

TUNBRIDGE WELLS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Monday, 21 January 2019

PRESENT: Borough Councillors Stanyer (Chairman), Backhouse, Dr Hall, Lidstone, Simmons and Woodward
County Councillors Barrington-King (Vice-Chairman), Hamilton, McInroy, Oakford and Rankin
Parish Councillor Mackonochie

Officers in Attendance: Nick Baldwin (Senior Engineer, Parking), David Candlin (Head of Economic Development and Property), Jane Fineman (Head of Finance and Procurement), Nikola Floodgate (Schemes Planning and Delivery Manager), Lisa Gillham (Tunbridge Wells District Manager), Vicki Hubert (Principal Transport Planner), Robert Perrin (Parking Manager), Patrick Rynne (Development Manager), Hilary Smith (Economic Development Manager), Gary Stevenson (Head of Housing, Health and Environment), Paul Taylor (Director of Change and Communities), Carol Valentine (West Kent Highway Manager), Jamie Watson (Traffic Schemes Team Leader) and Mark O'Callaghan (Democratic Services Officer)

Other Members in Attendance: Councillors Eyton, Dr Basu, Moore, Podbury, Pope, Reilly and Scott.

Others in Attendance: Stephen Eyton (Vectos (Consultant))

APOLOGIES

TB19/18 Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Holden.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

TB20/18 The Democratic Services Officer read guidance from the Monitoring Officer regarding predetermination in relation to the Traffic Regulation Orders set out in the agenda. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that the matters specific to traffic regulations were separate to planning or corporate considerations. Consequently, any member who previously expressed an opinion in those cases could continue to take a view in this matter.

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

NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS WISHING TO SPEAK

TB21/18 Councillor Moore had registered to speak at minute TB23/18 and TB25/18. Councillor Scott had registered to speak at minute TB23/18, TN25/18, TB29/18 and TB31/18.

The Chairman noted that 12 members of the public had registered to speak on various items.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 15 OCTOBER 2018

TB22/18 Members reviewed the minutes. No amendments were proposed.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting dated 15 October 2018 be approved as a correct record.

UPDATE REPORT

TB23/18 Scott Purchas, for Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group (TWBUG), had registered to speak and commented that whilst the Langton Road crossing was welcomed it was inaccurate to suggest that it was part of a complete cycle route from the town to Rusthall and Langton. Such a route was needed and further work was requested however shared use paths should be avoided. Any proposed works to Carrs Corner and the surrounding areas should have regard to improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The Joint Transportation Board should monitor performance indicators which would highlight the increasing number of injuries on Kent's roads. TWBUG supported efforts to improve the town centre as a place to visit and dwell but was disappointed by the lack of ambition of the proposed public realm works and further restricting of motor vehicles in the town centre should be considered.

Ian Rennardson, for Calverley Park Gardens Residents' Association, had registered to speak and was disappointed to note that the promised HGV signs, pedestrian refuge and protective bollards had not been implemented. The Council's commitment to major projects was sadly lacking in respect these simple actions. The aforementioned works and a 20 mph speed limit was needed and would become more urgent as the proposed development would inevitably lead to more traffic and more danger.

Nicholas Sturcke, resident of Kings Toll Road, Pembury, had registered to speak and sought support to convince Highways England to implement short term action to help alleviate tailbacks on the A21 by way of a left filter lane on the southbound carriageway at the Kipping's Cross roundabout. The congestion was the prime motivation for drivers to leave the A21 searching for an alternative route. Highways England had acknowledged the effect of the traffic and advised that the only solution was to bypass the Kipping's Cross junction, however work was not expected before 2020-25, this was too long to wait for any resolution. They would work with local partners to assess the feasibility of the proposal and the Council was urged to lend its support.

Councillor Scott, member for Culverden ward, had registered to speak and commented that written material had been circulated which demonstrated that 20 mph zones were effective in reducing accidents and worked without necessarily having physical barriers. The requirement to have physical speed reduction measures where the average speeds were above 24 mph was an unnecessary policy decision of Kent County Council. Furthermore, Upper Grosvenor Road had become a main arterial route from the town to North Farm and was increasingly dangerous to cross, a pedestrian crossing would also help to reduce speeds. Work was ongoing with County Councillor McInroy on both these issues.

