

**TUNBRIDGE WELLS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

**Monday 9 January 2017**

**PRESENT:** Borough Councillors Bulman (Chairman), Backhouse, Lidstone, Simmons, Stanyer and Woodward  
County Councillors Hoare, Holden, Oakford and Scholes  
Parish Councillor Mackonochie

**Officers in Attendance:** Nick Baldwin (Senior Traffic Engineer), Rosemarie Bennett (Parking Manager), Earl Bourner (District Manager for Tunbridge Wells), Michael Hardy (Schemes Project Engineer), Paul Lulham (DHA Planning (Consultant)), Hilary Smith (Economic Development Manager), Carol Valentine (West Kent Highway Manager), Jamie Watson (Traffic Schemes Team Leader) and Mark O'Callaghan (Democratic Services Officer)

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillors Jukes and McDermott

**APOLOGIES**

TB26/16 Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Davies and King.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

TB27/16 There were no disclosable pecuniary or other significant interests declared at the meeting.

**NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS WISHING TO SPEAK**

TB28/16 Councillor Tracy Moore had registered as wishing to speak on minute TB30/16.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 17 OCTOBER 2016**

TB29/16 Members reviewed the minutes. No amendments were proposed.

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting dated 17 October 2016 be approved as a correct record.

**TUNBRIDGE WELLS TRACKER FOR JANUARY 2017**

TB30/16 The Board considered the Tunbridge Wells Tracker for January 2017. Comments were made in respect of the Tracker Items as follows:

**Tracker Item 1 – Grosvenor Bridge Tunbridge Wells:**

Earl Bourner, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, KCC, confirmed that works were underway and the flyer attached at appendix A to the Tracker had been distributed. Congestion, as a result of the works, appeared to be light but KCC continued to monitor the situation. In response to a question from County Councillor Hoare, Mr Bourner advised that the works were due to be completed in Autumn 2017 and progress would be reported via the Tracker. County Councillor Hoare commented that he had been advised that only two of the four piers were being replaced, but it was anticipated that the remaining two would need work within the next 3 years. He added that he would like to

see all work completed as quickly as possible and that LGF funding could be diverted to expedite the work. Mr Bourner was not aware of any additional work on the piers but agreed to make enquiries and provide feedback.

Councillor Backhouse commented that the area around the bridge appeared to be prone to problems requiring remedial works, but that these were essential and people would have to manage the delays. Councillor Bulman added that where works were essential they would have to be completed but Members and the public would need to know if there were further works known to need doing.

Mr Bourner clarified that the bridge consisted of two concrete and two brick piers, but only the concrete piers required replacing at this time. County Councillor Hoare reiterated that he believed that the two brick piers and other parts of the bridge would need work in the near future. He added that it would be unfair to residents to hold back any information. Councillor Bulman confirmed that the officers had agreed to investigate and report back. Mr Bourner commented that the work at the bridge had originally been planned as two separate jobs but it had subsequently been decided to undertake the work at the same time and he wondered if this was a cause of any confusion.

Councillor Backhouse commented that during a Planning Committee site visit to a nearby site in 2015 it had been explained that the concrete was affected by 'cement rot' which did not affect the bricks.

**Tracker Item 2 – A21 and Capel Parish Council:**

Councillor Bulman commented that work on the A21 was ongoing and causing the expected level of disruption. He understood that work had been delayed on several occasions due to particular issues on site.

Michael Hardy, Schemes Project Engineer, KCC, commented that following receipt of the letter from Capel Parish Council a formal response had been sent and both were attached at appendix B and C to the Tracker. He added that KCC were unable to implement temporary restrictions in response to the increased traffic caused by the works by Highways England. 30 mph restrictions were already being progressed through County Councillor King's Members' Grant. The junction of Alders Road and Crittenden Road at Colt's Hill was known to be problematic and was expected to be progressed as part of the Crash Remedial Programme in 2017/18. No further actions were expected as restrictions would impact on farm vehicles requiring access and increase traffic in surrounding areas.

Parish Councillor Maggie Fenton, Chairman of Capel Parish Council, had registered to speak.

