

## TUNBRIDGE WELLS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Monday, 18 October 2021

**PRESENT:** Borough Councillors Lidstone, Knight, Scott (Vice-Chairman) and Lewis  
County Councillors Hamilton (Chairman), Barrington-King, Holden, McInroy, Oakford and Bruneau

**Officers in Attendance:** Hilary Smith (Economic Development Manager), Nick Baldwin (Senior Engineer, Parking), John Strachan, David Candlin (Head of Economic Development and Property), Paul Leary, Richard Emmett (West Kent Highways Manager) and Caroline Britt (Democratic Services Officer)

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillor David Brazier (KCC)

### CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

TB1/21 The Chair welcomed Councillor David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport at Kent County Council who joined the meeting as a guest.

Councillor Dawlings, Leader of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council was due to attend but unfortunately had to send his apologies. In his absence the Chair mentioned a scheme that he had intended to talk about and for which he would like the JTB to consider taking forward.

Councillor Dawlings was keen to see a project to enhance the street scene in Tunbridge Wells town centre. A walk around with officers from KCC and TWBC had been arranged for the end of October.

It was noted that KCC were hoping to bring a report to JTB sometime in 2022 on red brick paving.

In addition, the Chair provided a brief update on items raised at the last JTB meeting.

Vision Zero – At the last meeting there was an agreement to invite KCC to give a presentation on this strategy at the next meeting (originally scheduled for July). Instead, a presentation was given by KCC at an All Member Briefing on 6 August. The scheme had been launched and KCC were now in the process of securing funding and the necessary resources to start work on a draft development plan. KCC were keen to involve the JTB as and when it was appropriate to do so.

Electric Vehicles – Any work would be subject to funding and resources being available.

Bus and Pedestrianisation in Tunbridge Wells Town Centre – Any work would be subject to funding and resources being available.

Highways Improvement Plans (HIPs) – It was noted that KCC were very happy for the Parishes to contact them and there was no need to wait for a HIPs review before asking any questions.

Before the substantive items on the agenda started, there was a 2 minutes silence in memory of Councillor Stanyer who had recently passed away. Councillor Stanyer had been a previous Chair of the Joint Transportation Board.

## **APOLOGIES**

TB2/21 Apologies were received from Cllr Backhouse and Cllr Mackonochie. Councillors Holden and McInroy joined the meeting at 6:10pm.

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

TB3/21 There were no disclosable pecuniary interests or other significant interests declared at the meeting.

## **NOTIFICATION OF PERSONS WISHING TO SPEAK**

TB4/21 Councillor David Pate, Chair of Speldhurst Parish Council had registered to speak on Agenda Item 7.

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 19 APRIL 2021**

TB5/21 Members reviewed the minutes. No amendments were proposed.

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting dated 19 April 2021 be approved as a correct record.

## **ZONE C PERMIT PARKING CONSULTATION RESULTS**

TB6/21 Nick Baldwin, Senior Engineer introduced the report set out in the agenda.

Discussion and questions from Members included the following:

- TWBC understood there were parking pressures in the Grosvenor Road and Park Road area. It was therefore their intention to undertake a survey (spring 2022) that covered an area that broadly speaking straddled the southern end of St John's road and would include Grosvenor Road and Park Road.
- TWBC wanted to formulate a new permit parking policy that would provide clarity when determining what constituted a sufficient level of response when undertaking consultations.
- It was therefore unlikely that any further surveys would be undertaken until the policy had been drafted.
- The reasons why people did not respond to the consultation were not known.
- The Parking Strategy, published in 2016 included a proposal to extend parking permits in Zone A and Zone C. Permits had been extended in Zone A. It was possible the effects of the pandemic might have played a part in why the response to the consultation to extend Permits in Zone C were low.
- A review would be undertaken at a later date (but not before 2023).

**RESOLVED** – That Members endorsed the recommendation to not progress the implementation of the proposal to expand Permit Parking Zone C at the present time, but to review the position in the future.

## **BADSELL ROAD JUNCTION - PADDOCK WOOD**

TB7/21 John Farmer, Major Capital Programme Team, Kent County Council introduced the report set out in the agenda.

Discussion and questions from Members included the following:

- It was suggested that some form of memorial should be erected in the area to remember a German pilot who had been shot down during World War II. KCC would engage with the general public to see if this would be appropriate and if so, what form it would take.
- Following engagement with the public it was expected a further report would be brought to the JTB, probably early next year and just prior to submitting the planning application (spring 2022).

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

## **SPELDHURST 40MPH SPEED LIMIT (SPELDHURST PARISH COUNCIL)**

TB8/21 Paul Leary, Schemes Programme Manager, Kent County Council introduced the report set out in the agenda.

