

## TUNBRIDGE WELLS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Monday, 10 February 2020

**PRESENT:** Borough Councillors Stanyer (Vice-Chairman), Backhouse, Bruneau, Lidstone, Scott and Woodward  
County Councillors Hamilton (Chairman), Barrington-King, Holden, McInroy, Oakford and Rankin  
Parish Councillor Mackonochie

**Officers in Attendance:** Hilary Smith (Economic Development Manager), Nick Baldwin (Senior Engineer, Parking), Jane Fineman (Head of Finance and Procurement) and Stephen Baughen (Head of Planning Services)

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillors McDermott

### APOLOGIES

TB72/19 There were no apologies for absence received.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

TB73/19 There were no disclosable pecuniary or other significant interests declared at the meeting.

### NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS WISHING TO SPEAK

TB74/19 The Chairman noted that there were 6 members of the public registered to speak on various items.

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 14 OCTOBER 2019

TB75/19 Members reviewed the minutes. No amendments were proposed.

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting dated 14 October 2019 be approved as a correct record.

### UPDATE REPORT

TB76/19 As part of the Update Report, Councillor Hamilton gave a verbal update on the Council's work on Walking and Cycling and the current concerns regarding Forest Road and Halls Hall Road.

- Councillor Hamilton had a very productive meeting with the Tunbridge Wells Bicycle Users Group (TWBUG).
- The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) included details of work currently being undertaken by TWBC:
  - o TWBC had recently commissioned consultants Phil Jones Associates to undertake further work on the LCWIP in line with guidance from the Department for Transport.
  - o The LCWIP would seek to develop a comprehensive network of high quality walking and cycling routes that would enable resident (and visitors) to choose sustainable modes of travel for journeys to work and for other trip purposes.
  - o Central Government had stated that although LCWIPs were not mandatory, Local Authorities that had them would be well

- o placed to make the case for future investment.
- o The LCWIP would support the new Local Plan and would feed into the Transport Strategy. It would also contribute towards the aims of the recently declared Climate Emergency as well as the Air Quality and Public Health agendas in the borough.
- Forest Road and Halls Hall Road:
  - o Kent CC had a bid from the Local Transport Plan to resurface the approaches to the Zebra Crossing on Forest Road and to carry out pedestrian crossing improvements at the junction of Halls Hole Road in the 2020/21 financial year.
  - o The outcome of the bids were as yet unknown. However, Kent CC would provide an update at the next JTB (20 April 2020) at which time it would be known what schemes had been awarded funding from the Local Transport Plan.
  - o KCC confirmed that a meeting would be convened with Councillor Bruneau to discuss the options for Forest Road and this would be done in advance of the next JTB meeting.
  - o Councillor Rankin had been working with the Hawkenbury Village Association and officers at Kent CC regarding the Halls Hole Road and Forest Road junction and some funding may be possible. In addition Grant money would be used both for junction improvements and a gateway to Hawkenbury to make the entrance more attractive. Preliminary plans were currently being worked up and discussions with Hawkenbury Village Association would continue.

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

## **SGN (SOUTHERN GAS NETWORKS) PROGRAM OF WORKS IN TUNBRIDGE WELLS**

TB77/19 SGN gave a presentation on their work which included the following matters:

- SGN managed the network that distributed natural gas and green gas to 5.9 million homes and businesses across the South of England and Scotland.
- SGN were tasked to undertake a replacement project as required by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) enforcement policy for the iron mains risk reduction programme that addressed the failure of 'at risk' iron gas mains.
- Pipes within 30 metres of buildings must be decommissioned or replaced between 2002 and 2032 to reduce the risk of injuries, fatalities and damage to buildings.
- The pipes that would be done this year would be mandatory pipes. Mandatory pipes were those that have been highlighted as the top 20% at risk pipes in the network and therefore must be replaced within a specific time period.
- Old metal gas main pipes would be replaced with new yellow polyethylene (PE) plastic pipes which were designed to last for at least 80 years. Service pipes that connect the mains to individual properties would also be checked and if necessary replaced.
- Where possible activity was planned in advance as this was less disruptive.
- There were a number of mandatory replacement projects to be carried out in Tunbridge Wells in 2020. Once the plans had been finalised it would be possible to obtain details of these works.

- Engagement and communication was very important and SGN were committed to engage with a wide variety of stakeholders at the earliest opportunity.

