

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

MONDAY, 20 APRIL 2015

MINUTES of the Joint Transportation Board held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS on Monday, 20 April 2015

PRESENT: **Borough Councillors** Rogers (Chairman), Backhouse, Bulman, Neve, Scott and Woodward
 County Councillors King (Vice-Chairman), Hoare and Oakford
 Parish Councillor Mackonochie

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Rankin, McDermott, Sloan, Tompsett and Webb

OFFICERS: Rosemarie Bennett (Parking Manager), Earl Bournier (District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, Kent Highways & Transportation), David Candlin (Head of Economic Development), Nick Baldwin (Senior Traffic Engineer), Vicki Hubert (Strategic Transport and Development Planner, Kent Highways & Transportation), Steven Noad (Traffic Engineer, Kent Highways & Transportation), Hilary Smith (Economic Development Manager), Cheryl Clark (Democratic Services Officer) and Mark O'Callaghan (Democratic Services Officer)

APOLOGIES: County Councillor John Davies, County Councillor Sean Holden and County Councillor James Scholes

APOLOGIES

TB37/14 Apologies for absence were recorded from County Councillors Davies, Holden and Scholes.

DECLARATION OF INTEREST (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT, PART 6):

TB38/14 There were no disclosable pecuniary interests. However, Councillor Rogers asked that it be noted that he was an employee of Network Rail; County Councillor Hoare advised that he was a member of the congregation of St. Augustine's Church.

NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS WISHING TO SPEAK (IN ACCORDANCE WITH CABINET PROCEDURE RULE 5.3)

TB39/14 Councillor Rankin had registered to speak on minute TB41/14, TB42/14 and TB44/14. Councillor Webb had registered to speak on minute TB42/14.

TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES

TB40/14 Councillor Scott asked for the following amendments:

- Minute TB32/14 be amended to show that it had been Councillor Neve who highlighted that an assault took place in Chandos Road.
- Minute TB35/14 be amended to show that it was him and not Councillor Neve who had asked for confirmation as to which County Councillor was providing funding for works on Sandrock Road.

Councillor Neve asked for the following amendment:

- Minute TB36/14 should have "at" added so it read, "grass verges on

George V (Pigs) Hill be looked at.”

RESOLVED:

- that, subject to the amendments above, the minutes of the previous meeting on Monday 19 January 2015 be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS TRACKER SYSTEM

TB41/14 The Board considered the Tunbridge Wells Tracker System as at 20 April 2015. The following comments were made in respect of the Tracker Items as follows:

Tracker Item 1: Vicki Hubert, Strategic Transport and Development Planner, Kent Highways & Transportation stated that there was nothing further to add to the update except that they would keep Members informed should a window of opportunity arise for the commencement of the work.

Tracker Item 2: Earl Bourner, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, Kent Highways & Transportation introduced the item as an update for information and invited questions. Councillor Bulman noted his satisfaction that the temporary roundabout at Knights Park appeared to have already made a significant improvement to the flow of traffic through the area. This solution could be considered when considering other similar projects including on the A26 to be discussed later. Councillor Scott reassured the Board that if any proposed water fountains on roundabouts in Knights Park and Kings Standing Way were to go ahead they would be low level and feature automatic shut-offs in high winds to avoid splashing which should negate the problems experienced at other roundabouts with water fountains.

Tracker Item 3: David Candlin, Head of Economic Development, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council advised that there was nothing further to add to the update.

Tracker Item 4: The Chairman, Councillor Rogers noted that this item would be covered by the full report under minute TB44/14.

Tracker Item 5: Mr Bourner introduced the item as a final update for information. The item may be removed from the Tracker.

