

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2014

Present: Councillor J.A. Wilson (Chairman) and Councillors Ash, Bird, Mrs Blackmore, Brown (KALC), Carter, Clark, Cooke, Cuming, Daley, Hotson, Moriarty, Moss, Paterson, Mrs Stockell and Mrs Whittle

Also Present: Councillors Burton and McLoughlin

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Chittenden and Clark.

19. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

20. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillors Burton and McLoughlin indicated their possible wish to speak on all items on the agenda.

21. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

During the discussion on the report of the Director of Highways and Transportation relating to the Yalding and surrounding area experimental 7.5 tonne weight restriction:

Councillor Bird stated that he was a resident of Yalding. However, since he lived some distance from the route, he did not believe that he had a disclosable interest in the scheme.

Councillor Burton stated that he was the Chairman of the Marden Business Forum and the owner of a business operating in Pattenden Lane, Marden. However, since the Forum had not expressed a view on the scheme, and his business had not been affected by the weight restriction, he did not believe that he had a disclosable interest, and intended to speak in support.

22. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Members stated that they had been lobbied on the report of the Director of Highways and Transportation relating to the Yalding and surrounding area experimental 7.5 tonne weight restriction.

23. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

24. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2013

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed.

25. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2013

Minute 8 - Invitation to the Police to Attend a Future Meeting of the Board

In response to a question by a Member, the Chairman said that the Police had declined the invitation to attend a meeting of the Board to discuss their approach to traffic regulation enforcement and the enforcement of weight and width restrictions, but had offered to meet with representatives of the Board during office hours.

RESOLVED: That the position be noted, and that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Councillor Mrs Blackmore be appointed to attend a meeting with the Police to discuss the Board's concerns.

Minute 10 – Enforcement of Weight and Width Restrictions

In response to the point made at the last meeting relating to the possible use of CCTV cameras to provide evidence of breaches of weight and width restrictions, the Chairman said that he had been informed that:

Kent County Council did not have the legal authority to use cameras to enforce moving traffic offences such as weight or width limits. This was the sole responsibility of the Police and as such this would be discussed at the meeting to be arranged with representatives of the Board and the Police. The power to enable local authorities to use cameras to enforce moving traffic offences was contained in Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act which had not been enacted. This section of the Act would provide local authorities with the legal framework to issue penalty charge notices for the contravention of a number of moving traffic offences including banned turns, yellow box markings and traffic restrictions such as weight and width limits. The Government had indicated that this enabling legislation would not currently receive priority.

RESOLVED: That the position be noted.

26. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

27. QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

See Minutes 28 and 30 below.

28. YALDING & SURROUNDING AREA EXPERIMENTAL WEIGHT LIMIT

The Board considered the report of the Director of Highways and Transportation setting out the results of the public consultation on the experimental 7.5 tonne weight restriction implemented last year in the Yalding area to improve the quality of life of residents. The representative of the Director of Highways and Transportation advised the Board that:

- The results of the public consultation showed that there was a clear difference in views between local residents and the local business community. Local residents generally felt that the scheme had been beneficial in reducing the number of large HGVs travelling through the area. There had been a reduction in noise, pollution, vibration and damage to roads and property, and an improvement in safety and quality of life. However, local residents had highlighted the problem of HGVs using even less suitable alternative routes to avoid the experimental restriction, and many had indicated that they would not support the scheme unless additional roads such as Claygate Road, Darman Lane, Spenny Lane, Pikefish Lane and Laddingford were included in the zone.
- Local businesses and their representatives had made a clear case that the scheme was having a detrimental effect due to the increased running costs of having to travel further and for longer to avoid the restricted roads. However, it was considered that the amendments made to the scheme allowing the issue of exemption permits and a proposal to extend the general exemption for agricultural purposes to include HGVs travelling through the zone should minimise the effect of the scheme on most local businesses, but it could not be totally mitigated against.
- Maidstone Borough Council had commissioned an economic impact assessment regarding the scheme, and this had been circulated separately.
- Kent Police had raised no objection in principle to the scheme, but had indicated that in real terms enforcement of the weight restriction was likely to be a low priority.

Councillor Barbara Grandi of Collier Street Parish Council addressed the Board. She said that the Parish Council fully supported the implementation of the weight limit, recognising the beneficial impact on the quality of life of local residents. However, it was felt that additional roads such as Claygate Road, Spenny Lane and Laddingford should be included within the zone as they were being used by HGVs as an alternative route to avoid the experimental restriction.

Rachel Curley, a resident of Yalding, addressed the Board urging Members to recommend that the scheme be made permanent. She said that since the implementation of the scheme, the number of HGVs passing through without stopping had dropped substantially resulting in a reduction in noise, pollution, vibration, safety issues, environmental damage and congestion.