Councillor Fenton commented that the need for action was longstanding but made more urgent by a recent road traffic accident. Whilst the works on the A21 fell under the jurisdiction of Highways England, any new road improvement schemes were also the responsibility of the Highway Authority who, with the contractor, must take account of the risks to anyone and the measures needed to protect them in line with Construction (Design and Management) Regulations. Any relief from traffic as a result of the completion of duelling works on the A21 would be short-lived due to the development of over 600 new homes in Paddock Wood and a further 300 in the area of Badsell Road. The B2017, also known as Badsell Road/Five Oak Green

Road, bisected the village and was a district distributor road carrying the majority of traffic from Paddock Wood to Tonbridge. Recently acquired advisory signs directing HGVs away had reduced the numbers of inappropriate vehicles and should now be made mandatory. KCC's argument that restrictions would adversely affect less suitable roads offered no evidence and was contrary to the advice that led to the installation of the advisory signs. A pedestrian crossing was desperately needed in the village where heavy traffic and narrow pavements made walking and cycling perilous. The Parish Council had been sent a video from a mother in the village showing a 2 minute 46 second walk through the village during which it showed 46 vehicles including HGVs traveling at speed, equivalent to over 1,100 vehicles per hour, and only a single 12 second gap in which to cross. Speed was often excessive through the village, Councillor Fenton was a member of the Speedwatch group and the findings from which would suggest that at least one vehicle per minute was recorded speeding in excess of 36mph. However, it was likely that the situation was worse as it was rarely possible to take down the details of more than the first car in a bunch and it was too busy to monitor speeds in peak times. Speeding was so bad that Capel was identified as one of the six problem sites in West Kent for Operation Wealden in October 2016. Five Oak Green has been recorded on the Community Speedwatch website as having the four highest instances of traffic density in Kent. She supported the campaign of Greg Clark MP and Helen Grant MP to alter the policy regarding the use of speed cameras to enforce speed limits and to prevent injury rather than as a reactive measure. The consultation to extend the 30mph speed limit around the school was welcome, but it was disappointing that Capel Parish Council had not been contacted first. The Council had called for a gateway at the end of the village and the interactive sign that had been promised in 2011 had not been delivered. It was suggested that Capel Parish Council be consulted on the Mascalls Court Road development and that Kent County Council should request Section 106 funds to cover traffic calming and other measures around the development which was close to the boundary of Capel Parish.

Parish Councillor Hugh Patterson, Vice-Chairman of Capel Parish Council, had registered to speak.

Councillor Patterson commented that a previous attempt in 2003 to install a pedestrian crossing in Capel had been frustrated due to the speed of traffic being too high, this demonstrated that the problems pre-dated the current works on A21. The linear nature of the village meant that there were many people who travelled from one end to the other on the school run and often undertook the journey by car exacerbating the problem. Previous limitations on what could be done in the village were no longer valid since the construction of the A21 meant that the village could no longer be seen as being on an arterial road. Subject to appropriate funding, pinch points and a 20mph speed limit would reduce speeds allowing a pedestrian crossing. The large housing developments in Paddock Wood would give the Highways Authority an opportunity, as a statutory consultee, to request a contribution through a Section 106 agreement in order to fund traffic calming which would, as least, compensate for the increased traffic likely as a result of the new development in addition to the long-standing issues in the village. Furthermore, a no right turn on Alders Road at the junction with Colts Hill would help protect a dangerous junction and stop inappropriate use of a small country lane.

County Councillor Holden commented that he was involved in a campaign with Helen Grant MP and Greg Clark MP to try to get the Police to actively enforce speed limits. It was encouraging that the Police were now supporting local speedwatch groups, however work was ongoing with the Camera Safety Partnership to change their policy with regard to the use of speed cameras. At a recent meeting it had been demonstrated that resources were limited to dealing with the most serious cases where accidents had occurred, but it was hoped that a more pre-emptive approach would be adopted. Physical barriers and build-outs, whilst effective, were expensive and funding was scarce and he was of the opinion that the best way of reducing speeds was by increasing the likelihood of drivers being caught.

Jamie Watson, Traffic Schemes Team Leader, KCC, suggested a meeting with Capel Parish Council in order to fully appraise the situation and offer advice on what could be achieved. Specific advice on Section 106 funding and the use of speed cameras would be offered following consultation with the relevant officers. Councillor Bulman welcomed the suggestion of a meeting.

Councillor Backhouse commented that Section 106 funds had been secured at an early stage from the Knight's Wood development in Sherwood therefore every effort should be made with developers in Paddock Wood as soon as possible.

Councillor Woodward sought confirmation that the Borough Councillor for Capel could also attend the meeting with Capel Parish Council. Mr Watson agreed.