Tracker Item 6: Mr Bourner introduced the item and invited the Board to indicate its preferred course of action. Councillor Neve commented that he preferred option (ii) as it would look better in keeping with the natural environment and be easier to maintain in the long run. The condition of the surface was continuing to deteriorate with parking on both sides of the road, effectively reducing the road to a single lane track and more of the verges would need doing. The Chairman, Councillor Rogers asked Mr Bourner to provide a costing of the scheme. Mr Bourner advised to keep the item on the Tracker and to proceed with the works in sections subject to budgetary constraints. However, Councillor Neve insisted on a full report.

RESOLVED:

- that the Board requested a full report on the matter to be brought to the next meeting of the Joint Transportation Board.

Tracker Item 7: Mr Bourner introduced the item and added that crime statistics had been collated by the Police to form part of the full report which will be coming to the next meeting of the Joint Transportation Board. Councillor Backhouse noted that the lack of street lighting had been identified by the residents of Sherwood as a particular concern. All lights in certain areas were switched off rather than every third light as had been expected. Clarity was desired as to what the ongoing policy would be. Councillor Woodward asked whether LED lighting could be dimmed rather than switched off would be considered in the full report. Mr Bourner noted that he was unsure whether it would form part of this particular report, however, it was the intention of Kent County Council to eventually replace all street lights with LEDs. Mr Bourner added that at a cost of £40m the project would take time to complete. County Councillor Hoare supported Councillor Backhouse's comments and added that the street lighting that remained needed to be maintained. Councillor Backhouse asked the Board to be aware of a trial whereby an LED light had been installed on Thornfield Gardens (opposite No. 5) and can be seen as an example.

Tracker Item 8: The Chairman, Councillor Rogers noted that this item would be covered by the full report under minute TB50/14.

Tracker Item 9: Mr John Barber, Chairman of the Friends of Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons had registered to speak. Mr Barber noted that the expected deadline for the budget decision on this matter had passed but he had been unable to ascertain whether funding had been approved or not. After involving County Councillor Balfour he had been advised that assessment session for new Local Transport Planning (LTP) schemes normally occurs in February or March but that the process had been delayed. Mr Barber asked whether the process had simply been delayed and whether there were any other implication of the delay; when would the LTP schemes be considered and where; and why was the process not more transparent.

Steven Noad, Traffic Engineer, Kent Highways & Transportation responded to reassure the Board and Mr Barber that the process was simply delayed. The Chairman, Councillor Rogers asked how the Board would go about finding out the reason for the delay and Mr Noad agreed to report back to the Board and Mr Barber. Councillor Woodward asked for clarification that the funding in question was for the feasibility study prior any works and how secure the funding was. Mr Noad confirmed that it was the feasibility study that was the subject and clarified that this was the process for assessing and approving funding. Until that time there was no guarantee of funding. Councillor Scott enquired how works were prioritised and how this matter could be moved up in priority. Mr Noad advised that the current priority system was weighted by local support, Member support and the Joint Transportation Board support was also influential. As such this matter was likely to be viewed as high priority.

Tracker Item 10: Councillor Rankin had registered to speak. Councillor Rankin observed that this roundabout had been damaged a number of times and questioned whether the fundamental design of the road was wrong and whether it was appropriate that such large lorries be permitted on this road. Councillor Rankin also noted that the planting had become unkempt and asked that if the roundabout was to be restored it should be maintained.

Mr Peter Perry, Town Forum had registered to speak. Mr Perry highlighted a lack of visible signage in the approach to the roundabout and recommended

improved signage. Signs could include “SLOW” painted on the road surface and “Pedestrians Crossing” signs placed in clear view. Electronic speed signs should also be considered. The Town Forum advocated the establishment of a 20mph zone to include Calverley Road, Crescent Road and Church Road to the junction with London Road. Mr Perry noted that these measures should only be seen as an interim solution while the broader picture be considered. A major trunk road intersecting a busy pedestrian area was inappropriate and an alternative route needed to be found.

Mr Noad noted the speaker’s comments and agreed to report back to the Chairman and Mr Perry on what might be possible. Additional signs were limited by Department of Transport regulations and the Conservation Area. Mr Bourner advised the Board that the person responsible for damaging the roundabout had been identified and the cost of repairs were being recovered. Repairs were scheduled for May/June and would involve shutting the road temporarily at night. Planting maintenance was scheduled for October annually but was also very difficult as even this involved shutting the road for safety reasons.