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the following:

- The need for additional advance signage to advise drivers of recommended alternative routes;
- The need for further publicity to be given regarding the availability of exemption permits;
- The possibility of extending the experimental weight restriction for six months to allow more time for the permit scheme to run in conjunction with it before a final decision is made;
- The damage caused by HGVs to old buildings, roads, verges and ancient bridges;
- The argument for putting double yellow lines through the centre of Yalding and providing a village car park as an alternative approach to dealing with the traffic issues;
- The argument for promoting the use of larger and heavier vehicles as they cause less damage to roads and less pollution;
- The need for the weight restriction to be, in the main, self-enforcing; and
- The results of the before and after HGV surveys.

On the basis of the consultation results that the majority of the local community wish to see the scheme retained subject to the inclusion of Claygate Road, Darman Lane, Spenny Lane, Pikefish Lane and Laddingford within the zone and that the issuing of exemption permits and the extension of the agricultural activities exemption minimises the effects of the scheme on local businesses, the Board:

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Environment and Waste:

1. That the Yalding and surrounding area experimental 7.5 tonne weight restriction be retained with the inclusion of additional roads such as Claygate Road, Darman Lane, Spenny Lane, Pikefish Lane and Laddingford and that the agricultural activities exemption be extended to include HGVs travelling through the zone; and
2. That additional advance signage be installed to advise drivers of recommended alternative routes.

29. OBJECTIONS TO TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS

The Board considered the report of the Head of Environment and Public Realm setting out the response to the formal public consultation relating to the following Traffic Regulation Orders:

The Kent County Council (Borough of Maidstone) (Prohibition of Stopping on the Footway or Verge) (Variation No.2) Order 2013; and

The Kent County Council (Borough of Maidstone) Waiting Restrictions Order (Variation No.15) Order 2013.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to approve each of the recommendations identified in the Appendices to the report of the Head of Environment and Public Realm and that the objectors be informed of the outcome; and
2. That the Board recommends to Kent County Council, as the Highway Authority, that the Orders be implemented as outlined in the Appendices to the report of the Head of Environment and Public Realm.

30. CUCKOO WOOD AVENUE

The Board considered the report of the Head of Transportation setting out proposed changes to waiting restrictions in Cuckoo Wood Avenue, Sandling, Maidstone. It was noted that:

- The Traffic Regulation Order implementing the existing double yellow lines in Cuckoo Wood Avenue came into effect in September 2012, no objections having been received in response to the formal consultation exercise. The lines extend the entire length of Cuckoo Wood Avenue on both sides of the road and also extend into Sandling Lane by 12.5m. Subsequently, residents of Boarley Court complained that they were experiencing difficulties when trying to park as there was insufficient parking provision to meet their needs within the grounds of Boarley Court itself.
- Following discussions with representatives of the residents of Boarley Court, a proposal to remove 67m of double yellow lines on the south eastern side of Cuckoo Wood Avenue was advertised in September 2013. There had been no reported crashes within Cuckoo Wood Avenue in the past ten years, and there had been one reported crash on Sandling Lane at the junction with Cuckoo Wood Avenue; this involved a vehicle waiting to turn right into Cuckoo Wood Avenue which was struck from the rear.
- It was the recommendation of the Officers that having regard to the previous crash history, the proposed changes to the existing waiting

restrictions represented a reasonable balance between preventing dangerous obstruction and allowing necessary residential parking.

- Seven objections had been received to the proposed changes to the existing waiting restrictions and thirteen comments had been received in support.

Eva Howson, Duncan Bain and David Webb addressed the Board objecting to the proposed changes to the waiting restrictions in Cuckoo Wood Avenue. In making their representations the speakers expressed concern that the removal of some of the yellow lines would be detrimental to safety, cause an obstruction at the entrance to Sandbourne Drive, restrict access for emergency vehicles, lead to an increase in litter and result in an increase in commuter parking and the parking of large commercial vehicles.

Brian Raybould and John Avis addressed the Board in support of measures to alleviate the difficulties being experienced by the residents of Boarley Court in trying to park. It was suggested that one option would be to issue parking permits to residents of Boarley Court to enable them to park in bays provided for them in Cuckoo Wood Avenue.

The Board agreed that, on the understanding that there may be a small administration charge for those wishing to participate, the introduction of parking permits might provide a solution to the difficulties being experienced by the residents of Boarley Court, and

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development: That consideration be given to the introduction of a residents' only parking permit, administered by Maidstone Borough Council or Kent County Council, to allow residents of Boarley Court to park within bays provided for them in Cuckoo Wood Avenue on the understanding that there may be a small administration charge for those wishing to participate.

31. HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME 2013/14

This report was for information only.

32. SCHEMES REPORT

This report was for information only.

33. MEMBER HIGHWAY FUND PROGRAMME UPDATE

This report was for information only.

34. DURATION OF MEETING

5.00 p.m. to 6.40 p.m.