

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 APRIL 2013

Present: **Councillor Cooke (Chairman) and
Councillors Ash, Beerling, Bird, Mrs Blackmore,
Butcher, Chittenden, Cuming, Daley, English, Hotson,
Moriarty, B Mortimer, Moss, Mrs Stockell, Mrs Whittle
and J.A. Wilson**

Also Present: **Councillor Mrs Grigg**

64. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Brown (KALC) and Carter.

65. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Butcher was substituting for Councillor Brown (KALC).

66. ITEM WITHDRAWN FROM THE AGENDA

Report of the Head of Transportation – Integrated Transport Strategy Update

The Chairman said that he had agreed to the withdrawal of this report from the agenda. If Members wished to raise any issues relating to the Integrated Transport Strategy, they could do so under matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2013.

67. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Mrs Grigg attended the meeting as an observer.

68. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

69. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Members stated that they had been lobbied regarding Clapper Farm Lane.

Councillor Moss stated that he had been lobbied regarding the Integrated Transport Strategy.

70. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

71. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2013

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed.

72. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2013

Minute 56 – Marigold Way – One Way Traffic Order and
Minute 59 – Lorry Watch

The Chairman said that he had written to the Police inviting them to attend a future meeting of the Board to discuss their approach to traffic regulation enforcement and matters relating to the Lorry Watch scheme. The Police had accepted the invitation, and it was hoped that a representative would be in attendance at the next meeting.

Minute 58 – Integrated Transport Strategy Update

The Chairman said that he had received a petition and a significant number of representations from local residents objecting to the Borough Council's proposal for a bus lane along Sutton Road and Loose Road from Willington Street to Armstrong Road as part of the potential infrastructure improvements for South East Maidstone set out in strategic site allocation policy SS2 of the draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2011-2031. He then submitted details of an email sent by the County Council's Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste to the Secretary of the North Loose Residents' Association regarding the proposal.

The Chairman went on to say that he could assure Members that unless the Board was prepared to support the scheme, the County Council's Cabinet Member would not sign off the Traffic Order. At meetings of the Informal Member Group (IMG) set up to support the Officers in the redrafting of the Integrated Transport Strategy, it had been made clear to Officers that Members of the Borough Council on that Group and Members of the County Council had no appetite for a bus lane running from Park Wood to Armstrong Road. He believed that there was a need to look at other mitigation measures and he had suggested to the Borough Council that arrangements be made for a public transport summit involving representatives of the Borough and County Councils, bus operators and local residents to see what can be done to improve bus services in the Borough, with the findings being fed into the IMG. A comprehensive and visionary Transport Strategy was required to support housing and employment growth and address other necessary infrastructure improvements.

The Board noted the Chairman's comments and Members asked that the Cabinet Member's email to the Secretary of the North Loose Residents'

Association be forwarded to the local Borough and County Council Members.

Reference was then made to the strength of feeling locally against the proposal to construct a one-way gyratory system at St Andrews Road and the need for the Officers to look at alternative solutions to mitigate current and forecast congestion at the A26/B2246 Fountain Lane junction.

73. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

74. QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Paul Linaker, a local resident, addressed the Board asking that it call for further consultation with Marden and Staplehurst Parish Councils and lane user representatives regarding the decision to install hop-over gates instead of the Kent Carriage Gap bollards to support the Traffic Regulation Order prohibiting motor vehicles from using Clapper Farm Lane. He suggested that a further report should be submitted to the Board if a change was still proposed.

75. UPDATE ON PETITIONS SUBMITTED TO KCC HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

The Board considered the report of the Head of Transportation updating the position with regard to petitions submitted to KCC Highways and Transportation.

A274 Sutton Valence Speed Limit Reduction

The representative of the Head of Transportation advised the Board that in September 2012, a petition with over 250 signatures was submitted by Sutton Valence Parish Council requesting the continuation of the 30 mph speed limit on the A274 northwards to the Five Wents junction. Speed surveys were carried out which indicated existing mean speeds of 34.1 mph northbound and 35.1 mph southbound. Kent Police were consulted and indicated that they did not support the continuation of the 30 mph speed limit at this location. The 40 mph speed limit was largely complied with and reducing it to 30 mph was likely to require constant enforcement. Given the response of the Police to the proposal, KCC Highways and Transportation did not currently support the request. However, a meeting had been arranged to take place the following week with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste and the local Borough and County Council Members to discuss the situation further.

Councillor Mrs Eileen Riden, the Chairman of Sutton Valence Parish Council, addressed the Board in support of the request. She explained that the continuation of the 30 mph speed limit was required in the interests of highway and pedestrian safety.

During the ensuing discussion, the Director of Highways and Transportation advised the Board that generally the Highway Authority accepted the views of the Police regarding speed limits and recognised the resource implications associated with traffic regulation enforcement. However, having regard to the circumstances in this case, he was prepared to agree to the petitioners' request.