**Tracker Item 3 – Pedestrian crossing: Major York's Road:**

Mr Hardy confirmed that funding for the proposed crossing on Major York's Road had been secured and was scheduled to be implemented in the next financial year. Councillor Bulman welcomed the news.

Councillor Woodward asked about the status of the associated Langton Road crossing. Mr Hardy advised that progress had been delayed due to ongoing legal negotiations. Therefore, the implementation would proceed in the next financial year. Mr Bourner, added that the funding was secure.

Councillor Stanyer queried the final paragraph in the letter from County Councillor Balfour which did not appear to be consistent with the update from officers. Councillor Bulman believed that the situation had changed since the letter had been written as a result of considerable pressure that had been applied.

Mr John Barber had registered to speak on behalf of Friends of the Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons.

Mr Barber welcomed the confirmation of funding for the two crossings and commented that he would modify his comments to address his wider concerns. He felt that the handling of the two crossings reflected wider problems. Firstly, the ability of the Joint Transportation Board to function in relation to what KCC Highways said at meetings but then did not follow through in practice, and, secondly, the ability of concerned individuals or groups to be part of the 'big society' when authorities failed to uphold the agreed course of action. Whilst the effort of individuals was appreciated, poor leadership and co-ordination meant that basic outcomes were not being

delivered. With further cutbacks anticipated, the situation would get worse unless there was systematic change.

Councillor Bulman commented that he hoped that concerned people would not become disheartened as it was important to maintain the engagement and he would do everything he could to ensure agreements were honoured.

County Councillor Scholes expressed his gratitude.

**Tracker Item 4 – Speeding on London Road:**

Councillor Bulman advised that initial data had been received but that full details would be reported to the next meeting.

**Tracker Item 5 – LGF Underspend:**

Mr Bourner commented that the item had not been intended to be included on the agenda as there would not be an update until the next financial year. Councillor Bulman noted the error but allowed the item to continue in order that the members of the public who had registered to speak could have their say. He added that there would also be a report to a future meeting with the results of the monitoring following completion of the A26/Yew Tree Road/Speldhurst Road junction.

Mrs Jennifer Hemming had registered to speak on behalf of Calverley Park Gardens Residents' Association.

Mrs Hemming disputed suggestions that changes in Calverley Park Road would increase congestion. Rather, the specific requests for: a) a ban on HGVs; b) 20mph speed limit; and c) improved pedestrian crossings would have a beneficial or no effect on surrounding roads. Congestion at the lower end of Pembury Road was partly caused by vehicles turning into Calverley Park Gardens, stopping the flow of traffic in both directions. A ban on HGVs using Calverley Park Gardens would improve congestion and reduce the complexity of the Carrs Corner junction and reduce damage caused by HGVs turning. Since the last JTB meeting in October 2016, two pedestrian bollards and the roundabout at Carrs Corner had been damaged. A 20mph speed limit and pedestrian crossings would have no adverse effect on the traffic on Pembury Road.

Mrs Hemming added that a petition calling for 20mph speed limits in Park Ward had been completed and contained over 560 signatures which would be submitted to Kent County Council in due course. The number of signatures was double that submitted in support of the 20mph zone in St. John's and officers were asked to work with Members and residents in implementing a similar scheme in Park Ward. Another petition calling for improved pedestrian crossings on Calverley Park Gardens had also been completed and contained more than 200 signatures.

Councillor Bulman welcomed the petitions and commented that he would like to see corresponding reports brought to the Joint Transportation Board at a future meeting.

Mrs Becki Bruneau had registered to speak on behalf of Calverley Park Gardens Residents' Association.

Mrs Bruneau questioned why Kent County Council had claimed to not know at a previous meeting what the problem was at Calverley Park Gardens

despite representations by the Residents' Association at three consecutive meetings of the Joint Transportation Board in April, July and October 2016. Given the support of Members that action should be taken she asked when such a plan would be forthcoming. Several examples were given of near misses and dangerous occurrences due to inappropriately large or fast vehicles using Calverley Park Gardens. One particular incident recently involved a large HGV turning into Calverley Park Gardens from Pembury Road where the driver misjudged the turn and mounted the pavement. Three young children only narrowly avoided being hit and action needed to be taken to protect users of this residential road.

Mrs Anna Shaw, a resident close to the junction of Bayhall Road and Forest Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, had registered to speak.

