

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 JULY 2020**

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

**Also Present:** Councillor Harper

#### 148. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Anne Brindle
- Councillor Geraldine Brown
- Councillor Paul Carter
- Councillor Paulina Stockell

#### 149. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

#### 150. URGENT ITEMS

It was noted that Item 16 – Verbal Update – 20MPH Pilot Schemes and Item 17 – Verbal Update – Active Travel Schemes would be taken together.

Item 13 – Verbal Update – Progress since Withdrawal of the Judicial Review would be taken after Items 16 and 17.

#### 151. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Harper was present as a Visiting Member, and indicated the wish to speak on Item 12 – KB18 Public Footpath Conversion to Cycle Track Maidstone, Item 14 – Maidstone Integrated Transport Package, Item 16 – Verbal Update – 20MPH Pilot Schemes and Item 17 – Verbal Update – Active Travel Schemes.

#### 152. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

153. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Bird had been lobbied on Item 12 – KB18 Public Footpath Conversion to Cycle Track Maidstone, Item 16 – Verbal Update – 20MPH Pilot Schemes and Item 17 – Verbal update – Active Travel Schemes.

Councillor Clarke had been lobbied on Item 14 – Maidstone Integrated Transport Package, Item 15 – Verbal Update – Traffic Modelling, Leeds-Langley Relief Road, Item 16 - Verbal Update – 20MPH Pilot Schemes and Item 17 – Verbal update – Active Travel Schemes.

Councillor Kimmance had been lobbied on Item 12 – KB18 Public Footpath Conversion to Cycle Track Maidstone.

Councillor Wilby had been lobbied on Item 12 – KB18 Public Footpath Conversion to Cycle Track Maidstone, Item 14 – Maidstone Integrated Transport Package, Item 15 – Verbal Update – Traffic Modelling, Leeds-Langley Relief Road and Item 16 - Verbal Update – 20MPH Pilot Schemes.

154. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

155. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2019

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed at a later date, subject to the correction of the heading that reads A246 to A249, for Item 12 – Verbal Update – M2 Junction 5/A249.

156. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

157. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

It was agreed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman be able to respond to the questions posed by members of the public, as opposed to Leaders or Group representatives, as representatives of Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council respectively.

There were three questions from members of the public.

Question from Mr Duncan Edwards to the Chairman of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

*'Maidstone Borough Council has strong policy and planning for modal shift and active travel, but these are not always applied by planning applications.*

*For example, on land west of Church Road policies not applied were:*

*SEM3 of the walking and cycling strategy which sets the requirement to connect Sutton Road developments with H1(8) (land west of Church Road) and Sustrans Walking and Cycling Assessment which sets out the need for a route to Mote Park from the South and makes specific recommendations on the Church Road site.*

*What steps can be taken to make sure the full value of the council's active travel policy is realised in future planning applications?'*

The Chairman responded to the question.

The Vice-Chairman responded to the question.

Mr Duncan Edwards asked the following supplementary question:

*'Could I ask, as a member of Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum, if Councillors could suggest anything more that the forum could be doing to help support MBC and KCC in promoting and developing active travel within the borough?'*

The Chairman responded that a written answer would be provided.

The Vice-Chairman responded to the question.

Question from Mr James Willis to the Chairman of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

*'It is very good to see items being positive about cycling and especially agenda item 12 KB 18. However, this route only covers part or in fact a spoke of the Maidstone/TMBC border. I am sure committee understands there is much concern re congestion, pollution and cycling safety along Hermitage Lane.*

*What can be done to provide a route as documented in the Local Plan for a Cycle and Walking plan strategy along the Hermitage Lane corridor and into Tonbridge and Malling?'*

The Chairman stated that an answer to the question had not been provided by Kent County Council officers. It was noted that a written answer would be provided to Mr Willis at a later date.

