removed from the programme, then other funding streams could potentially be identified to deliver the work.
- Until the business cases were evaluated and a decision was made by SELEP, the £8.9m funding could potentially be lost. £8.9m of funding had, however, been reserved for the schemes.
- A mitigation scheme at Hall Road, which was estimated to cost £1.7m, had been identified.
- A benefit-cost ratio was the only approach that could be used for the SELEP business cases. The mechanisms underpinning the formula were to be shared with Members outside of the meeting.

Mr Tim Read, Head of Transportation (Kent County Council), stated that the approach to the business cases was designed to ensure that the right work was undertaken first time. This would avoid incremental changes being made to roads, and ultimately reduce the impact of the works on road users.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Note: Councillors Wilson and Gooch left the meeting during consideration of this item.

87. A249 BEARSTED ROAD MAIDSTONE MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT

Mr Boorman informed the Board that a total investment of £11.4m had been secured for the project. Data collection showed that at peak times, there were in excess of 4000 vehicles using the road. A detailed design had been completed in December 2018, and the tender process was on track to award a contract by May 2019. Extensive engagement had been undertaken, and feedback had been incorporated into the design work. A design proposal for the signalisation of the M20 Junction 7 had been submitted to Highways England, however, this had been unsuccessful as the funding was withdrawn by central government. Other streams of funding were now being pursued for this work. In order to maximise awareness of the work, information had been shared using channels such as radio, local newspapers, social media and engagement with local groups.

The Board commented that when the scheme was first designed, there was no indication that two new schools, with entrances located on Bearsted Road, were to be proposed.

Mr Boorman stated that:

- Work was being undertaken to ensure that the proposals would incorporate the impact of the two new schools.
- The decision to signalise roundabouts was made on a site by site basis, and considered the demand and usage of the site.
- All projects were subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment, which covered the surrounding areas. This did not consider the potential for traffic to move elsewhere. Traffic Assessments had, however, been completed.
- Improvements to the M20 Junction 7 may not be carried out as part of the scheme, as it required funding that had not yet been secured.

The Board noted that a briefing was to take place once the construction plans were available.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

88. ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EV) CHARGING POINTS

Mrs Tay Arnold, Planning Projects and Delivery Manager, outlined that the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) and Low Emissions Strategy both aimed to improve air quality. Further to this, Maidstone

Borough Council (MBC) actively promoted the incorporation of electric vehicle charging units on new housing developments, while Kent County Council were drafting an Electric Vehicle Strategy. Mrs Arnold stated that Maidstone Borough Council Parking Services had engaged with electric vehicle users to ensure that activity was aligned to customer expectations. Efficient sites had been identified based on location and cost, however, significant work to update infrastructure was required. Following the completion of market testing and agreement of the operational model, the procurement and leasing of eight electric vehicle charging units would commence. These would be located in MBC owned car parks. The Board were to be updated on this work at a later date to ensure that Members were aware of the progress made.

The Board commented that MBC had demonstrated significant progress with regards to the usage of electric vehicles. It was important, however, to recognise that the technology was evolving at a rapid rate and plans would need to reflect this.

RESOLVED: That the progress to date regarding Electric Vehicles be noted.

89. HIGHWAY AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY - ROUNDWELL, BEARSTED

Mr Brendan Wright, Principal Transport and Development Planner (Kent County Council), stated that Roundwell did not currently require intervention in the form of highway safety measures, as there was no pre-existing pattern of recorded crashes. Outline planning permission for a development of 100 dwellings was granted in March 2018, and the conditions required the developer to implement works to address the issues of pedestrian safety and speed reduction raised by the Board. The developer had been made aware that safety audits were required as part of the technical approval process for the development.

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

- It was not possible to demand that a safety audit be conducted on the internal estate roads within the development, as they were not being offered for adoption as publicly maintainable highways.
- Pedestrian crossing facilities were included in the required works that was required from the developer, and this was considered at the time of the planning application. The developer was in the process of preparing a detailed package of works, which were to be reviewed and modified, as appropriate.
- The developer could be requested to conduct a speed survey as part of the safety audit, as the current data was from 2014 and traffic had changed significantly in this time.

RESOLVED: That

1. The report be noted.

2. The Board requests that the off-site works already secured in support of the Barty Farm development be taken forward as a means of improving pedestrian safety and reducing traffic speeds on Roundwell.

90. MAIDSTONE HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME

The Board commented that, in addition to the re-lining work outlined in the report, the Cripple Street hatched yellow junction needed refreshing.

In response to a question from the Board, Mrs Laporte stated that the criteria for prioritising works was to be shared with the Board outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Maidstone Highway Works Programme be noted.

91. DURATION OF MEETING

5.00 p.m. to 8.02 p.m.