Mrs Shaw commented that her family regularly used Bayhall Road to access St. Peter's School and the town centre but that the road was dangerous as drivers appeared to rarely abide the speed limit, possibly partly due to a lack of awareness as there were no speed reminder signs along the road. There were also no pedestrian crossings, which made accessing the park and schools particularly dangerous. The size and speed of some HGVs was so great that it caused buildings to shake. The Council should be encouraging people to walk or cycle the short distances to town and around the local areas, however, many residents including parents of young children and elderly felt forced to use their cars for their own safety. The forthcoming development of 250 new homes and a school in Hawkenbury would add to the problems. A 20mph zone was a simple option that would have a great effect. When traffic in town was heavy, this actually had a positive effect as traffic on the approach roads slowed almost to a stop and people were able to cross the road and use the pavements relatively safely. The road was not wide enough in parts for two HGVs to pass which forces them to skim the pavements. Behaviour needed to change. It should be the default position to be able to walk safely around your local area.

County Councillor Holden reminded members that he had previously asked for a strategic assessment of HGVs and their impact. This was a problem affecting the lives of people in towns and rural areas and appeared to be expanding with little or no control or concern for the people affected. The economic benefits for the hauliers of increasingly efficient HGVs seemed to trump all other considerations and he disagreed that it should. There should be a report on the effect of HGVs on the lives of the people of Kent, according to KCC Highways the damage to roads caused by an HGV was 10,000 times that of the damage caused by a car. Society survived perfectly well before the advent of the tendency towards super-large HGVs and many roads were not suitable for vehicles the size of buildings and there were many local examples of the damage being caused by oversized vehicles. There were further implications for the main routes through the county where the growth of road haulage was expected to continue growing.

Councillor Bulman acknowledged the arguments but determined that they were beyond the scope of the Joint Transportation Board. As a Member of Kent County Council, County Councillor Holden would be best placed to raise this issue in the correct forum.

County Councillor Holden reiterated that many of the issues had local implications and a study was likely to identify the specific problems. Requests for such a study at County had not come to fruition for a number of reasons.

Councillor Bulman agreed to forward the request to officers, but added that he wished to keep the focus on immediate areas of concern.

County Councillor Scholes strongly supported the subjects of both aforementioned petitions and added that it was disappointing that nothing had happened since a site visit to the area more than two years ago. There needed to be a date by which KCC Highways would put forward achievable proposals. The actions asked for were not excessively expensive.

County Councillor Hoare commented that there was significant house building taking place in west Kent which would add to the problems. Contributions from developers in the form of Section 106 agreements should ensure some of those problems were mitigated.

Councillor Bulman noted that many of the problems were in long established areas where it was unlikely that new Section 106 agreements would be forthcoming. He felt that the focus should be on changing the patterns of vehicle movements.

Councillor Woodward supported the case for action with regard to HGVs and commented that there were many such vehicles that manoeuvred around Broadwater Lane, which was particularly risky for children attending Broadwater Down School. Councillor Backhouse added that there were similar problems in Sherwood where 7.5 tonne limits were regularly ignored by oversized car transporters.

County Councillor Oakford commented that following the previous meeting of the Joint Transportation Board he had visited the area around Calverley Park Gardens and could support the comments made by the speakers as the situation was unacceptable. It had been proven in St. John's that where there was the will there was the way and a similar approach was needed in Park Ward. The case needed to be revisited and officers must work with the community to determine what could be done. He recalled his experience in the energy industry where there was a focus on safety and consequently, it was frustrating that actions were based on reaction to fatalities rather than on prevention. There were many examples of near misses, which, if responded to, could prevent a fatality.

Councillor Bulman highlighted the strength of feeling in this matter. Calverley Park Gardens and the surrounding areas had become dangerous and was being used as the A264 despite it being a residential road. A robust solution was needed that reduced the speed of vehicles and directed HGVs through the town in a more suitable way.

Mr Watson thanked the Calverley Park Gardens Residents' Association for the petition and other evidence and suggested revisiting the matter starting with a site visit and meeting with the Residents' Association and others. There may be consequential implications of a 20mph zone that needed to be fully explored and consideration of the viable placement of pedestrian crossings. Difficulties that may have been identified at previous meetings may have changed.

