

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12 JANUARY  
2022**

**Present:** Councillors Burton, Cannon, Carter, Chittenden, Clark, Cooke, Cox, Cuming, Fort, Hinder, Khadka, Parfitt-Reid, Prendergast, T Sams, Springett (Chairman), S Webb and Wilson

**Also Present:** Councillors English, Harper, Naghi and M Rose

204. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Brown, Cooper and Daley.

205. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

206. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman had agreed to take an urgent item and an urgent update, both of which contributed to the debate. These were the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package Report and Urgent Update to Item 14 – Hart Street/Barker Road – Options Report.

207. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillors English, Harper and M Rose were in attendance for Item 9 – Petitions.

Councillor Harper was in attendance for Item 13 – Update on the Kent Rail Strategy 2021-2026.

Councillors English, Harper, Naghi and M Rose were in attendance for Item 14 – Hart Street/Barker Road Options Report.

Note: Councillor Parfitt-Reid joined the meeting at 5.08 p.m.

208. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

209. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillors Burton, Cannon, Clark, Cooke, Cox, Parfitt-Reid, Prendergast, J Sams, Springett and S Webb had been lobbied on Item 14 – Hart Street/Barker Road Options Report.

Note: Councillor Cannon joined the meeting at 5.10 p.m. and Councillor S Webb joined at 5.12 p.m.

210. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

211. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman intended to take Item 16 – Maidstone Integrated Transport Package Report, prior to Item 8 – Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 January 2021, as the presenting officer was available for a short time only.

212. MAIDSTONE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT PACKAGE

The Senior Project Manager introduced the report and provided an update on the schemes contained within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package.

The A249 Bearsted Road scheme was dependent on the outcomes of two planning applications, to be considered by Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council's Planning Committees as required. The outcome should be known by February 2022, with works to begin that month to avoid nesting season. The works should be completed by spring 2023.

The procurement process for the A20 Coldharbour Roundabout scheme had begun. Due to the interactions between the highway, the M20 and Bearsted Road, the schemes commencement was dependent on the completion of the Bearsted Road scheme. Offline works could commence by winter 2022. Similarly, the A20 London Road scheme would commence after the Coldharbour scheme's completion.

In relation to the A229 Loose Road Corridor scheme, there had been substantial delays in progressing the related A274 Sutton Road Scheme, which had been split into two phases. Phase one involved implementing an experimental traffic order in Cranbourne Avenue to be trialled from February 2022. Phase two would focus on the construction works and was scheduled to commence in the spring of 2023. The works relating to Armstrong Road and Sheals Crescent would be conducted over the summer of 2022.

The schemes related to Cripple Street/Boughton Lane had been paused due to the feedback received on the scheme relating to the loss of landscaped area. A scheme of reduced scope was being considered,

although it was unlikely to deliver significant capacity benefits as the highway was heavily constrained.

The progress of the A20 Ashford Road/Willington Street scheme was dependent on a planning consent, which was likely to be considered in February 2022. The proposed April 2023 commencement date depended on the progress of the other schemes within the MITP. The A274 Sutton Road/Willington Street scheme had been paused to prioritise resources amongst the other schemes. There was insufficient funding to continue the A26 Tonbridge Road/Fountain Lane scheme, which was funded through Section 106 monies, although a feasibility design had been completed.

In response to questions, the Senior Project Manager stated that ducting would be implemented as part of the A20 Coldharbour Roundabout scheme to minimise future disruption should traffic lights be installed retrospectively. Traffic surveys would be undertaken following the TRO's implementation in Cranbourne Avenue to assess traffic displacement, with no traffic lights proposed in Plains Avenue for that purpose. The potential to use the data collected to refine the A229 Loose Road/A274 Sutton Road scheme's design was highlighted.

In response to concerns expressed by several Members, the Senior Project Manager would raise the possibility of short-term measures at the A20 Coldharbour Roundabout, and the phasing of traffic signals at the Fountain Lane junction, with the relevant officers.

The Board expressed their thanks for the update provided.

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

213. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2021

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

214. PRESENTATION - 20MPH SPEED LIMITS

Mr Stuart Jeffrey introduced the petition and reiterated the community support for the implementation of 20mph in Bower Mount Road and the surrounding areas.

The Board expressed support for the petition and for the implementation of 20mph schemes more widely. It was felt that the petition should be directed to the relevant Cabinet Member at Kent County Council, with the Board wished to receive an update on any action taken following its submission.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The petition be passed to the Cabinet Member at Kent County Council for their attention; and

2. An item be placed onto the work programme to receive a report on the progress of the petition.

## 215. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were three questions from members of the public.

### Question from Mr Chris Passmore to the Chairman of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

*'There's no one silver bullet to solving our transport problems in Maidstone, but clearly one avenue we must investigate is active travel and using cycle lanes, particularly for ultra-short journeys. Quite a lot of the congestion in Hermitage Lane is caused through ultra-short journeys, which could if we had adequate cycle lanes and active travel in that area, reduce the congestion in that area and allow the traffic to flow more freely. We are discussing at a number of times, a planned cycle track along hermitage lane from Maidstone Hospital to Barming Station, but there is actually one major problem in my view. That is the bridge over the railway to access Barming station which can only be accessed northside is only 2.5metres wide and that is incredibly narrow if you're trying to get cyclists and pedestrians over that bridge. When we get that cycle lane built are we taking into account getting that bridge in some way widened to allow passengers and cyclists to access the northside of Barming Station through Hermitage Lane?'*

The Chairman responded to the question.

