

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 21 JANUARY
2015**

Present: Councillor Mrs Stockell (Chairman), and
Councillors Ash, Bird, Brown, Burton, Carter,
Chittenden, Clark, Cooke, Cuming, Daley, English,
Fissenden, Moriarty, Powell and Mrs Wilson

Also Present: Councillors Mrs Blackmore, McKay,
D Mortimer and Round

37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ells, Hotson, JA Wilson and Mrs Whittle.

38. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitute Members were noted:

Councillor Powell for Councillor Ells

39. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillors McKay, Mrs Blackmore, and Round were in attendance as visiting Members.

It was noted that Councillor D Mortimer was in attendance and indicated a wish to speak on the objectives of the SMART Update Report under item 8 – Questions/Statements from members of the Public.

40. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

41. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

42. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2014

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 October 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed.

43. PETITIONS

Mr Bill Houston presented a petition requesting the immediate removal of parking restrictions imposed on Worcester Road on 26 May 2014, and explained to the Board that the 103 signatures were gained from residents across 86 homes. Mr Houston stated that the fines issues to residents and visitors was felt to be disproportionate to the scale of the problem, and that whilst removal of the restriction would allow verge parking, this would give peace of mind to residents as it would allow greater access to wider vehicles such as those used by the emergency services. Members were asked to consider other methods to improve parking in this area and to undertake further consultation with residents before the implementation of restrictions.

The petition was referred to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development.

44. QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Sean Carter and Councillor D Mortimer addressed the Board regarding the objectives of the SMART Update Report, and explained that SMART represented several groups in north Loose and surrounding areas. It was explained that research had been undertaken into air quality, volumes of traffic and congestion, and that the full report would be issued on 12 March 2015.

Councillor Cheryl Taylor-Maggio of Langley Parish Council addressed the Board with regard to item 13 – Transport Strategy Progress, and expressed concerns that a new road through Langley may trigger development which would impact on the infrastructure of the area and provision of utilities such as sewerage.

45. REPORT OF THE KCC HEAD OF TRANSPORTATION - UPDATE ON PETITION TO EXTEND THE 30MPH SPEED LIMIT ON THE A274 AT HEADCORN

Richard Emmett, the District Manager for Maidstone at Kent County Council Highways and Transportation, provided an update on the petition received to extend the 30mph speed limit on the A274 at Headcorn, to include the Stonestile Road crossroads and Headcorn Business Park at Barradale Farm.

The Board heard that current vehicle speeds from existing speed data were found to be in excess of the 30mph posted speed limit and very close to 40mph. Based on this and the likelihood that any reduced speed limit would largely not be complied with, as well as the sound safety reasons for not imposing an artificially low speed limit, the KCC Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation and Waste responded declining the request.

Following this decision a site meeting was held between the lead petitioner Cllr Round (MBC), the KCC Cabinet Member Mr Brazier, local interested residents, and KCC Highways. The meeting resolved that further investigation would be undertaken with a view to reviewing the previous decision based on current accurate speed data being available. This data

once collected would be presented to a future meeting of the Board. Kent Police were consulted and stated that based on previously recorded speeds they would object a proposed extensions of the 30mph limit on the basis that it would result in an unrealistic expectation of enforcement.

In her absence Councillor Mrs Whittle had provided a written statement to the Chairman confirming that she had been in attendance at the Headcorn site visit, and wishing this to be recorded.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

46. **REPORT OF THE KCC HEAD OF TRANSPORTATION - UPDATE ON PETITION TO REDUCE THE EXISTING SPEED LIMIT ON THE A20 ASHFORD ROAD, LENHAM TO 40MPH**

The KCC Manager for Maidstone at Kent Highways and Transportation presented an update report on the petition received to reduce the exiting speed limit on the A20 Ashford Road, Lenham to 40mph and on Faversham Road to 30mph.

It was explained that there had been a number of recent planning applications made on sites adjacent to and accessed from the A20 Ashford Road. If successful these would alter the characteristics of Ashford Road, which had little housing directly fronting the road with the exception of the properties near the Faversham Road junction. As a statutory consultee to the planning process, Kent County Council had requested that as part of these developments the current national limit on the A20 is reduced to 50mph which is supported by recent speed data. An artificially low speed limit could lead to additional overtaking manoeuvres and could be counterproductive in terms of road safety making a 40mph limit inappropriate.

The junctions of Faversham road had also been identified as part of a yearly review of crash cluster sites. The site was to be looked at in conjunction with Kent Police in a review that was scheduled to take place in the subsequent weeks, and engineering measures to address these crashes would be considered where appropriate. With regards to Faversham Road, the level of development would not currently support the introduction of a lower speed limit.