Councillor Lidstone sought clarification on the possibility of banning HGVs. Mr Watson commented that any proposal that resulted in putting more traffic through the Royal Oak junction would increase congestion and therefore would have to be carefully considered. The act of banning HGVs was

possible but difficult. Signs may be insufficient and other physical measures would be needed, which would have an impact on the bus route.

Councillor Bulman noted that there would be no easy solution but commented that doing nothing was unacceptable. Calverley Park Gardens was being used in a way that was not intended. The area had long been the focus of a need for change with so-called improvements to Carrs Corner only served to increase the speed of traffic and there had been several accidents which had demolished part of the roundabout. He welcomed the meeting between Kent County Council, Borough Councillors and residents in order to formulate a viable plan.

Councillor Stanyer asked that as part of the meeting, the impact of a ban on HGVs be discussed and arguments for and against be presented so that Members could make an informed judgement. Members agreed.

#### **RESOLVED –**

1. That the Board requests confirmation that no further works to Grosvenor Bridge were anticipated in the foreseeable future;
2. That the Board endorsed an investigative meeting between Kent Highways, Capel Parish Council and interested parties to consider options related to the issues highlighted by the Parish Council with a report to a future meeting;
3. That the Board endorsed an investigative meeting between Kent Highways, Calverley Park Gardens Residents' Association and interested parties to consider options related to the issues highlighted by the Residents' Association with a report to a future meeting; and
4. That, subject to the above, the Tunbridge Wells Tracker be noted.

#### **PROPOSED PERMIT PARKING CHANGES - ZONES A AND C**

TB31/16 The Chairman, Councillor Bulman, advised that the item was withdrawn from the agenda. The associated public consultation had been held over the Christmas period and was being extended. Consequently, the results were not ready for reporting.

County Councillor Scholes highlighted the concerns of Claremont School and asked that they be included in the consultation. Nick Baldwin, Traffic Engineer, TWBC confirmed that it was a public consultation and as such Claremont School was welcome to submit its representations, he added that a number of representations had been received from parents about Claremont School. All comments received would be taken into consideration.

#### **PROPOSED PERMIT PARKING SCHEME IN HAWKENBURY**

TB32/16 Nick Baldwin, Traffic Engineer, TWBC, introduced the report which included the following comments:

- A year ago, a report detailed the results of a parking survey in Hawkenbury.



- The views expressed had informed proposals for new parking restrictions, some of which have already been implemented, namely Camden Park and the two adjoining cul-de-sacs plus Forest Road.
- A further informal consultation was held in October 2016, which set out specific proposals and invited comment. The response rate was disappointing, but provided sufficient material to further refine the proposals ready for formal consultation.
- The revised proposals were set out in the report.
- If Members endorsed the proposals, a Traffic Regulation Order would be drafted and put to public consultation.
- The results of the consultation would be reported to a future meeting for a final recommendation, if necessary. There would be no need to return if the consultation produced fewer than five objections.

Mrs Jane Fenwick had registered to speak on behalf of Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum.

Mrs Fenwick thanked Parking Services for engaging with the community who were being inconvenienced by indiscriminate parking. AXA were an inconsiderate neighbour in terms of the impact its staff were having on the area. Although AXA contributed to the cost of the survey to help resolve the issue they had created, they should not be absolved from responsibility if the problem of parking was moved from one area to another. Councillors and officers were asked to work with AXA to encourage them to produce a transport strategy, as many large companies did, to reduce the impact of their staff on the local community. Measures including understanding where staff live and how they travel, car share schemes, cycling schemes should be considered to ensure other residents of Hawkenbury do not need to address concerns caused by the displacement of parking in the future.

Councillor Bulman commented that AXA had made an attempt to address the problems but had largely been unsuccessful as they had not provided sufficient parking as had been proposed when they originally occupied the site.

County Councillor Scholes supported the recommendation and added that the parking problem should not be allowed to move to other areas such as Farmcome Road. There were already reports of AXA staff parking in outlying areas including Dunorlan Park which effectively denied the use of the park to others. Councillor Bulman commented that the car park was intended solely for users of Dunorlan Park and he sought clarification on the restrictions in force in the car park.

Rosemarie Bennett, Parking Manager, TWBC, commented that survey work was ongoing in Dunorlan Park car park to understand the scale of inappropriate parking with a view to implementing restrictions to prevent all-day parking.

The Chairman, Councillor Bulman, invited further questions and comments. There being none, Members were asked whether the resolution was agreed.