Councillor Bulman welcomed progress but warned against making the roundabout even smaller, which might have the inadvertent effect of increasing the speed of traffic. A 20mph zone was supported by Councillors Bulman, Scott and Neve. Councillor Scott commented that the needs of pedestrians should be paramount in this case and a lights-controlled crossing would have the added benefit of slowing traffic. Pedestrians already crossed at the junction and it needed to be made safer for them to do so.

RESOLVED:

- that the Board requested a full report on improved signage and establishing a 20mph zone on Calverley Road, Crescent Road and Church Road.

PETITION REQUESTING A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING OR CENTRAL REFUGE IN CRESCENT ROAD, ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

TB42/14 At the Chairman’s discretion this item was brought forward.

Councillor Rankin had registered to speak: Councillor Rankin advised that much of what she wanted to say had already been covered in the previous item and similarly applied here.

Councillor Webb had registered to speak: Councillor Webb commented that there appeared to have been a recent spate of new road crossings on Mount Ephraim and a comment had been made at the previous meeting highlighting the finite resources for such works. He had previously supported new crossings on major roads including Langton Road and The Pantiles which were approved in February. As such he objected to new applications before existing ones had been completed.

Steven Noad, Traffic Engineer, Kent Highways & Transportation introduced the report and noted that the recent new crossings on Mount Ephraim had been funded through discretionary Member Grants. Mr Noad suggested it might be possible to look at the proposed crossing on Crescent Road in conjunction with the Carr’s Corner roundabout discussed earlier. However, having spent 1.5-2 hours investigating the proposed site the location did not appear to be desirable. The proposed site would be on the bend and too

close to entrances/exits of the car park. It was also noted that there are existing crossings only 90 yards away.

Councillor Neve asked if it would be possible to determine in advance of a feasibility study whether factors such as the visibility and sight lines are insufficient. Mr Noad confirmed that it was the purpose of the feasibility study to determine such factors and it need not be prohibitively expensive. County Councillor Hoare noted that the corner was used by many people using Calverley Ground as well as parishioners and a pedestrian refuge would be welcomed.

The Chairman, Councillor Rogers invited further questions and comments. There being none, and no objections, the Board was asked whether it supported the recommendation.

RESOLVED:

- that the report be noted and that the Board endorsed a dialogue with the local County Councillor for the area should there be options available to fund this work.

REPORTS OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

WAITING RESTRICTIONS REVIEW, TUNBRIDGE WELLS AND RUSTHALL COMMON

TB43/14 Ms Sarah Holden had registered to speak, Councillor Webb had agreed to read a statement on her behalf. Ms Holden's statement requested that the resident permit zone on Castle Road be extended to the north of Onslow House. The current spaces appeared to be rarely used but they were useless to residents as they were limited to 4 hours. A recent collision in the road highlighted the need for resident's parking north of the building to avoid people backing down the road. The one-way system would usually mean a resident having to take a 30 minute detour in order to park to the south of the building. The problem was compounded by the lack of a footpath. The walk up from the parking spaces south of Onslow House was dangerous whereas the short walk down from the spaces north of Onslow House would be comparatively less hazardous.

Nick Baldwin, Senior Traffic Engineer, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council introduced the report and added that the report followed the introduction of parking controls across the borough and was intended as a review of the measures. To date the only issue that had been presented was Castle Road as mentioned by the speaker. The report made the recommendation that the regulation covering the section of Castle Road where parking was limited to 4 hours without exemption would be changed to exempt permit holders.

The Chairman, Councillor Rogers invited questions and comments. There being none, and no objections, the Board was asked whether it supported the recommendation.

RESOLVED:

- that the report be noted and an amendment to the permit parking arrangements for Castle Road be endorsed.