Councillor Moore, member for Park ward, had registered to speak and commented that she was working with County Councillor Rankin to match fund a joint project to improve safety at Carrs Corner which was a priority for both Councils. She welcomed the implementation of the Grove Hill Road Traffic Regulation Order and recently received reassurance from officers that the restrictions would be enforced. Thirdly, suggestions that sufficient performance indicator data had been provided were unacceptable, the figures had been requested by members of the Cabinet following three consecutive years of significant flooding in the town. Residents reasonably asked what

was being done as it was difficult for residents and borough representatives to monitor whether and how quickly faults were rectified. It would aid confidence in Kent County Council to have this information regularly reported to the Joint Transportation Board.

Comments were made in respect of the following items (other items were taken as read):

Pedestrian Crossing on Langton Road

- KCC had agreed to fund the survey work necessary to inform the next stage of the works, the results of which were expected around March 2019.

Carrs Corner

- HGV signage was due to be installed shortly.

St John's 20mph Zone (including Currie Road)

- Additional roundels in the St John's zone were welcomed but did not resolve the specific problems in Currie Road which was a single lane road but where vehicles used the pavements when busy. Proposals for changing the road to one way needed to be investigated.

Congestion on Kings Toll Road, Pembury

- There was little doubt about the need for action and a number of quick wins had been implemented.
- Inappropriate vehicles for the roads were a hazard for residents and causing damage to the infrastructure.
- Evidence was needed on the efficacy of Mr Sturcke's proposals and a report was requested for a future meeting.

20mph Zone for Culverden

- The requirement for traffic calming measures where the average speed was above 24 mph was believed to be a matter of national guidance but clarification would be sought.
- Where policies were impediments they needed to be reviewed.
- There had been at least eight pedestrians injured in the past few months with no drivers injured during that period, this clearly demonstrated that the balance was tipped to the drivers and more needed to be done to protect pedestrians.
- Zones were preferable to single roads.

Pedestrian Crossing on Upper Grosvenor Road

- Pedestrian counts and speed surveys were underway to inform the next stages.

Reporting of Performance Indicators

- The ability of Kent County Council to report on a district level was questioned as nationally reported statistics on the number of people killed or seriously injured were provided on a district level.

RESOLVED – That, subject to the comments made in the discussion, the report be noted.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO PARKING RESTRICTIONS - MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD / MOUNT PLEASANT AVENUE, ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS

TB24/18 The report was introduced by a panel lead by David Candlin, Head of Economic Development and Property, and included a visual presentation.

Robert Chris, a resident of Royal Tunbridge Wells, had registered to speak and questioned the timing of the implementation of the proposed restrictions in relation to the public enquiry looking at the compulsory purchase orders, whether the proposed loading bay satisfied Sainsbury's requirements and what would happen with the relocated bus shelters.

Adrian Berendt, for Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum, had registered to speak and was disappointed that the opportunity to implement a 20 mph zone had not been taken. The development would deliver more traffic to the town centre contrary to the aims of the Urban Design Framework Supplementary Planning Document, an alternative would be to restrict all vehicles for the car park to only enter via Church Road / Crescent Road and make Mount Pleasant Road safer.

The discussion included consideration of the following matters:

- The proposed restrictions would only be implemented if the Calverley Square development went ahead.
- The loading bay was provided at Sainsbury's request and fulfilled the needs of their largest delivery vehicles.
- Relocated bus shelters would allow a minimum 2 meters pavement clearance.
- The design of the car park entrance, the flow of traffic, signage and the design of the shared space in front of the theatre would discourage vehicles from entering Mount Pleasant Avenue from the south.
- Modelling of additional traffic movements in the town centre did not indicate a significant negative impact as a result of the access to the car park and therefore no further adjustments to road layouts were deemed necessary. The Traffic Assessment formed part of the planning application and was publically available.
- The relocated taxi rank was positioned on the east side of Mount Pleasant Road to provide a line of sight to the rank outside the station.
- Taxis leaving one rank to join the other would need to cross the carriageway at the point pedestrians were being encouraged to cross.
- The taxi rank had been located temporarily in the proposed site during operation of ice rink without problem, it was less problematic than the current location.
- Permit bays at the south end of Mount Pleasant Avenue were Zone C residents parking, the move from one side of the road was a like-for-like swap. There would be no special provisions for councillor parking.
- The new car park would predominantly be for short-stay public parking, some spaces may be reserved for tenants but this was subject to ongoing negotiations. No spaces would be allocated to councillors or council staff.
- Taxi rank usage was not routinely monitored but Parking Services did respond to reported problems. Conversion of taxi ranks to parking could be investigated but was a separate.