**RESOLVED** – That the proposed parking restrictions as set out in the report be endorsed and that if more than five objections were received in the consultation these be reported back to this Board.

## A26 TONBRIDGE TO TUNBRIDGE WELLS CYCLE ROUTE

TB33/16 Hilary Smith, Economic Development Manager, TWBC, introduced the report which included the following comments:

- At the previous meeting in October 2016, detailed design proposals were agreed for consultation. The report set out the responses to the consultation.
- The consultation included:
  - Having the proposals and a questionnaire on the Kent County Council website;
  - Two drop-in evenings held at Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys which combined attracted in excess of 90 people;
  - Raising awareness via social media;
  - A leaflet drop along the entire length of A26 through St. Johns and Southborough; and
  - Signage on lamp columns.
- Over 200 responses were received of which the majority were positive. 67 per cent agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals.
- A number of specific issues were raised and these had been addressed in the report.
- Paul Lulham from DHA Consultations, who had worked on the design proposals, was in attendance to answer any questions.
- The proposed next steps we set out in the report.

County Councillor Oakford commented that he supported improving safety for all road users, but not at the expense of any particular user. The proposals overall were supported but there was concern about the section between the Hand and Sceptre Pub and Mabledon Farm where the proposals stated that it was impossible to have a cycle lane. He felt that this was the most dangerous section of the route and cyclists could often be seen with vehicles on both sides, either turning left to join the A21 or continuing on to Tonbridge. It was unsatisfactory to have a route that was not continuous and stopped at the most critical point. Although full details of the speed survey were expected at a future meeting, initial figures showed that more than 1,000 drivers per day exceed the 40mph speed limit. More needed to be done to make that section of road safer. He added that a short section of 20mph limit in Southborough was likely to cause confusion.

Councillor Bulman commented that he was aware of several accidents recently on that section of road.

Mr Lulham confirmed that the brief was to provide so far as possible a continuous route from Tunbridge Wells to Tonbridge and it was frustrating that there was no easy answer to the stretch of route in question. The nature of the road changed from urban to rural with fewer accesses and frontages onto the road and there was a resulting change in driver behaviour. The width of road was inconsistent and narrow in places and to provide extra width would be significantly more expensive. Whilst not impossible it would be disproportionately expensive, at this point in time given, the low usage. However, there would be a review to determine further improvements that could be made if the funding was available in the future.

Councillor Bulman commented that on the approach to the A26/A21 junction a significant proportion of vehicles would be splitting off to the A21 whereas most cyclists would want to continue along the A26 and asked how best to

overcome those conflicting priorities. Mr Lulham advised that the proposal was to encourage cyclists to use the shared use path on the eastern side of the carriageway. Some more confident cyclists would prefer to ride in the main carriageway. There was the potential for an alternative on the western side that utilised the wider verge at Mabledon to provide a similar solution as on the eastern side. This would, however, require cyclists to cross the carriageway and it may not be suitable for less confident cyclists. The nature of the traffic was different to that in the urban area and the solutions were more difficult to come by. Councillor Bulman added that the speed survey due to be considered at a future meeting might provide evidence in support of a reduction in the speed limit.

Mrs Smith reiterated that whilst it was disappointing that a continuous route could not be provided within current resources, this did not rule out further improvements in the future. Furthermore, the new non-motorised route along the A21 would link up with the cycle route through North Farm, providing an alternative route between Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge. In respect of the 20mph stretch in Southborough, Mrs Smith commented that the nature of the road was more urban and so, where a continuous route was not possible, a reduction in speed was appropriate. She added that officers would ensure signage was adequate to reduce confusion and assist drivers to be aware of the changing conditions.

Mrs Jane Fenwick had registered to speak on behalf of Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum.

Mrs Fenwick commented that the Town Forum supported cycle routes as a way to support active travel. The proposed route passed four schools, which meant it was vital for it to be improved to encourage children to cycle which would improve health and fitness and reduce the impact of the school run. As a fully segregated route could not be provided it was essential that what could be provided was of the highest standard, which, short of complete segregation, should include: raising the height of the cycle lane above the road, enhancing the white lines with cats-eyes and rumble strips and the number of adjoining roads being reduced by filtered permeability. All road junctions and entrances to premises along the road should have block raised tables to provide a consistent junction treatment for cyclists, pedestrians and drivers. It was disappointing that responses to the consultation appeared not to have considered such measures. The Town Forum canvassed students at Skinners' School and Tunbridge Wells Girls Grammar School, none of whom said they would cycle or be allowed to cycle. Simply painting a white line would not be sufficient to make the route safe and the aforementioned additional measures should be considered.