REVIEW OF WAITING RESTRICTIONS 2015

TB44/14 Councillor Rankin had registered to speak. Councillor Rankin asked whether there was the intention of extending restrictions on pavement parking throughout the borough, or parts of it, to protect the new pavement surfaces.

Rosemarie Bennett, Parking Manager, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council confirmed that they would be looking at pavement parking throughout the borough and Ferndale was on the radar. Pavement parking would form part of the Parking Strategy which would be published shortly.

Nick Baldwin, Senior Traffic Engineer, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council introduced the report and noted a correction to paragraph five. Major York's Road had received funding from the local County Council Member. Work was likely to commence in May ahead of the rest of the proposals. The report was not an exhaustive list and was intended to give an indication of the proposals which had received the most comment to date.

Councillor Neve suggested that any decision on the introduction of restrictions on King George V Hill should be taken in conjunction with the earlier proposal for maintaining the verges (Tunbridge Wells Tracker System, Item 6). If the verges were restored the double yellow lines might be unnecessary. Furthermore, Councillor Neve offered his services with distributing information if the proposal was to go through to consultation.

The Chairman, Councillor Rogers invited further questions and comments. There being none, and no objections, the Board was asked whether it supported the recommendation.

RESOLVED:

- that the report be noted.

INNOVATIVE TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

TB45/14 The Chairman, Councillor Rogers advised the Board that the purpose of the report was not to advise on what kind of innovative transport solutions to implement but rather to establish whether there was an appetite to explore innovative transport solutions and how to go about exploring those solutions.

Mr Peter Perry, Town Forum had registered to speak. Mr Perry made reference to a section of the discussion document prepared by DHA which highlighted a number of factors that effectively ruled-out establishing a park-and-ride scheme based at Tesco on Pembury Road. Mr Perry noted that the discussion document went on to highlight that park-and-ride schemes would be more successful if they piggy-pack on existing transport links. Mr Perry suggested that the new Tunbridge Wells Hospital at Pembury might serve as such a link. The hospital benefitted from 6 buses per hour into Tunbridge Wells throughout the day and other good services to Tonbridge, Maidstone and Paddock Wood. The hospital also had good road connections to the A21. Subject to agreement with the hospital, a park-and-ride scheme could be established with the minimal cost of a few signs. Use of the park-and-ride might reduce congestion on Pembury Road. A second option would be to facilitate use of High Brooms train station with 4 trains per hour into Tunbridge Wells. Improvements to North Farm Estate and the anticipated widening of the railway bridge would provide easier access to the A21. A new multi-storey car park would be needed. In closing Mr Perry asked that

important reports such as the DHA discussion document be provided further in advance.

The Chairman, Councillor Rogers advised that reports were prepared subject to strict deadlines and unfortunately would not be available earlier.

David Candlin, Head of Economic Development, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council introduced the report and advised that the author of the discussion document Paul Lulham was in attendance for questions.

Councillor Scott welcomed the opportunity to discuss future solutions. County Councillor Hoare noted that the borough had some pressing needs that could be addressed by more conventional means. Councillor Scott referenced a paper that had been prepared by him and Councillor Woodward which had been distributed to Members. The paper highlighted the issue of congestion in the long term. The nature of transport would change significantly over the next decades and retrofitting contemporary transport schemes into a town was an increasingly expensive and damaging operation. Councillor Scott added that any plans for the future must consider some of the near future solutions which might be less expensive to retrofit and considerably less damaging. Councillor Woodward supported the comments made by Councillor Scott and noted that the table used in the discussion document to compare relative costs of various transport schemes omits Personal Rapid Transport schemes.