Discussion included the following comments:

- It was suggested that the issue of safety be included in the signage to better inform residents of the reasons the work was being undertaken.
- It was noted that the Commons Conservators were currently not included on the list of consultees.
- The new pipes were designed to take account of any new future mixes. The new pipes would be future proofed.
- Where possible SGN liaised with other agencies/utility companies. However it was not always possible to undertake joint ventures e.g. water and gas did not mix.
- SGN would propose slots but ultimately those slots were given by Kent CC. SGN would not know if other works were planned at a similar time.
- Kent CC confirmed that where possible they would seek to plan works that could be undertaken in partnership. Emergency works were dealt with separately and undertaken as necessary.
- Engagement with the local community was paramount to ensure all necessary parties were suitably informed of planned works, including timescales and the extent of any disruption.
- There were a small number of roads where the Government permitted Kent CC to charge for the use of the road by the utility company. Kent CC were actively considering whether this could be extended to other roads to incentivise companies to progress the work quicker so disruption was kept to a minimum.

## **BANNER FARM ESTATE PROPOSED PERMIT PARKING RESTRICTIONS**

TB78/19 Nick Baldwin, Senior Engineer TWBC introduced the report that sought the endorsement of the proposal to introduce permit parking restrictions in the Banner Farm Estate, Tunbridge Wells and included the following comments:

- The Banner Farm Estate sat between two existing permit parking zones with most streets experiencing some level of nuisance parking.
- A formal consultation which detailed proposals to introduce permit parking on the currently unrestricted parts of the Banner Farm Estate was undertaken in January 2020.
- The consultation received a good level of response. The result was an overwhelming support for the introduction of restrictions on the Estate.

**RESOLVED** – That the Board endorsed the proposal to make a traffic regulation order, the effect of which was to introduce permit parking restrictions across the remainder of the Banner Farm residential estate.

## **ZONE A PERMIT PARKING RESTRICTIONS**

TB79/19 Nick Baldwin, Senior Engineer TWBC introduced the report that recommended the endorsement of the proposal to amend permit parking restrictions in Zone A area of Tunbridge Wells and included the following matters:

- The report included 2 specific issues, the inclusion of Rodmell Road and the addition of an afternoon hour long restriction in the Claremont Road area.
- The Council had been made aware of parking concerns on the lower part of Warwick Park. TWBC undertook a survey, carried out at different times of the day and found that spaces were available on every occasion.
- The proposed restrictions were considered to be a measured response to the concerns raised.
- It was recognised that the introduction of these restrictions may result in parking pressures in other areas, but by undertaking a staged approach, TWBC would be able to monitor the situation and review as necessary.
- The afternoon restriction proposed in the Claremont Road area would alleviate the problems of long term parking by non residents.

Ms Nicola Merrett (Buckingham Road resident) had registered to speak, which included the following comments:

- In favour of the additional proposed parking restrictions but would like the Council to consider further restrictions.
- The road was next to Grove Park and only a few minutes walk to the High Street and The Pantiles making it very attractive for non residents to park.
- The road had many residents with young families that needed to park close to their property. There was no guarantee that any parking would be available after 11am in the morning.
- There were also issues of spaces being taken by residents of other roads where permits were over subscribed.
- The road was a no through road and very narrow, only one car width wide. This resulted in damage to parked cars when others were trying to turn around. It also resulted in cars being blocked in.
- Cars were also known to park on the double yellow lines, which also resulted in severe access issues into and out of the road.
- Non residents should use the car parks available.
- The roads surrounding Buckingham Road had much stricter parking restrictions and it was unclear as to why Buckingham Road was not treated the same.

Tony Pawson, Chairman of the Warwick Park Area Residents Association and speaking on their behalf had registered to speak which included the following comments:

- The inclusion of Rodmell Road was very welcome but residents were still looking for wider restrictions to be introduced in the area.
- The report suggested that further restrictions could be considered at a later date but it was felt that this was not enough of a commitment.
- Residents at the lower end of Warwick Park were blighted to such an extent that they had started to dig up their front gardens in order to create their own parking provision.
- The introduction of off street parking and the associated drive ways would result in the loss of on street parking spaces.
- The residents were keen to see if the new limited restriction ameliorated the problem and looked forward to a review in due course.

Discussion included the following comments:

- A review would be important to establish what had worked and whether the new restrictions had moved the parking problems to another area.
- TWBC confirmed that reviews of restrictions were undertaken on a regular basis.

**RESOLVED** - That the Board endorsed the proposal to make a traffic regulation order which adds to and amends the restrictions in the Zone A permit parking area as detailed in the report.