Mr Lulham commented that physical segregation had not been ruled out in principle but that many of the other examples where it had been successfully installed were where the space was much wider to start with. In places along the A26, the road was simply not wide enough or there were too many accesses and bus stops for the route to be fully segregated. There also had to be a compromise on what the Highway Authority would be willing to adopt and maintain whereas novel and untested features may require significant maintenance and the stockpiling of spare materials. Mrs Smith added that all options had been thoroughly investigated to see what was practical and a lack of further segregation was not simply a matter of cost.

Councillor Bulman sought clarification on the feasibility of raising the road surface in the cycle lane. Mr Lulham commented that there were stretches of the road where it may be possible, but not continuously and added that problems included considerable new drainage works being necessary and the lack of road width. The road was narrow in places and HGVs were close to overrunning the kerbs, such that reducing the road width would increase this risk and was likely to result in damage to the kerbs. Such an action would be unlikely to pass a safety audit.

Councillor Bulman commented that he was unconvinced by the argument as an HGV could just as easily overrun a white line. Mrs Smith reiterated that all features had been thoroughly investigated, but she would be willing to check the route again with the Highway Authority to ensure the best practicable facilities would be provided. Councillor Bulman added that he would appreciate further checks being made as his experience of the A26 was such that he would not be willing to cycle the route. Mrs Smith agreed to review the route but urged members to support progressing the current proposals as a good first step and any action to encourage cyclists should be taken. It was hoped that this was only phase one and there would be future improvements.

Mr Scott Purchas had registered to speak on behalf of the Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group.

Mr Purchas commented that the Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group was pleased to see the Council progressing the Cycling Strategy and noted the significant support from residents for more and better provision for cycling. Cycling was the easiest and most cost effective method of adding transport capacity whilst also alleviating pollution, poor health from inactivity, road danger and congestion from population growth. Congestion could not be solved without embracing cycling as a key transport mode. To be successful, a cycle route must be attractive to those who would not otherwise cycle, it would only be through high quality segregation from the fast and heavy traffic that more people would be willing to leave their cars. Mr Purchas quoted correspondence from schools along St John's Road, noting their support for greater cycling provision and specifically a letter from the Head Teacher of Tunbridge Wells Girls Grammar School which highlighted that most pupils resided less than two miles from the school yet few cycled due to safety concerns. There were potentially thousands of pupils attending the various secondary and primary schools in the area who could cycle if it was made safe. If continuous provision could not be made it should be prioritised in St John's and reducing school-run traffic would benefit all road users. He disagreed that full segregation was not possible as there were many examples in similar conditions where it had been achieved, but he acknowledged that it was more expensive and, therefore, not deliverable in phase one. The current plans were a valuable, welcome and important first step to a high-quality cycling network, which would need further connections to all major routes in order to unlock the full benefits.

In response to a question from Councillor Bulman, Mrs Smith considered that it was unlikely that a continuous fully segregated route would be possible, but welcomed any examples demonstrating where it had been achieved elsewhere.

Councillor Simmons welcomed the cycle route plans, but expressed concerns regarding the section between Mabelton and Bidborough Ridge where the speed limit increased from 30mph to 40mph. He disagreed that the nature of

the road should be the determining factor in setting the limit. The recent speed survey had shown individuals travelling at speeds up to 90mph and there was a risk of creating a killing zone. Reducing the speed limit to 30mph would be a clear and cost effective demonstration of the risks in that area. Councillor Simmons also questioned why it was not possible for cyclists and buses to share the existing lanes. Mrs Smith commented that the proposal to remove the bus lane was not made lightly and noted the objections from bus operators. She explained that she had conducted a survey from the top of the bus lane in Southborough and estimated that the lane gave buses only a 30-60 second advantage over the surrounding traffic and this was often negated by the traffic lights at the bottom. The loss of the bus lane was necessary to facilitate a cycle lane up-hill where cyclists were more vulnerable. Elsewhere along the route cyclists and buses would continue to share the lanes. Councillor Bulman added that there was also a bus stop in the lane in question which further reduced the benefit of the lane.

Councillor Simmons sought clarification as to how the loss of the bus lane would benefit cyclists travelling up-hill. Mrs Smith commented that it would allow the carriageways to be moved over thus creating space for cycle lanes in both directions.