The Chairman, Councillor Rogers invited further questions and comments. There being none, and no objections, the Board was asked whether it supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

- that the Board endorsed the inclusion in the Borough Transport Strategy referring to the need to explore innovative transport solutions for the future;
- that the Board asked Councillors Scott and colleagues to continue their exploration of ULTRA and other driverless solutions and accept that whilst TWBC Cabinet are supportive of this work, the Borough Council was unable to offer up staff or financial resources at the present time; and
- that the Board agreed that any future Local Plan Review and Transport Strategy Review was accompanied by further technical work and support from KCC to ensure that there was transport infrastructure to support future development within the borough.

REPORTS OF KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

HIGHWAY DRAINAGE

TB46/14 Earl Bournier, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, Kent Highways & Transportation introduced the report and added that there would be a move from programmed cleansing to more reactive cleansing. Local hotspots, high speed roads and strategic main routes would be cleansed every 12 months. Minor urban roads, residential areas and rural roads would be subject to targeted cleansing. Property flooding would remain a priority.

Councillor Woodward asked the definition of a hotspot and how many there were in the borough. Mr Bourner confirmed that a hotspot is where there was known flooding and agreed to email Councillor Woodward with the number of hotspots in Tunbridge Wells. Councillor Woodward asked, in reference to paragraph eight of the report, how the various improvement schemes were selected. Mr Bourner advised that he would take the question back for a full answer but summarised that generally works which improved hotspots and property flooding issues were prioritised.

The Chairman, Councillor Rogers invited further questions and comments. There being none, and no objections, the Board was asked whether it supported the recommendation.

RESOLVED:

- that the report be noted.

UPDATE ON LGF FUNDED IMPROVEMENTS TO REDUCE CONGESTION AT THE YEW TREE ROAD/LONDON ROAD JUNCTION & SPELDHURST ROAD/ST JOHNS ROAD JUNCTION IN SOUTHBOROUGH

TB47/14 Mr Adrian Berendt had registered to speak. Mr Berendt questioned the assumption in the report that traffic would increase by 17 per cent over ten years. It was highlighted that the report failed to take account of 1) changes to the A21 redistributing local traffic to major routes, 2) changes to driving habits due to factors such as new schools in Sevenoaks or internet shopping, 3) Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's own Transport Strategy which sought to prioritise active transport and 4) the fact that when the junction was previously altered the traffic had been predicted to increase but there had been a decrease in traffic. Rather than relying on inaccurate modelling it was suggested that the Council considered how it wanted the town to look and used the existing 5 year plan as a guide. Mr Berendt suggested that the redevelopment of the junction satisfied none of the goals of the 5 year plan and action should be taken to address the wider problem. The example of the Dutch was given whereby 33 per cent of children cycle to school whereas only two per cent cycle in the UK. It was suggested that more than 7,000 children go to school on St Johns Road and 25 per cent have expressed an interest in cycling to school. High quality, segregated cycle lanes on the A26 would deliver significant reductions in traffic, reduce pollution, tackle obesity and improve the quality of life for all residents.

Vicky Hubert, Strategic Transport and Development Planner, Kent Highways & Transportation introduced the report and added that the wider problem would be looked at in preparing the draft Transport Strategy. Ms Hubert noted that funding for the redevelopment of this particular junction had been secured from the Local Growth Fund on the basis of increasing capacity which was the sole purpose of this report at this time. Furthermore, wording in the report that might have suggested vehicle and pedestrian safety had not been considered was not accurate and was intended only to show that those aspects were not the primary driver in the way the funding was secured.

In response to a question from Councillor Backhouse, Ms Hubert confirmed that the works were due to commence from January 2016.

Councillor Bulman expressed concern at the report and noted that suggestions a mini-roundabout would increase congestion seemed counter-intuitive. The example was given of traffic on North Farm which had

significantly improved due to the mini-roundabout. Councillor Bulman suggested a live trial whereby the traffic lights would be switched off and mini-roundabouts installed using traffic cones, as was the case on North Farm. Such a trial would cost-effectively prove or disprove whether they would work. County Councillor Oakford asked to hear more about the statistics provided earlier by Mr Brendt. County Councillor Oakford also commented that whilst mini-roundabouts were generally good for cars, they did nothing for the ease and safety of other road users and pedestrians. Any improvements would need to work for all.