Mr James Willis asked the following supplementary question:

*'Could any work that comes back from that as the question, walking and cycling strategy along Hermitage Lane and into Tonbridge and Malling, which is the key to it, the fact that we need to keep talking to our neighbour, come back to this Committee in some written format or perhaps as a report? It is in the local plan for cycling and walking and at the moment there is no clear plan as I can see, to do that with the Section 106 monies in that area?'*

The Chairman responded to the question.

Question from Mr Brian Smith-Lowther to the Chairman of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

*'Regarding the Willington Street/Sutton Road junction, why can you not put forward the simple solution to solve the traffic 'problems' by upgrading the traffic sensitive lights, as if you cannot give this a try, why not spend money on other alternatives?'*

The Chairman responded to the question.

The Vice-Chairman responded to the question.

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

To access the webcast recording, please use the below link:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8XC\\_guOLfg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8XC_guOLfg)

158. MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

It was highlighted that the A229 and A249 Links between M2 and M20 with the proposed New Lower Thames Crossing, as included in the agenda for the previous meeting of the Board held on 16 October 2019, would be included as an item for future consideration.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

159. KB18 PUBLIC FOOTPATH CONVERSION TO CYCLE TRACK, MAIDSTONE

The Senior Transport and Development Planner introduced the report and reminded the Committee that the public path creation agreement was agreed in 2015 between Kent County Council (KCC) and the Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust, to widen, resurface and convert the path to cycle track status. For this to be achieved, certain legal actions would be undertaken in accordance with the Cycle Track Act 1994.

The KB18 route was shown in Appendix A to the report, from Hermitage Lane towards Giddyhorn Lane, to join the national cycle route 17. The cycle track would form part of a wider strategic network to enable residents in Hermitage Lane to access the local schools and colleges more directly, whilst the NHS Trust would encourage its use for staff and visitors through its access to the London Road Park and Ride.

The funding for the legal and signage costs had been identified by KCC and an audit assessment had been completed that concerned the suitability, width and shared use of the proposed cycle track. Preliminary plans for another part of the route to go through residential sections was shown in Appendix B to the report. It was noted that further consultation

and works would need to take place before the proposal would be brought forward.

The Senior Transport and Development Planner confirmed that, dependent on the necessary legal work having been completed, the work associated with the KB18 proposal could begin in the Summer of 2020.

Councillor Harper addressed the Committee as a visiting member, with specific reference made to the prevalence of motor vehicles being parked across the cycle path along Ash Grove Road, the busy nature of the turning from Giddyhorn Lane and whether an alternative would be considered at a later date.

Several members of the Board expressed concerns over the proposed cycle route shown. It was felt that the route as shown was not the safest or shortest route and that alternatives should be considered in due course.

It was confirmed that discussions with Maidstone Hospital had taken place before the pandemic lockdown period, and that the hospital had agreed to open the gate in question as an access point when the helipad was not in use. The report addressed the KB18 public footpath conversion with the public consultation process aimed at obtaining the order to update the footpath to cycle track status. Any public consultation that related to the wider proposed route would occur after the item had been presented to the Board following the necessary work to identify the preference for the route.

The Head of Planning and Development clarified that improvements to the cycling provision on Hermitage Lane had been proposed in recent infrastructure delivery plans that are produced by the Council annually.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board support the KB18 Public Footpath Conversion to Cycle Track.

160. MAIDSTONE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT PACKAGE

The Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager introduced the report that presented the results of the public consultation from the Keep Maidstone Moving Schemes, that began on 29 January 2020 for six weeks. The proposals included the A20 Coldharbour Roundabout, A229 Loose Road: Armstrong Road/Park Way, A229 Loose Road: Wheatsheaf Junction, A229 Loose Road: Cripple Street/Broughton Lane, A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street and A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street.

It was noted that during this time three engagement sessions were organised and attended by 218 individuals, with 8395 recorded visits to the KCC website and the consultation material was downloaded 14, 279 times.

The Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager confirmed that many of the responses received expressed doubt of the schemes ability to deliver the projected aims, particularly with regard to the A229 Loose Road: Wheatsheaf Junction. An amended Wheatsheaf junction proposal would be drafted with the relevant members consulted at a later date. The effect of the Cranbourne Road closure on the surrounding roads had been examined within an additional piece of work to include cycling provisions across the junction and along Cranbourne Road.

The Board was informed that officers recommended that the A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street and A229 Loose Road: Cripple Street/Broughton Lane, be removed and paused from the Keep Maidstone Moving Scheme. Additional consultation regarding the relocation of the ragstone wall on the A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street, had been requested of KCC by the Council and this had been agreed. It was confirmed that the Coronavirus pandemic had delayed progress of the schemes as many of the necessary surveys were not completed. KCC had been working with SELEP and the Local Growth Fund to achieve an extension for the scheme's delivery, as the previous six-month extension that had been granted had been removed following government guidance.

Councillor Harper addressed the Board as a visiting member and made reference to the proposed removal of the traffic lights at the A20 Coldharbour Roundabout. In response, the Senior Manager Capital Programme Project Manager confirmed that traffic lights would be implemented if needed post-construction, as a design was readily available.

During the debate it was confirmed that the traffic lights at the Sutton Road-Willington Street Junction have been visited by officers several times in order that the signals could be assessed with changes made if necessary. The recommendation to have the scheme put on hold arose from the short-term benefits expected of the scheme and the requirement to remove vegetation for this to be achieved. The funding designated for this scheme had originated from Section 106 Monies.

The Board felt that a previously presented scheme for the A274 Sutton Road Maidstone should be brought back for the board to review. It was understood that changes would need to be made to the scheme for this to occur.

The Head of Planning and Development confirmed that whilst the Section 106 monies had been allocated to the A274 Sutton Road: Willington Street scheme, not using the funds would potentially cause problems in negotiating further Section 106 funds when the previous entitlement had not been spent.

It was noted that the full consultation document for all the schemes presented would be uploaded onto the KCC Consultation Website in due course. The officer extended an offer for members of the board to engage in discussions on the potential changes that would be made to the schemes in light of the public consultation results.

The Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager informed the Board that the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation would be provided with the consultation report and the recommendations as shown within the report, for a decision within the next few weeks. If any changes were proposed, the item would be brought back for presentation to the Board.

**RESOLVED:** That the report including the actions of officers outlined in paragraph 4 be noted, with the exception of point 4.5 whereby the previous A274 Sutton Road Maidstone, scheme which would provide improvements for the next 10 years be brought back to the next meeting of the board with minor amendments relating to the scheme and active travel accepted as necessary with a view to making a recommendation to the KCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

Note: Councillor Cooke was absent for part of the debate but returned prior to the item's conclusion.

Councillors Daley and Prendergast exited the meeting during this item.

Councillor Sams exited the meeting after this item.

161. VERBAL UPDATE - TRAFFIC MODELLING, LEEDS LANGLEY RELIEF ROAD

The Senior Major Capital Programme Manager provided a verbal update to the Board on the work carried out by consultants WSP. A traffic modelling and economic assessment was completed on several indicative routes in July 2019 that indicated that a relief road would provide significant traffic relief for both villages. The projected traffic relief would depend on effective restraint measures being used, as the existing road would remain an attractive route for drivers.

The Board were informed that a satisfactory transport economic return could be achieved despite the high cost associated with the development and construction of a relief road, but that no public or private funding was available for the project. Numerous properties would need to be built to provide initial funding towards the relief road's delivery.

The Senior Major Capital Programme Manager confirmed that whilst a relief road would provide a signed route for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV's) and resilience to the wider road network, other roads that included Sutton Road and Willington Street would not be as affected. Any relief road considered would have to be a single carriageway that operated under a 50mph speed limit to replicate the existing B2015. The increased importance of environmental and climate change considerations would need to be considered in any proposal, alongside the likely changes to traffic demands in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Several members of the Board expressed that they did not feel that a detailed proposition for a relief road had been presented for Members' consideration. It was noted that if an option were to be presented, it

would now be unlikely to be duly considered within the cycle for the Local Plan Review in Maidstone.