A229 Sheals Crescent

The representative of the Head of Transportation reminded the Board that at its meeting in January 2013, a petition with over 600 signatures was presented requesting road safety measures in the Sheals Crescent, Hayle Road and Postley Road area of Maidstone following a fatal crash. KCC Highways and Transportation had analysed the recent personal injury crash history for Sheals Crescent and Hayle Road and there was no record of crashes involving pedestrians or excessive speeds except the crash referred to by the petitioners which had extenuating circumstances and no reasonable road safety measures could have prevented. There was no data to support major expenditure in this area, and the decision had been taken not to proceed with the petitioners' request. However, KCC Highways and Transportation would continue to monitor the situation and should either the Police or the Coroner raise any concerns about the highway as a result of the incident, their recommendations would be taken very seriously.

During the discussion on the report, it was suggested that, in the interests of pedestrian safety, a controlled crossing was required somewhere in Sheals Crescent. It was also suggested that if options were being assessed for improving the operation of the Bridge gyratory, the opportunity should be taken to look at the one way system as a whole to relieve congestion and improve road safety.

With regard to the funding of road safety improvements, the Director of Highways and Transportation explained that in view of the limited resources available, the policy was to prioritise roads where accidents occurred most frequently. However, consideration was being given to the development of a policy to secure funding and implement schemes more proactively.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

76. A COMMON SENSE PLAN FOR SAFE AND SENSIBLE STREET LIGHTING

The Board considered the report of the Head of Programmed Work setting out details of a new approach to street lighting to meet the challenge of rising energy costs, carbon emissions and light pollution without compromising community and road safety. It was noted that a number of initiatives had been completed already delivering an annual saving of £130,000 and that it was proposed to deliver further measures to significantly reduce energy consumption in two phases as follows:-

Phase 1 – Trial switch off of surplus lights for a period of twelve months.

Phase 2 – Conversion of a significant number of lights to part-night lighting.

These measures when fully implemented would reduce the annual energy bill and carbon emissions by around £900,000 and 5,000 tonnes respectively.

The Board was asked to consider each site selected for the trial switch off of surplus lights within the Borough of Maidstone, the exclusion criteria to be used for the part-night lighting initiative and the hours of switch off for part-night lighting.

A Member referred to the proposal to include five lights on the B2246 Hermitage Lane in the trial switch off and suggested that consideration be given to the inclusion of these lights in the programme for conversion to part-night lighting in line with the recommendation made by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council in relation to lights in its area further along the road. It was also pointed out that residents had asked that consideration be given to the provision of reflective bollards at the turn off to the Garden of England Mobile Home Park if lights on the A20 Ashford Road at Harrietsham were to be included in the trial switch off.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the COUNTY COUNCIL:

1. That the sites selected for the trial switch off of surplus lights in the Borough of Maidstone, as set out in the Appendices to the report of the Head of Programmed Work, be endorsed with the exception of the B2246 Hermitage Lane where the five lights should be included in the programme for conversion to part-night lighting.
2. That the exclusion criteria to be used for the part-night lighting initiative be endorsed.
3. That the hours of switch off for part-night lighting should be 12.00 midnight to 05.30 a.m.

77. CLAPPER FARM LANE UPDATE

The Board considered the report of the Head of Highway Operations setting out details of the reasons for the decision to install hop-over gates instead of the Kent Carriage Gap bollards to support the Traffic Regulation Order prohibiting motor vehicles from using Clapper Farm Lane. The Director of Highways and Transportation advised the Board that clearly there were very strong opposing views on this matter. He had reviewed the situation and felt that in discussion with Officers he had come up with a reasonable and practical solution. He would be prepared to meet Members to explain the situation, but had no intention of spending any more time on Clapper Farm Lane given the significant resource implications.

RESOLVED: That the position be noted.

78. HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME 2013/14

This report was for information only. The Officers undertook to respond direct to those Members who asked questions relating to specific schemes.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

79. MEMBER HIGHWAY FUND PROGRAMME UPDATE FOR MAIDSTONE BOROUGH

This report was for information only.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Officers be complimented on their work in implementing the Member Highway Fund schemes.

80. LORRY WATCH

The Board considered the report of the Head of Transportation updating the position with regard to the Leeds and Langley pilot Lorry Watch scheme and other pilot schemes proposed in the Maidstone area. Members again raised the possibility of imposing fines on the operators of vehicles which fail to comply with weight restrictions and of pursuing the operators of such vehicles registered abroad through the companies to which they are destined. Reference was also made to the use of Satellite Navigation systems designed specifically for the car market by HGV drivers.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

81. GAS WORKS, MAIDSTONE TOWN CENTRE

This report was for information only.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

82. DURATION OF MEETING

5.00 p.m. to 6.50 p.m.