In response to questions Mr Emmett confirmed that an interim update on the review would be provided to the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That an interim update on the review of crash cluster sites pertaining to the junction of Faversham Road be provided to the April meeting of the Board.

47. REPORT OF THE KCC HEAD OF TRANSPORTATION - HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME 2014/15

Mr Emmett, the KCC Manager (Maidstone) for Highways and Transportation, presented the Highways Works Programme 2014/15 which updated Members on the progress of Footway and Carriageway Improvement Schemes, Street Lighting, Traffic Systems, Bridge Works and Drainage Repairs and Improvements.

It was noted that some of the information referred to schemes completed in 2013. This was clarified as an admin error.

The following matters were discussed:

- There had been an increase in burglary committed during the daytime hours, which a Member enquired whether this could be put down to street lighting switching on later in the evening during the winter months. Structural testing of street lights also removed some from operation.
- Members noted the cost efficiency of using LED lights in street lighting and asked if the intention was for all units in need of repairs to receive these automatically, and whether this would allow lighting at night time hours in the future. Mr Emmett advised that although the LED lights once in place were cost efficient, the purchase and implementation of LED lighting incurred a cost, and that a bid put forward to central Government for funding to replace all units with LED was yet to receive a decision.
- It was raised that when members of the Public reported a faulty street light, they were requested to provide exact details of the location which they may be unable to provide. Mr Emmett said that clarification on the procedure and the necessity of location details would be provided to the next meeting of the Board.
- The footpath from Tudor Park to junction 8 would be complete by the end of the financial year.
- The re-camber and site of gully work on the area of flood caused by surface run off at Loose Road and Wheatsheaf Close had been handed over to Amey to be carried out but the start date for this work was yet to be confirmed.
- The notices of parking restrictions posted on lampposts on Maxwell Drive in Allington prevent verge parking. However there had since been replacement of lamp columns and the notices had not been reattached, causing confusion as to the status of enforcement of the restrictions. Mr Emmett reassured Members that these would be replaced.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a report on street lighting be produced by the KCC relevant officer for the April meeting of the Board containing:
 - a. An update on the schedule for structural testing;
 - b. Clarification on the bid to central Government for funding to replace the current lighting with LED; and
 - c. The relevance of clarifying the exact positioning of reported lights by members of the public.
3. That an update on the date of the re-camber and site of gully work to be undertaken by Amey on the area of surface run off at Loose Road and Wheatsheaf Road be provided to the Board when confirmed.
4. That for clarity an additional column be added to future Highways Works Programme reports to define the programmed and completed dates for works to be undertaken.

48. REPORT OF THE KCC HEAD OF TRANSPORTATION - HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

The Manager for Maidstone at Kent County Council Highways and Transportation provided a report on the progress of traffic and safety schemes currently being progressed.

Members were advised that:

- The A229 Running Horse Roundabout scheme continued to be monitored and minor amendments had been proposed. The work to alter the road markings was weather dependant but it was intended that this be carried out in the subsequent weeks.
- A scheme had been developed for A229 Stile Bridge to Knoxbridge which included improved direction signage, high friction surfacing and improved cats-eyes, as well as substantial vegetation removal, all of which except the large advanced signage had been completed.
- Work on the previously identified Crash Remedial sites was largely completed with signage works at B2163 Penfold Hill, Leeds and A20 Roundwell, Bearsted still outstanding. Work had also commenced on the identification of future sites requiring intervention.

During discussion it was noted that:

- The data contained in the report was historical, and that this type of information could prove useful as a reminder of jobs requiring updates.
- The fee for Officers to attend site visits still applied. Clarification was requested on whether this would continue to apply under combined grants.
- The KCC Member for Maidstone North East advised the Board that additional work had been undertaken that was not referenced in this report, and requested that this be detailed in the next report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That further clarification on the status of site visit fees for the allocation of combined grants be provided at the April meeting of the Board.
3. That the additional schemes programmed by the KCC Member for Maidstone North East be included in the next Highways Improvement Schemes Report.

49. REPORT OF THE KCC HEAD OF TRANSPORTATION - TRANSPORT STRATEGY PROGRESS

The KCC Strategic Transport Planner, Peter Rosevear, reported on the progress towards a transport strategy to support the Local Plan, following on from the Transport Workshop that was held in December.