## **ZONE HA HAWKENBURY PERMIT PARKING ZONE**

TB80/19 Nick Baldwin, Senior Engineer TWBC introduced the report that recommended the endorsement of the proposal to introduce parking restrictions in additional streets within the Zone HA area of Hawkenbury and included the following matters:

- The zone was first implemented in 2018 in a small number of streets but with the understanding that it might need to be extended if demand in other streets increased over time.
- TWBC undertook an informal and a formal consultation process and combined the results. The figures for both were included in the report.

Discussion included the following comments:

- Concern was raised regarding the afternoon restriction being from between 2-4pm rather than 2-3pm and the effect this might have around school collection time.
- The restrictions currently in place in Hawkenbury were between 2-4pm and TWBC were minded to keep the new restrictions consistent with existing restrictions. TWBC confirmed that the new proposed restrictions would not include the roads closest to the school so there would be opportunities to park in this area.

**RESOLVED** - That the Board endorsed the proposal to make a traffic regulation order which would introduce permit parking restrictions in more streets within Zone HA as detailed in the report.

## **PROPOSED ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING BAYS: MOUNT PLEASANT ROAD (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

TB81/19 Nick Baldwin, Senior Engineer TWBC introduced this report for information only, that noted the results of the public consultation exercise and subsequent making of the necessary traffic regulation order to introduce to 2 EV charging bays on Mount Pleasant Road, Tunbridge Wells.

Adrian Berendt, Chair of the Town Forum had registered to speak and made the following comments:

- The Town Forum had not been aware of the consultation.
- The bays should not be provided on Mount Pleasant which was part of

the Public Realm.

- Charging points should be located in either car parks or on side streets.
- The technology associated with electric charging was also raised as a potential issue.

Phil Munslow, Tunbridge Wells Bicycle Users Group (TWBUG) had registered to speak and made the following comments:

- TWBUG prioritised walking and cycling in Tunbridge Wells and supported by improved public transport.
- Against the siting of charging points in precious Public Realm space. Especially as there were 2 electric charging points in the Great Hall car park that were not being used.
- Not convinced that taxi drivers would be incentivised enough to change their vehicles.
- It was noted that none of the consultees commented on the location of the charging points, they were more concerned about the speed of the charging.
- TWBUG believed that Mount Pleasant should be protected and there was much better uses for this space.

Discussion included the following comments:

- It was noted that the Report was for information only. A public consultation was undertaken with no objections and as such no endorsement by the JTB was required.
- When TWBC was notified by Kent CC that funding was available it included a request for suitable locations for electric taxi charging facilities. It seemed appropriate to suggest a location that was closest to where the main taxi destination was i.e. Tunbridge Wells station.
- The footway on Mount Pleasant Road was very wide so the charging point could be sited away from the main thoroughfare.
- The 2 Bays would consist of one for taxi's the other for general use.
- A progression towards the use of electric vehicles would require a considerable number of charging points, it was likely therefore that this was the start of a potentially much larger installation process.
- There seemed little thought in the process other than money had been made available so it was used. The issue needed to be considered holistically rather than piecemeal.
- There was no charge by TWBC for parking in one of the bays. The charging element would be undertaken by a private enterprise, as such neither TWBC or Kent CC would receive any money for this.
- Concern was raised that there would be no monetary benefit to the Council. Money that could be used for improvements in other areas.
- Investment had to be considered against advancements in technology. Would these charging points become redundant in the not too distant future.
- Consideration should be given to offering free parking for those who used electrical charging points.
- Concern raised whether there was the capacity to deliver the amount of electricity required for an increased use.
- Hydrogen cell and kinetic technology may be the way forward.
- The price of electric cars was an issue.
- Phase 3 of the Public Realm project included turning Mount Pleasant into a Boulevard – with pedestrians as a priority rather than cars.

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

## HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME

TB82/19 Paul Mason from the Tunbridge Wells Bicycle Users Group had registered to speak and made the following comments:

- TWBUG campaigned for better road infrastructure that would enable people to leave their car keys at home.
- The latest report from Department for Transport on Road Safety stated that 92% of cyclist accidents were caused by motorists. And 75% of those casualties occurred within 20 metres of a junction.
- The equivalent report on pedestrian safety stated that the most common factor for pedestrian accidents was the failure by motorists to look properly.
- A reduction in vehicle speeds would significantly reduce casualties and improve safety.
- There were a number of speeding reducing measures that could be implemented, one of which was having tight radius junctions.
- It was therefore disappointing that the report included 44 proposed works of which 22 were Bell Mouth junctions. These were dangerous and intimidating designs that made crossing difficult.
- Action was now needed and a request should be made to Kent CC to bring a report to the next JTB giving the reasons why these junctions were being installed.