- Season ticket bays that the north end of Mount Pleasant Avenue were not allocated to AXA. The bays were, and would remain, for use by any season ticket holder.
- Both taxi ranks could be used to pickup customers which would have to be monitored in case of conflict.
- Traffic disruptions during the construction phase may have an impact on footfall for local businesses. The traffic management plan should minimise disruption.

RESOLVED – That the Board endorses the making of Orders B, C, D, E and F as set out in the report.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO PARKING AND TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS - MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD AND ADJOINING ROADS FOR THE PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT SCHEME

TB25/18 The report was introduced by a panel lead by Gary Stevenson, Head of Housing, Health and Environment, and included a visual presentation.

Karen Pengelly, for Royal Tunbridge Wells Together, had registered to speak and commented that businesses in Monson Road were concerned about access, particularly for delivery vehicles, and the displacement of traffic to other already busy areas. Town centres were undergoing significant change and the effect of any changes needed to be monitored and revisited if the expected benefits were not realised.

Jane Fenwick, for Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum, had registered to speak and supported efforts to reduce traffic and improving the environment for pedestrians in the town centre. Previous suggestions by the Town Forum had been taken into account but the plans did not fully achieve the ambition. York, Dudley and Newton Roads all fed onto Mount Pleasant Road and should be restricted to residents or deliveries only, similarly all traffic should only be allowed to exit via the southbound junction with Church Road to avoid creating rat runs and improve safety for pedestrians crossing Monson Road. 20mph limits should extend further and limits rather than zones would reduce signage. Taxis should not be allowed as they were not allowed at Fiveways. To further reduce traffic on Monson Road the entrance to the Town Hall Yard Car Park on Monson Way should be closed with access being provided via the Crescent Road Car Park.

Pippa Collard, a resident of Royal Tunbridge Wells, had registered to speak and was very concerned about a lack of consultation with residents. The proposals could transform York Road from a quiet residential road to a major rat-run. The road was narrow and larger vehicles already struggled to get through, any additional traffic would reduce safety and cause damage to its historical setting. The proposal to not allow right turns from York Road would unduly affect residents by increasing their journeys by three quarters of a mile through heavy traffic. If the works were to go ahead signage should be provided to direct non-resident traffic away from residential roads and residents should be allowed to turn right from York Road.

Caterina Plastow, a resident of Royal Tunbridge Wells, had registered to speak and whilst the aesthetic improvements to Mount Pleasant Road were welcomed parts of the plans that affected York Road needed mitigation. Single yellow lines and thus parking after 6pm should be retained on the

wider sections of the road and additional spaces could be provided at the southern end of the road. These and residents only parking restrictions, if extended overnight and on Sundays, would provide an opportunity for residents to park near their homes. Residents should be allowed to turn right from York Road to avoid the need to complete long loops to find parking.

Councillor Scott, member for Culverden ward, had registered to speak, and endorsed many of the points raised by the previous speakers. There was a very strong likelihood of the changes creating a rat-run so something had to be done to mitigate the risk. One such idea would be to reverse the one-way direction of either Dudley Road or York Road to create a localised loop. Residents should be eligible for overnight parking in the Crescent Road Car Park and signage should clearly identify the area as residents only.

Councillor Moore, member for Park ward, had registered to speak, and commented that the purpose of the works was to provide a better environment for pedestrians. Improvements in phase one of the public realm work at Fiveways had had a positive transformative effect to the area and a higher quality finish for phase two would be achieved as the Council was taking the lead. Empty shops was a commonly expressed concern, to maintain town centres investment was needed to make areas attractive and to provide an experience that online shopping could not. These works were part of the Council 5-Year Plan to deliver growth and improve the quality of life. Studies showed that street improvements had substantial benefits to users, uplifts in rental values, declines in vacancy and increased footfall associated with a café culture. Roads needed to be more than just traffic corridors.

The discussion included consideration of the following matters:

- Deliveries to Monson Road during the restricted hours would need to either travel down Newton Road and up Monson Road or turn on Monson Road.
- A weight limit on York Road and Dudley Road would restrict larger vehicles from using those residential roads for access. Such a restriction would be subject to a separate Traffic Regulation Order.
- The purpose of the scheme was not congestion busting but rather amenity improvement. There would be some displacement of traffic to other areas which would be monitored.
- Whilst not a full town square, the raised section on Mount Pleasant Road would provide a focus for the war memorial and a space for civic functions.
- The scheme was constrained by the funding available.
- Monson Road was not suitable for a 20mph limit as the average speed was above the threshold and there was insufficient funds for additional traffic calming measures.
- A town-wide 20 mph zone could be considered in the future but not as part of this scheme.
- Additional parking restrictions on York Road would need to be looked into as a separate issue as there were a number of conflicting considerations.
- More and earlier consultation with residents was necessary.
- Allowing right turns from York Road would undermine one of the key purposes of the scheme, namely reducing as much traffic as possible.