The Board was advised that:

- The presentation made by Amey at the Workshop has indicated that the road network would come under increasing pressure from substantial additional demand for journeys as development proceeded into the future. By the end of the Local Plan period the results were showing an increased demand for travel of 17-18% in both peak hours.
- With the implementation of a full package of capacity improvement schemes, the projected increase in total journey time across the network was calculated as a 25% increase in the morning peak (8-9 a.m.) and a 34% increase in the evening (5-6 p.m.)
- The reduction in resilience created by the increases would entail a greater impact on congestion should any incident - such as breakdowns and road works - occur.
- It was suggested that two new model runs be undertaken. The first would be based upon the current Local Plan development

expectations supported by the package of capacity improvements. This would include sustainable transport improvements but not the Leeds Langley Bypass. The second would be a KCC specified run which would assess suggested alternative development scenarios and transport improvements.

- The results of the first of these would be available in February. There was an opportunity for another informal workshop to be held for Members to discuss the outcome.

Discussion included the following points, among others:

- The modelling to date had been undertaken on urban areas and was strategic. Rural areas would be included within smaller level modelling on specific junctions. The MBC Head of Planning and Development confirmed that VISIN modelling had been undertaken on three junctions in Coxheath and two in Staplehurst, with both sets of findings being available from February 2015. The same modelling could be undertaken for Headcorn due to an increase in applications for this area. The primary reason for undertaking VISIN modelling was to provide a firm foundation when dealing with applications, and to clarify the impact of housing numbers on congestion, as and when planning decisions are required to be made. It was clarified that VISIN modelling was conducted at a strategic level.
- The Amey modelling work concentrated on producing headline results which will be available as soon as completed. Three models had been undertaken: base model, do-minimum, and do-something which included the proposed package of measures. There would then be a choice between asking Amey to produce all documentation or the modelling of other options. As MBC had chosen a detailed dispersed route which incorporated relatively small sites it would require detailed modelling. It was suggested that MBC Officers and Members may wish to produce a list of questions that they would like the modelling to address. Members expressed an interest in viewing the validation report for the base model.
- Reports to Planning Committee invited responses to applications from statutory organisations, one of which being KCC Highways. It was requested that further detail from these organisations would benefit the consideration of applications in areas where highways difficulties were foreseen, and that this might be assisted by Officers being provided with the modelling that was being undertaken. It was also noted that it was essential to get further detail on the do-minimum position, to allow developers to undertake their own modelling and utilise the detail already produced.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 agreements provided funding for highway improvements, however Members raised the concern that more properties had to be built in order for these funds to be raised, which had the potential to further add to future congestion. The Local Growth Fund had been accessed which

would make the package of measures proposed affordable should the maximum grant be given.

- The Planning Inspectorate would require evidence to make decisions, and modelling would provide information regarding potential constraints on housing numbers. It was posited that the main constraint was securing funding for the schemes and that greater detail on costs and availability of funding was essential.

It was queried whether highway developments would have a knock-on effect on areas where there was no development. Mr Rosevear advised that the dispersed growth route avoids the exacerbation of town centre congestion which may impact on other areas. This would need to be expressed and addressed through modelling

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the following documents be circulated to Members of the Board:
 - a. Presentations delivered by Amey and KCC Officers to the December workshop
 - b. The validation report for the base model
3. That further details on the cost of schemes and the availability of funding be provided when available.

50. **REPORT OF THE KCC HEAD OF PROGRAMMED WORKS - HIGHWAY DRAINAGE**

Mr Emmett provided the Board with an update on the approach to maintaining and improving the highway drainage system and ensuring providing customers with a quality service against a background of increasing severe weather events, originally reported to the KCC Environment and Transport cabinet Committee on 5 December 2014.

It was explained that:

- The County Council was responsible for the maintenance of the 5400 miles of public highway roads including 250,000 roadside drains (gullies) and associated drainage systems.
- The primary objectives of the highway drainage system were the removal of surface water from the carriageway, effective sub-surface drainage, and minimisation of impact of highway surface water on adjacent environment including properties.

- In the last 12 months, around 10,000 enquiries related to drainage and flooding have been received. Of these, 3000 were related directly to highway flooding and 500 to incidents of highway flooding that had resulted in damage to private properties.
- The allocated budget for highway drainage cleansing was £2,408,300, reflecting a saving of £300,000 made as part of the wider Highway, Transportation and Waste efficiencies for 2014/15.

It was noted that Amey had been working together with Southern Water to address waste water concerns that had particularly affected south Maidstone. Southern Water were looking into replacing pumps and manhole covers. I was also clarified that they were not a statutory consultee on planning applications.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

51. DURATION OF MEETING

5.07 p.m. to 7.04 p.m.