### Question from Mr Stuart Jeffrey to the Chairman of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

*'During financial year 2020 / 2021 across this borough, how much has been spent by Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council on: a. road schemes (excluding speed reductions), b. cycling improvement, c. pedestrian improvements?'*

The Chairman stated that a written response would be provided.

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

*'The traffic issues at Hart Street / Barker Road are on the agenda for this meeting. There are no options which, in the words of the NPPF "identifies measures required to improve accessibility and safety for all modes of travel, particularly for alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport". Without these options on the table don't we run the risk of not finding the most cost effective, sustainable and workable solution to this issue?'*

The Chairman responded to the question.

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

To access the webcast, please use the link below:

[Maidstone Joint Transportation Board Meeting - 12th January 2022 - YouTube](#)

216. MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

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

217. A229 AND A249 LINKS BETWEEN M2 AND M20 - VERBAL UPDATE

The Major Capital Programme Manager introduced the report and stated that the scheme was being promoted as part of the Department for Transport's (DfT) 'Large Local Majors Programme'. A public consultation had taken place in August 2020, with work continuing to build the business case required to secure financial support.

In response to questions, the Major Capital Programme Manager stated that the DfT had requested Kent County Council to conduct further modelling works on the scheme proposed. The importance of progressing the scheme was reiterated, in the hope that it would be completed before the Lower Thames Crossing. If approved, construction could begin in 2026, however a significant amount of work was still required.

It was reiterated that all available options continue to be considered, but that the options were dependent on considerations such as available land and the associated cost/benefit analysis.

The Board expressed support for the proposed scheme and its progression. Officers were thanked for the work undertaken.

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

218. UPDATE ON THE KENT RAIL STRATEGY 2021 - 2026

The Principal Transport Planner introduced the report and stated that the Kent Rail Strategy (KRS) had been adopted in 2021 and aimed to clearly set out Kent County Council's view on the future rail service provision. The KRS was written with consideration to the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The continued progress made against the KRS was outlined, which included lobbying for improved services between Maidstone and London. It was noted that Southeastern Railway had made provision for additional off-peak, semi-fast services from Blackfriars to Maidstone from February 2022. It was reiterated that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, including the recent omicron variant, had affected the demand for rail services generally.

In response to feedback from the Board, the Principal Transport Planner reiterated the importance of ensuring that a suitable and increased level of high-speed rail services to the County.

The Board expressed support for the actions undertaken and progress made.

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

219. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The Board adjourned for a short break between 6.39 p.m. to 6.45 p.m.

Note: Councillor Prendergast left the meeting at 6.39 p.m.

220. HART STREET-BARKER ROAD – OPTIONS REPORT

The Schemes Project Manager introduced the report and reiterated the queuing and congestion issues prevalent in and around the Lockmeadow Estate, which were exacerbated through the Covid-19 pandemic. The appendices to the report were outlined.

Local stakeholders had been consulted in considering future options to alleviate the traffic pressures, however they were not supportive of an experimental one-way traffic scheme. Particular attention was drawn to the options aimed at providing long-term benefits, with funding available to conduct further design work to understand the improvement's suitability and provide a cost estimate. Additional funding would be required for construction. An alternative option was to pursue the installation of a relief road through Station Approach, with the relevant third parties supportive of the concept. Funding would be available to progress the designs and land agreements.

A report would be presented to the Board at a later date concerning the chosen scheme.

The Board felt that both short-term and long-term options to alleviate the traffic concerns should be considered, to ensure maximum benefits. Whilst consideration was initially given to Option 3 of the report, it was felt that it would be too restrictive on local traffic. Option 1 as per the report was the preferred option, as it provided greater flexibility to the existing traffic whilst aiming to minimise congestion.

The Board were informed that if a short-term trial option was implemented, the overall funding available to progress any long-term scheme would be reduced. The Scheme Project Manager advised that Option 1 could provide greater resilience to the road network than Option 3, as a highway problem would affect the entire one-way system proposed in the latter.

In response to questions, the Schemes Project Manager confirmed that an experimental traffic order (TRO) could be implemented for six to eighteen

months. If agreed, it was possible that the TRO could be implemented within six-months.

**RESOLVED:** The Board recommend that

1. Option 1 be instructed on a trial basis;
2. Further consideration be given to the options contained in point 3.14 of the report as part of the Maidstone Town Centre Strategy;
3. If larger schemes were identified, design work also be undertaken as part of the Maidstone Town Centre Strategy.

Note: Councillor T Sams left the meeting at 7.25 p.m.

221. A229 BLUE BELL HILL IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

**RESOLVED:** That the item be considered alongside Item 12 – A229 and A249 Links between M2 and M20 – Verbal Update, due to the overlapping subject matter.

222. MAIDSTONE HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME

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

223. DURATION OF MEETING

5.00 p.m. to 7.45 p.m.