- Works affecting York Road would be towards the end of the scheme so there would be several months to consider any further actions including consulting with residents.

RESOLVED – That the Board endorses the making of Orders A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H as set out in the report.

LOCAL WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2018/19

TB26/18 Lisa Gillham, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, KCC, introduced the report.

Members took the report as read.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

WELL-MANAGED HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

TB27/18 Lisa Gillham, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, KCC, introduced the report.

Members took the report as read.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

FLOOD INVESTIGATION

TB28/18 Lisa Gillham, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, KCC, introduced the report.

John Cunningham, a resident of Royal Tunbridge Wells, had registered to speak and was disappointed that flooding was not getting higher priority, partly perhaps as there were five parties involved in the decision making process. There had been six serious flooding events in the past four years, something that was only supposed to occur once in every thirty years. The primary cause was that sewer infrastructure was largely unchanged since 1900 despite a massive increase in the number of properties connected to it. For example, the Warwick Park sewer was installed in 1896 and provided for approximately 120 properties, today there were between 800 and 1,000 households connected to the same system. New sewers were planned to run at 25 per cent capacity as the normal with 75 per cent redundancy in case of extreme circumstances. The system was now overloaded and further developments were planned. Berkley Homes development of 220 houses in Hawkenbury would be connected to the Warwick Park system. All influence needed to be brought to bear to fix a major problem.

The discussion included consideration of the following matters:

- Page 120 of the report set out further action to be taken.
- Relevant officers from the Flood team could attend a future meeting to answer questions.
- The actions set out in the report were welcomed but more needed to be done, there were still problems particularly with surface water drainage.
- Works to divert surface water drainage from the sewer to the River Grom had been completed and appeared to have improved the situation.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

LOCAL PLAN WORKING GROUP UPDATE

TB29/18 Vicki Hubert, Principal Transport Planner, KCC, introduced the report.

Councillor Scott, member for Culverden ward, had registered to speak and commented that any plans must take account of emerging technology to ensure that current works did not impede future development.

Discussion included consideration of the following matters:

- Driverless vehicles had been discussed at the Planning Policy Working Group which would feed into the Local Plan work.
- The consultants working on the Transport Strategy as part of the Local Plan had been briefed to take account of new technologies in their reports.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME

TB30/18 Lisa Gillham, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, KCC, introduced the report.

Paul Mason, for Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group, had registered to speak and commented that Kent County Council had a policy of promoting active travel. The waiting time for pedestrians and cyclists at crossings should be removed. 25-30 second waits were not encouraging active travel. The removal of waiting times was permissible as demonstrated by an example in Pembury High Street. Misuse could be avoided by programming a minimum go time for the traffic between stops. Suggestions that there wouldn't be sufficient notice for drivers were illogical as the stop cycle for drivers would be the same regardless of when the button was pressed. It would not impede traffic flow as the flow was often slow enough that the traffic would simply catch up with itself. Reducing wait times to zero would be easy and inexpensive to implement and have a positive effect to active travel.

Comments were made in respect of the following matters:

- The pedestrian crossing on Mount Ephraim outside Tunbridge Wells Free School was another example where a long wait cycle of 30 seconds deterred its use. School children and others often did not wait.
- Comments would be fed back relevant officers.
- Discussions at the previous meeting asked for further explanation on the rationale behind bell-mouth junctions and members were keen that this not be lost.
- The Kent Design Guide which covered bell-mouth junctions was currently under review.
- Officers had visited the junction of Halls Hole Road and Bayhall Road following a recent accident and a review was ongoing.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

TB31/18 Comments were made in respect of the following matters:

On-street parking reserve

- A considerable pot of money was potentially available and proposals for funding would come forward to future meetings.

Schools Transport

- A review of schools policy was outside the remit of the Board and therefore better pursued through alternative channels.

Update on Autonomous Vehicles

- Any specific proposals should come through Officers.

Double Yellow Lines on Major York's Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells

- Proposals may come forward to a future meeting.

Speeding on Penshurst Road, Bidborough

- Review of safety following an accident with a cyclist may come forward to a future meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

TB32/18 The date of the next scheduled meeting was Monday 15 April 2019 at 6pm.

NOTES:

The meeting concluded at 8.25 pm.

An audio recording of this meeting is available on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website.