

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 JULY
2015

Present: Councillor Burton (Chairman), and
Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Carter, Clark, Cooke,
Cuming, Daley, English, Fort, Hotson, Mrs Robertson,
T Sams, Springett, Mrs Stockell, Vizzard, Mrs Whittle,
Willis and Mrs Wilson

Also Present: Councillors English, Mrs Gooch, Newton,
Mrs Ring, Mrs Robertson, and Sargeant.

70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ash, Bird, Harwood and J.A. Wilson.

71. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:

Councillor Mrs Blackmore for Councillor JA Wilson
Councillor Mrs Springett for Councillor Ash
Councillor Mrs Wilson for Councillor Harwood

Councillor English informed the Chairman of his intention to substitute for Councillor Willis at a later stage in the meeting.

72. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated, that in his opinion, the following late enquiries should be taken as Urgent Items, and verbal updates provided, due to the length of time until the next meeting:

- An update on the Worcester Road Petition;
- The Bridge Gyrotory Widening Scheme;
- A letter from the residents of Shepway North Ward in relation to a 17 tonne HGV limit; and
- Urgent update report to item 10, Report of Head of Planning and Development - Results of the VISUM Transport Modelling.

It was stated that verbal updates would be taken following Item 9, Questions/Statements by members of the public.

73. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

The following members were in attendance as observers and reserved the right to speak on any item on the agenda:

Councillor English,
Councillor Mrs Gooch,
Councillor Newton,
Councillor Mrs Ring,
Councillor Mrs Robertson, and
Councillor Sargent.

74. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by members or officers.

75. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

It was noted that all members of the Board had been lobbied on item 10, Report of Head of Planning and Development - Results of the VISUM Transport Modelling.

76. 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.

77. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 APRIL 2015

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed.

78. PETITIONS

Mrs Claire Brown presented the petition in the following terms:

We, the undersigned petitioners, and parents/governors of St Margaret's Collier Street School do hereby petition Kent County Council (KCC) to install adequate signage and road traffic calming measures to warn drivers of the presence of children crossing during school hours.

Parents, staff and governors are concerned about the number of speeding vehicles along Collier Street (B2612) and the junction with Green Lane, where the school is situated. There have been several near misses involving young children crossing the road to and from the car park during school hours. Adequate signage, reducing the speed limit, a zebra crossing and other appropriate traffic calming measures will help to address these issues and prevent a serious road traffic accident involving young children.

It was clarified during the course of the discussion that there had been no fatalities but a number of near misses had been recorded. Further funding was sought in order to implement the measures suggested. The petition was given the full support of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the petition be accepted with the full support of the Board.

79. QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Ms Lizzie Hare asked the following question of the Committee:

I am aware of a disabled person with breathing difficulties affected by pollution in Hermitage Lane. The pollution is measured from the Wateringbury side of the Tonbridge Road and not Hermitage Lane where the problem is, why is this?

Steve Clarke, Principal Planning Officer, provided an initial response stating that Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) monitored pollution at the junction of Fountain Lane on Tonbridge Road as there was significant residential development near the highway, whereas Hermitage Lane currently had less residential development. As residential development came forward on Hermitage Lane monitoring points could be reassessed.

RESOLVED: That a report be brought to the Committee's next meeting by the Environmental Health Shared Services.

80. VERBAL UPDATES

Jeff Kitson, Parking Services Manager at MBC, provided the Board with an update on the Worcester Road petition. He informed the Board that all residents had been written to, and could confirm that there had been forty five replies. He reported a mixed response but the consensus was to keep verge parking in place. He confirmed that a formal response would be made to the petitioners.

Richard Emmett, the District Manager (Maidstone) KCC Highways, Transportation & Waste responded to an enquiry made on the Bridge Gyratory Widening Scheme, making the following points:

- The Maidstone Bridges Gyratory scheme formed part of the South East Local Partnership (SELEP) programme of works;
- KCC has been successful in securing funding to deliver the scheme in early 2016 combined with a sizeable investment from MBC;
- Engagement with local groups had commenced with a communications plan being developed with MBC;
- MBC were fully involved with the project and contributed to the scheme on a regular basis; and
- Further engagement would continue with the local community in the near future.