Councillor Lidstone commented that the risk to cyclists around Bidborough Ridge may not be such a concern as any who had made it up the hill would be the more confident cyclists. The main problem was with congestion and, for the cycle route to be successful, it would have to move people out of their cars. Initially these would be unconfident people and school children on short journeys to school and into town. He felt it was unfortunate that better segregation could not be achieved in St. Johns and suggested that the bus lanes should be sacrificed. Councillor Lidstone also asked whether Section 106 developer contributions from the Dairy Crest site had been allocated and whether they could be used to provide further measures to reduce vehicles crossing traffic to and from rat-runs along the route. Mrs Smith commented that all opportunities for funding would be taken and that raised tables and filtered permeability solutions had been included in the plan where practicable.

The Chairman, Councillor Bulman, invited further questions and comments. There being none, Members were asked whether the resolution was agreed.

**RESOLVED** – That the progress of the A26 cycle route proposals be supported including the following next steps:

- Undertake the statutory Traffic Regulation Orders consultation for the changes to the route in early 2017;
- Submit the business case for funding to the Local Enterprise Partnership Accountability Board in early 2017; and
- Agree a delivery timetable with KCC, aiming for a start in June 2017.

## **LOCAL WINTER SERVICE PLAN**

- TB34/16 Carol Valentine, West Kent Highway Manager, KCC, introduced the report which included the following comments:
- The county-wide plan had been updated, the report set out the plan for Tunbridge Wells with links to the full document.
  - Focus would be on salting the primary routes and salt bins were also provided for secondary and rural routes.

- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Parish Councils had supplies of a salt/sand mix.
- Current projections were for a mild winter.

In response to a question from Councillor Backhouse, Ms Valentine clarified that primary routes did not necessarily include bus routes. In the event of snow the plan set out those secondary routes that would be cleared, these were prioritised around bus routes.

Parish Councillor Mackonochie noted that salt/sand mix was gratefully received by the Parish Councils.

The Chairman, Councillor Bulman, invited further questions and comments. There being none, Members were asked whether the resolution was agreed.

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

## **HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME**

TB35/16 Earl Bourner, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, KCC, introduced the report for information and invited questions.

Councillor Woodward commented that he had a number of issues he was expecting to be included in the programme in the near future and asked when the plan would be updated with next year's works. Mr Bourner requested that details of the expected works be forwarded to him and he would report back. The programme for next year was being prepared. It was expected that budgets would be confirmed in February 2017 and the programme would be finalised shortly after.

The Chairman, Councillor Bulman, invited further questions and comments. There being none, Members were asked whether the resolution was agreed.

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

## **TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

TB36/16 The Board considered items for future meetings and comments were made in respect of the proposals as follows:

### **Speeding on the A26:**

The Chairman, Councillor Bulman, noted that Speeding on the A26 was due to return following the speed survey.

### **Concerns raised by Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum:**

Councillor Bulman drew Members' attention to a list of concerns raised by the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum and suggested that he work with the officers to determine an effective method for addressing the points made in the list.

Councillor Woodward commented that many of the issues would be affected by the completion of the A21. Earl Bourner, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, KCC, added that it would be difficult to anticipate the precise implications of completing the A21 and that any long-term plans would need to be reviewed once the actual situation had been established.

Councillor Bulman commented that to pick individual items from the list would be difficult at this time and reiterated his suggestion that he work with officers to propose a way forward for the next meeting. Councillor Lidstone supported the establishment of a working group to tackle concerns raised and proposed that such a working group be considered at the next meeting. Councillor Backhouse commented that the potential implications of dualling the A21 had been considered in the past and agreed that to make policy on conjecture could result in incorrect policy. Consequently, it would be prudent to wait for the works to be completed. Councillor Bulman sought to confirm that the idea of a working party to consider transport matters was supported but that its priorities may need to be dynamic.

Hilary Smith, Economic Development Manager, TWBC, noted that Planning Policy was in the process of reviewing the Local Plan and, alongside this, there would be a review of the Transport Strategy. It may be advantageous to have a working party to look at transport issues as part of the Local Plan review. A proposal would be put forward at the next meeting following consultation with colleagues and stakeholders. Members agreed.

#### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

TB37/16      The next meeting of the Joint Transportation Board would be held on Monday 24 April 2017 commencing at 6pm.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 8.00 pm.