Registered Speakers - Councillor David Pate, Chair of Speldhurst Parish Council.

Discussion and questions from Members included the following:

- The scheme was welcomed. The JTB should support the Parish Council.
- Slower speeds reduced the need to brake and accelerate which were significant factors for increased emissions.
- It was noted that vehicle speeds were mostly already travelling at the new proposed speed limit.
- It was not envisaged that congestion levels would increase.
- Notification of the new proposed speed limit was advertised as prescribed by Regulations and included the KCC website and site notices. Unfortunately there was no hard and fast rules as to the level of response any application might receive.
- In this instance, the informal consultation that took place prior to the formal consultation might have been the reason for the level of responses received (43 in total).
- It was suggested that given the 'low' level of response it should not be presumed that the majority were in favour.
- It was noted that based on responses received for other schemes, the level of response for this scheme was a good level.
- Consultations should be viewed with caution as the results don't always reflect the consensus of the majority. For example it may not take into consideration those who use the road but do not live in the road.
- The general public had the right to be consulted and it remained important for local residents to be involved with local decision making.

A vote was taken:

Agreed:7  
 Against:0  
 Abstain: 3

**RESOLVED** – That the JTB supported the recommendation for the implementation of the proposed 40mph speed limit as advertised.

## HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME

TB9/21 Richard Emmett, West Kent Highways Manager, Kent County Council introduced the report set out in the agenda.

Discussion and questions from Members included the following:

- With reference to Footway Improvements (Page 49), it was intended that Hopwood Gardens would be included as part of the Red Brick Paving project scheduled for next year. Funding had been secured but the scheme was currently 'parked'. It might be that Hopwood Gardens would be used as a trial site.
- With reference to the A26 and loss of funding (£640k back to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)), a press release was due on 19 October which would read as follows:  
 "At the start of the LGF programme £1.8m of LGF funding was allocated to support the delivery of the Yew Tree Road, Speldhurst Road, A26 junction improvement scheme in Tunbridge Wells. The aim of this project was to ease congestion and facilitate growth. To date, £1.177m has been spent on delivery of the project. KCC had been working with TWBC for over 12 months to agree a satisfactory resolution to the remaining budget, which is £623k for the Tunbridge Wells junction improvement package. KCC secured, with the assistance of officers at TWBC at the July SELEP accountability board meeting, a change in scope of the project to take into account the cycle improvements proposed. It was agreed that a revised business case for the scheme should be presented at the September meeting to demonstrate high value for money in regards to the remaining LGF allocation. In addition, evidence would be provided as to how the project met the conditions for spend for beyond 1 September 2021 as proposed by SELEP. The revised business case, although bold and innovative, unfortunately did not deal with the risk to delivery and realisation of benefits that was a prerequisite for the funding extension granted by SELEP."
- The use of Public Rights of Way might be an option for future cycle paths. It was noted that to take this investigation further would require significant resources and funding.
- There remained issues related to Public Realm 2 including measures to make the junctions safer. It was understood that further discussions would take place once traffic had returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- It would be helpful to investigate any measures to help remove HGV's on the A26. Unfortunately the duelling work on the A21 had not removed a significant number of HGV's from the A26.
- The A26 was not a suitable road for a cycle path.
- Funding remained a major issue. Central Government had taken £9m from KCC's Highway budget last year and it was unclear what would happen with the budget this year.

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

## **TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

TB10/21 Comments were made in respect of the following matters:

- At present, the JTB mainly focused on operational issues. It was suggested that the JTB should work together to produce a strategy that gave details of the vision for highways going forward.
- Cllr Scott had put together a document that provided an initial narrative that Members could use as a starting point. It was agreed that the document should first be sent to Members for comment. A meeting would then be convened separate from the JTB to allow Members to decide on priorities that were meaningful and appropriate.
- It would be important that before any items were brought forward that TWBC and KCC officers agreed that they were achievable (with funding and resource implications being established before any public engagement took place). Working in partnership would be very important.
- One possible item was the use of Public Rights of Way for cycle routes. It was agreed that TWBC would speak to KCC and revert back.
- It was agreed that the 'Vision' would be included as an agenda item at the next meeting.
- Another possible item was to consider the possibility of cycle routes that linked rural communities but that avoided using main roads.
- Items for future consideration can be sent in advance of any meeting of the JTB.

Actions:

- TWBC to engage with KCC in respect of Public Rights of Way (Hilary Smith)
- Draft Vision to be circulated to Members of JTB for comment and then a meeting to be arranged (outside of JTB) to discuss (Cllr David Scott).

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

TB11/21 The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 31 January 2022 at 6:00pm.

NOTES:

The meeting concluded at 8.00 pm.

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