The following formed the progress update:

Outline Design	Completed May 2015
Detailed Design	On-going until September 2015
Tender process	October 2015 – December 2015
Contract award	January 2016
Vegetation Clearance	January 2016 – March 2016
Utility Pre-contract works	January 2016 – March 2016
Main contract works	May 2016 – September 2016

The following points were made during the course of the discussion

- MBC officers were consulted throughout the design process;
- The scheme sign off would be a joint process with MBC and KCC; and
- A report should be brought back to the Committee which made provisions for facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, planting to combat pollution and other associated improvements as part of the scheme.

The Chairman accepted a letter from the residents of Shepway North Ward in relation to Willington Street on behalf of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the updates be noted and a report on the Bridge Gyratory Scheme be brought to the next available meeting.

81. AMENDMENT TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED: That item 10, Report of Head of Planning and Development - Results of the VISUM Transport Modelling, be taken as the last item on the agenda.

82. REPORT OF KCC HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORTATION AND WASTE - HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME 2015/16

Michael Heath, KCC Traffic Engineer provided an overview of the Highway Works Programme 2015/16 report.

The report provided an update and summarised the following schemes that had been programmed for delivery in 2015/16:

Footway and Carriageway Improvement Schemes

- Drainage Repairs and Improvement; and
- Street Lighting.

Transport and Safety Schemes

- Casualty Reduction Measures; and
- Integrated Transport Schemes.

Developer Funder Works

- Bridge Works;
- Traffic Systems; and
- Combined Member Fund.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

83. REPORT OF KCC HEAD OF TRANSPORTATION - MARDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Michael Heath, KCC Traffic Engineer, provided an overview of the report into the recent incident at Marden Primary School which had been requested at the last meeting, including a progress report on Highways activities undertaken with regard to Marden Primary School.

It was highlighted during the course of the discussion that the timing of the crash, at approximately 7.36am, may have prevented a much more serious incident occurring. The proposed 20 mph speed limit was deemed sensible and its implementation supported by members.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

84. REPORT OF KCC HEAD OF TRANSPORTATION - PETITIONS REPORT - HEADCORN ROAD WEIGHT RESTRICTION

Michael Heath, KCC Traffic Engineer, provided an overview of the report which was to update the Board on the progress on a petition to introduce a 7.5t Weight Restriction on Headcorn Road. The report recommended that a Weight Restriction was not implemented given the good safety record and fact that HGV vehicles observed were legitimately accessing premises in the area.

It was highlighted by members during the course of the discussion that Headcorn Road was being used as a shortcut to the station as rail improvements were being made.

It was noted that there was an increase in traffic road users trying to avoid Operation Stack.

It was requested that a verbal update report on the lessons learned from the recent effect of Operation Stack be given at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That

1. The report be noted; and

2. A verbal update be given at the next meeting on the lessons learned from Operation Stack.

85. REPORT OF KCC HEAD OF TRANSPORTATION - PETITIONS REPORT - HERMITAGE LANE JUNCTION WITH FOUNTAIN LANE

Michael Heath, KCC Traffic Engineer, provided an overview of the report which was to update the Board on the progress of a petition in relation to increased development along the Hermitage Lane Corridor. The petition contained a number of elements relating to planning matters. The report presented dealt solely with the request for improved pedestrian crossing facilities at Hermitage Lane junction with Fountain Lane.

The report concluded that the safety of pedestrians at this busy junction had been raised many times; however solutions had not been possible within the existing infrastructure. An upgrade would be costly in terms of civil engineering and modelling.

It was confirmed that a bid for funding had been made through the Local Transport Plan to upgrade the crossing, replace the controller and improve pedestrian facilities.

The availability of S106 monies was considered during the course of the discussion and possible uses for it. It was confirmed by the Head of Planning and Development at MBC that a S106 officer and assistant had been appointed and Board members were welcome to access the information available via this means.

It was agreed that Ward Members should pursue individual matters outside the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

86. REPORT OF KCC HEAD OF TRANSPORTATION - PETITIONS REPORT - LEAFY LANE

Michael Heath, KCC Traffic Engineer, provided an overview of the progress report on a petition to introduce a formal Zebra crossing at Leafy Lane.