In response to a question from Councillor Neve, Ms Hubert confirmed that if these works did not go ahead as programmed the funding would be lost.

Councillor Neve highlighted that there had been a scheme to provide off-road cycle lanes servicing the St John's and Southborough area which would have provided safe cycling access to the schools and other areas. This scheme appeared to have not been pursued. Concern was also expressed at spending further significant amounts of money without first exhausting much simpler solutions such as trial mini-roundabouts. County Councillor Hoare strongly supported Mr Brendt's comments and encouraged the provision of protected cycle lanes. County Councillor Oakford added that his understanding was that the central funding was for improving all aspects of the A26 for cars, cycles and pedestrians. Councillor Neve asked whether funding could be used for an off-road cycleway as it would reduce traffic on the A26, fulfilling the purpose of the funding.

Ms Hubert advised that mini-roundabouts tended to be most effective when the traffic is primarily road traffic and there was a balance of traffic coming from all directions. Road traffic on the A26 was heavily in one direction making it difficult for joining traffic. Also, the junction in question was equally a pedestrian crossing. The remainder of the funding would be used for other studies which would take in many of the aspects discussed at this meeting. The studies would consider other sustainable modes of transport in order to encourage people out of their cars.

The Chairman, Councillor Rogers invited further questions and comments. There being none, the Board was asked whether it supported the recommendations.

Councillors Bulman, Neve and Scott recorded their objection to recommendation two which stated, "Support the proposed improvements detailed in scenario 3 being taken forward to detail design and implementation stage." Councillor Scott proposed that recommendation two be appended with, "... and that particular attention is paid to the needs of cyclists and pedestrians in the detailed design."

Councillors Bulman and Neve recorded their objection to the amended recommendation two.

RESOLVED:

- that the report be noted; and
- that the Board supported the proposed improvement detailed in scenario 3 being taken forward to detailed design and implementation stage, and that particular attention is paid to the needs of cyclists and pedestrians in the detailed design.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS HIGHWAYS WORKS PROGRAMME

TB48/14 Earl Bourner, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, Kent Highways & Transportation introduced the information only report.

Councillor Neve praised the recently completed works in Ferndale. Councillor Backhouse praised the comprehensive communications from Kent Highways & Transportation to residents in Sherwood regarding works from Pembury Road to High Brooms.

Councillor Bulman asked how much of the A26 was due for resurfacing. Mr Bourner confirmed that the A26 had not appeared in the 2015/16 priority list nor had it been successful for a Change Fund bid.

The Chairman, Councillor Rogers invited further questions and comments. There being none, and no objections, the Board was asked whether it supported the recommendation.

RESOLVED:

- that the report be noted.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEME PROGRESS REPORT

TB49/14 Earl Bourner, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, Kent Highways & Transportation introduced the information only report.

The Chairman, Councillor Rogers invited questions and comments. There being none, and no objections, the Board was asked whether it supported the recommendation.

RESOLVED:

- that the report be noted.

TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

TB50/14 Board members asked for the following topics to be considered for future meetings:

Rosemarie Bennett, Parking Manager, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council advised that the Parking Strategy would be ready shortly.

Councillor Backhouse asked Members to consider the matter of road safety on the junction of Birken Road and Liptraps Lane. A number of inappropriate heavy goods vehicles have been reported using the predominantly residential road to access Longfield Road. There was some data available that showed a number of near-misses at the junction. The Chairman, Councillor Rogers asked that the data be sent to him and Earl Bourner, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, Kent Highways & Transportation.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

TB51/14 The Vice Chairman, County Councillor King noted that the Chairman, Councillor Rogers was not seeking re-election and as such this was his last meeting. The Board recorded it's praise and thanks for Councillor Rogers'

chairmanship.

The next meeting of the Joint Transportation Board will be Monday 20 July 2015 commencing at 6pm.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 7.45 pm.