Louise Robertson had registered to speak and made the following comments:

- Job included teaching adults and children to cycle on the roads – Bikeability - which aimed to increase cycling and reduce casualties.
- One of the main teaching aims was for cyclists to take the lane and use a primary position around junctions. This meant using the centre of the lane, which was much safer. Teaching someone, particularly a child to take the lane and to keep cars behind was very challenging at Bell Mouth junctions.
- Some junctions took 35 steps to cross from one side to the other.
- Cars used these junctions as an opportunity to cut around cyclists rather than slowing down to a more appropriate speed.
- Children continually witnessed drivers turning into side roads on the wrong side of the road because it was wide enough to do so.
- This type of road encouraged inconsiderate driving.
- It was thought this junction type was an old style and was shocked that the design was still being introduced on new roads.
- Bell Mouth junctions encouraged speed, overtaking and poorly judged road entry.
- Streets should be designed to allow people to cross safely, ensuring that vehicles slowed down to turn and where drivers stayed behind cyclists at corners.

Julian Cook, District Manager, Kent County Council introduced the report that gave a summary of the schemes that were programmed for delivery in 2019/20.

Discussion included the following comments:

- Bell Mouth junctions were designed as part of the public highway. The public highway must be accessible to all users.
- Bell Mouth junctions were designed to cater for all types of traffic. A Bell Mouth junction would be appropriate for vehicles such as a refuse truck to avoid having to mount the pavement in order to gain access to the road. There were incidents of pedestrians being hit at square junctions due to large vehicles overhanging.
- This was a national issue and consideration needed to be given to better protect vulnerable road users. The introduction of a central island was a measure that could be used that would mean pedestrians were not having to negotiate a wide crossing in one go.
- Appropriate measures needed to be fed into the design guide that would inform developers during the planning application process.
- Discussions and the reasons for the introduction of Bell Mouth junctions needed to be undertaken at an early stage. Retrofitting junctions was costly so any measures to avoid this should be considered.
- Square junctions were not appropriate for all roads. Larger vehicles required wider junctions in order to gain access.
- Road junctions needed to be considered individually as each had different purposes and requirements. Kent CC had a team of professional engineers who designed roads. Their remit was to look at all road users and design something that was safe. A blanket approach to junctions was not appropriate.
- Kent CC to consider looking at the design guide to see whether it adequately covered the concerns raised and to amend as necessary.
- Kent CC were aware of some resurfacing work in the Parish of Capel that was coming off and this had been reported. The contractor had been informed and were now coming back to repair at their own cost.
- The team at Kent CC were applauded on their responses to questions raised.

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

## TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

TB83/19      Comments were made in respect of the following matters:

- There was a request for visibility of progress against targets in the Active Travel Strategy, in particular:
  - o 40% of commuter journeys within 5km to be made by Active Travel
  - o 2 out of 3 of primary and 1 out of 3 secondary aged children to travel actively to school
  - o The number of people cycling on key routes to increase by 10% by 2021.
- The Active Travel Strategy document was 6 years old – Kent CC Highways had been asked to look at the document and provide an update.
- There was a new cabinet member with responsibility for the environment. A new department was looking at the issues and a budget was being developed. Two conferences had been organised to take place during the year.

- A suggestion had been made regarding the planting of trees by the roadside. But the pollution from vehicles that subsequently covered the leaves made this measure redundant.
- The work was in its early stages but it might be possible to report back later with some initial thoughts.
- HGV working group that was developing a trial area that would ban HGV's from rural lanes.
- An Air Quality check as a safety matter at Hawkhurst traffic lights was requested. Cllr Holden would send a request to TWBC for this item to be added to the agenda for the next JTB.
- A request for residents of Cornford Lane and Halls Hall Road to come to the next JTB to discuss plans to restrict vehicle movement in the area. Cllr Rankin to submit a request for this to be included as an agenda item for the next JTB.
- Walking activities in predominately urban areas – ideas to be considered. Perhaps something for a future JTB meeting.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

TB84/19      The next meeting was scheduled for Monday 20 April 2020 at 6:00pm.

### **NOTES:**

The meeting concluded at 8.10 pm.

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