Members heard that Leafy Lane was the sole means of access to Brunswick House Primary School. Problems occurred when parents parked on double yellow lines or the School's keep clear markings.

The School had taken steps to engage with parents, promoting safer parking practices and had a system in place to combat the issues.

The report concluded that a Zebra crossing was likely to be more respected than the existing yellow lines and a bid for funding from the Local Transport Plan budget had been submitted.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

87. REPORT OF KCC HEAD OF TRANSPORTATION, PETITIONS REPORT - B2010 AND B2163 EAST AND WEST FARLEIGH

Michael Heath, KCC Traffic Engineer provided an overview of the progress report on a petition to reduce the existing speed limits on the B2010 and B2163 through East Farleigh and West Farleigh.

The Board had recommended that KCC implemented a 30mph speed limit for the B2010 and B2163 between the existing 30mph limit in East Farleigh and the start of the existing 30mph limit at Yalding.

It was reported that a pragmatic approach had been taken in moving this forward, with the lead petitioner contacting the Local Member for the area who had previously agreed to part fund the scheme from her combined Members Grant. The Cabinet Member for Highways had been consulted and agreed that statutory consultation should proceed. The speed limit would be advertised for consultation in line with the previously submitted report to the April meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

88. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned from 6.20pm to 6.32pm.

89. REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - RESULTS OF THE VISUM TRANSPORT MODELLING

Officers from MBC and KCC provided an overview of the results of the VISUM transport modelling report. The Board then considered a presentation from AMEY which set out three options that would form the basis of Maidstone's Integrated Transport Strategy. They considered Do Something 1, Do Something 2 and Do Something 3 (DS1, DS2 and DS3) and the correlation between housing targets against the three options

Councillor Mrs Ring, Visiting Member, addressed the Committee. She advocated the need for a relief road, citing traffic issues on Willington Street and Parkwood Estate roads. She voiced her reticence at encouraging a modal shift with elderly residents, explaining how walking and cycling presented a challenge for the aging population.

The Head of Planning and Development at MBC explained the emphasis placed on sustainable transport in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guidance and how this would be taken into account when transport policies were considered by an Inspector.

Affordability and funding opportunities were considered as part of the discussion, particularly in relation to key junction and road capacity

improvements and the inclusion of a new relief road subject to cost/benefit analysis and an environmental impact assessment.

Consideration was given to the following during the course of the discussion:

- A modal shift within urban areas. This was thought to be less achievable in rural areas; and
- The sustainability of the Park and Ride was considered in terms of the subsidy paid by the council, and conversely the option of replacement bus services that would be based on a commercial need, otherwise this too would incur a subsidy.

It was clarified that, with reference to sustainable transport and achieving a modal shift in rural areas, the focus would be on Rural Service Centres that had train stations where cycling to the station could be encouraged, and car parks made larger at stations to allow a bus service to come in and out. This would achieve a modal shift. It was explained that commercial opportunities for bus companies lay with services provided for school children and commuters.

A consensus was reached by the Board on the following which formed the basis of its recommendation to the appropriate bodies at MBC and KCC for the Integrated Transport Strategy:

- The importance of adhering to the Local Plan timetable;
- That references to 'town centre parking charges' be amended specifically to 'long stay town centre parking charges';
- Key junction and road capacity improvements were needed;
- The East/West Park and Ride Service should continue;
- Sustainable transport and modal shift were permissible but the options should not tie in to specific percentage targets; and
- Frequent bus services were encouraged with appropriate junction improvements but at no detriment to existing traffic capacity.

RESOLVED: That this Board recommends to Kent County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation and Waste and to Maidstone Borough Council's Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee that a combination of DS2 and DS3 form the basis of the Integrated Transport Strategy for Maidstone to underpin the Local Plan. This is with the exception of the following and subject to costing to ascertain affordability and the evaluation of feasibility, sustainability and deliverability:

- Additional North/South Park and Ride removed from DS2;
- All references to percentage targets removed from DS2;
- That it is specified that with reference to parking costs, it refers to long-term car parks; and

- That frequent bus services are encouraged with appropriate junction improvements but at no detriment to existing traffic capacity.

90. DURATION OF MEETING

5.03pm to 8.55pm