**RESOLVED:** That the verbal update provided be noted.

162. VERBAL UPDATE - 20MPH PILOT SCHEMES AND ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEMES

The Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager addressed the Board to provide a verbal update on the 20mph pilot schemes and active travel schemes under consideration.

With regard to the 20mph schemes it was noted that there had been several requests for such schemes, and that prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the schemes had been collated with the aim of creating a county wide survey on the proposals. The necessary traffic surveys had not been completed due to the disruption caused by the pandemic, with resources having been largely directed to delivering emergency budgets such as the emergency active travel fund. It was confirmed that the aim was to deliver various town wide 20mph schemes through the active travel fund, which included Buckland Hill and Boughton Monchelsea as individual sites.

The Board was informed that the emergency active travel fund was announced by the Secretary of State on 23 May 2020, to support the installation of temporary projects as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. For the first tranche of funding, Kent County was provided with one of the largest sums of funding that totalled £1.6million. The funding would be subject to a 12-week delivery period with five themes selected which included town wide 20mph schemes, recreational cycling, the repurposing of carriageways for pop-up cycleways, school travel streets, and model filters and liveable streets. The Leaders of the relevant local authorities had been informed of those themes.

The Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager confirmed that the two schemes being progressed were to allow highways to be utilised for recreational needs along Earl Street by moving the pedestrianised area down to Puddling Lane and the creation of a pop-up cycle route in King Street, from the A249, through to the Mall. The designs for the two schemes would be completed by Friday 17 July 2020, with a further 2-week period to programme the works across the county and the remainder of the 12-week period being focused on the delivery of the schemes.

The Board was informed that no guidance on the second tranche of funding had been received, with the potential for up to £4.6million to be provided. It was noted that Members would be given further opportunities to be involved in the schemes delivered as a result of the second tranche of funding. A potential scheme included a 20mph speed limit within the Maidstone Town Centre area, however this was not a fixed proposal.

Councillor Harper addressed the Board as a visiting member with specific reference made to the proposed scheme on Earl Street as Chairman of the



Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee. A petition previously presented that concerned with a 20mph between Tonbridge Road and the Medway was discussed. The Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager responded that a working group had been created that would have discussions with the numerous cycle groups and forums operating across the county.

In response to questions, the Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager confirmed that when the application for a new development is received by Planning, the imposition of a 20mph speed limit is considered if it was proposed or deemed necessary to the development.

The Senior Major Capital Programme Project Manager noted that it was hoped that the schemes put forward for the second tranche of funding would have the full support of Members in order that they would be achieved.

**RESOLVED**: That the verbal update provided be noted.

Note: Councillor Wilby exited the meeting during this item.

163. VERBAL UPDATE - PROGRESS SINCE WITHDRAWAL OF THE JUDICIAL REVIEW

The Chairman addressed the Board with regard to the progress made since the withdrawal of the judicial review. The Maidstone Strategic Infrastructure Working Group had been created, although it had not met since the beginning of this year and were encouraged to do so.

It was noted that an improved communication was needed, with specific reference made to Item 14 – Maidstone Integrated Transport Package and Item 15 – Verbal Update – Traffic Modelling, Leeds-Langley Relief Road, in that Members of the Board were not as well updated as they could have been prior to the meeting of the Board.

The Vice-Chairman echoed the Chairman's reference to the working group and suggested that a meeting take place in the near future.

**RESOLVED**: That the verbal update provided be noted.

164. MAIDSTONE HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME

**RESOLVED**: That the report be noted.

165. DURATION OF MEETING

5.00 p.m. to 8.04 p.m.