

TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

TUNBRIDGE WELLS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at the Virtual Meeting - Online, at 6.00 pm on Monday, 31
January 2022

PRESENT: Borough Councillors Backhouse, Lidstone, Knight, Scott and Lewis
County Councillors Hamilton (Chairman), Barrington-King, Holden,
McInroy, Oakford and Bruneau
Parish Councillor Mackonochie

Officers in Attendance: Julian Cook (District Manager), Stephen Baughen (Head of Planning Services) and Louise Kellam (Democratic Services Officer)

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

TB12/21 The Chair introduced the meeting and set out procedural matters. It was noted that there were audio issues with the online live webcast. These issues were not resolved until approximately 6.30PM.

The Chair also provided a brief update on items raised at the last JTB meeting:

- The report to JTB proposed by KCC regarding red brick paving was be brought to a meeting later in the year.
- A further walkabout was to be arranged in relation to Street Scene.

It was also noted by the Chair that at Full Council last July, a Motion was put forward for JTB regarding rural speed limits. This would require discussion between TWBC and KCC officers and was be brought to a future meeting.

APOLOGIES

TB13/21 No apologies were received. Councillor Holden joined the meeting at 6.30pm.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

TB14/21 There were no disclosable pecuniary interests or other significant interests declared at the meeting.

NOTIFICATION OF PERSONS WISHING TO SPEAK

TB15/21 Mr Paul Mason and Mr Saeed Malik had registered to speak on Agenda item 7. Mr Phil Munslow had registered to speak on Agenda item 8.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 18 OCTOBER 2021

TB16/21 Members reviewed the minutes. No amendments were proposed.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting dated 18 October 2021 be approved as a correct record.

UPDATE ON LOCAL PLAN

TB17/21 Stephen Baughen, Head of Planning, gave a presentation to update

Members on the Local Plan.

Discussion and questions from Members included the following:

- Examination of the Local Plan was to commence at the beginning of March and through to the end of May. The Inspector's decision was expected around October 2022 and it would then be for the Council to decide whether to adopt the Plan in January 2023. In the meantime, the Inspector wanted a Hearing during the examination to look at transport measures and proposals. Following this examination of the broader framework, discussion around finer details could take place with certainty.
- In relation to the influence of the district Council on policy which fell under KCC purview, officers at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council had been liaising with colleagues at Kent County Council throughout the process of producing the Plan. Local Transport Plan 5 was being worked on at County Level, which positively seemed to be aligning with the Borough's strategic approach.
- When asked about the meaning of the term "severe impact" on highways in development applications, it was stated that development was only to be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe, as per paragraph 111 of the NPPF. This was tested on a case-by-case basis, which included looking at elements such as existing traffic queue length and if a development would make this worse, and if it did, would the degree of change be so great as to make it severe. As well as being looked at on a case-by-case basis, the views of the Statutory Consultee (KCC) had to be taken into consideration. In the case of the crossroads at Hawkhurst, the development application last year was refused due to several reasons, including the impact on the traffic, and the developers had worked hard with KCC to solve these issues. The bar to pass cumulative impact was set high by Planning, which was deemed to be good for residents.
- Dates for the timeline of the Local Transport Plan 5 would be distributed at a later date as were not available to the KCC officer present at the time of the meeting.

HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME

TB18/21 Julian Cook, West Kent Highways Manager for Kent County Council introduced the report set out in the agenda.

Registered Speakers – Mr Paul Mason and Mr Saeed Malik.

Discussion and questions from Members included the following:

- Members of the public wanting to complain about old lamp post/streetlight stumps were to report them directly to KCC as they should have been removed promptly.
- In regards to footpath improvements, and specifically on the western side of St. John's Road which was badly damaged by tree roots lifting the brickwork, KCC were aware of damage to redbrick paving across the town and specific areas of damage required a capital bid for improvement works, which KCC applied for. There was no current plans to relay the pavement in its entirety, as had happened on the eastern side, but this would be reviewed. Mr Cook did state he would look at St. Johns Road himself to assess the situation.

- Mr Cook stated that at the next JTB meeting the report would include the commitments from KCC for the 22-23 financial year.
- On the footway along Upper Grosvenor Road, Mr Cook did conduct a walk with Cllr James McInroy and as a result has put together a bid for the following financial year (2023-24) to conduct a slurry seal treatment over the tarmac path to fix the small defects along those sections, whilst maintaining the sections of brick pathways present. This would create a new pathway surface, rather than patchwork repairs.
- Thanks were given to Julian for his work and patience listening to the concerns and coming out to walk the road himself.
- In terms of Utility Companies digging up tarmac footways and creating trip hazards due to variable surfaces, a Street Works team would go out after works were completed to inspect the footway, but defects could occur some months after due to footfall, wheelie bins or cars. Mr Cook encouraged people to report the defects as there was a Guarantee period after the completion of works in which Utility Companies had to maintain the area to the required standard, or fix the defects at their expense. In addition, due to rollout of further broadband works, more KCC staff had been acquired to inspect the works and ensure the quality was satisfactory.
- Creating a dedicated sub-section in the Works Programme to the maintenance of Cycling paths and routes was to be looked into.
- A bid for improvements to the path in Calverley Park Gardens was being put together for 2023-24, and Mr Cook would go and look at the markings and condition of the cycle paths.
- Crash statistics involving cyclists was not available at the meeting, as this was dealt with by a separate team, but Mr Cook highlighted KCC's Vision Zero targets and encouraged more reporting by residents and users. A request for an update on the Near Miss Register in future meetings was made, as well as potentially discussing driver behaviour, in terms of issues such as Holden Park Road turnings, as Police enforcement was not always possible or practical.
- Members had a discussion regarding the recent revisions to the Highway Code.

TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

TB19/21 Registered Speaker – Mr Phil Munslow

Comments were made in respect of the following matters:

- In response to Mr Munslow's proposal, it was felt that a briefing by TWBUG may be more appropriate for a separate briefing to all Councillors rather than to JTB, and it was recommended that this be discussed outside of the meeting. It was mentioned that if it were to be brought to JTB, KCC Cycling Officer Katie Cullen was to be invited to the meeting to contribute.
- The Board was referred to the Public Transport Forum or KCC Director of Highways and Transportation Phil Lightowler to discuss Borough bus routes and 'joined-up' transport solutions as a potential future meeting topic.
- Potential of a face-to-face meeting would be discussed outside of the meeting. +
- A proposed topic of making Tunbridge Wells a 20mph zone was discussed, and KCC would ask their Schemes Team to look at the possibility and could provide an Officer to a future meeting should it be

added to the Agenda. It was noted that the 20mph Zone in Tonbridge could not be compared to the road network of Tunbridge Wells and specific roads would need to be assessed based on local circumstances.

- A proposed extraordinary meeting of the Joint Transportation Board in order to solely answer questions from the public and residents was deemed problematic to organise and handle. KCC officers felt there was already a suitable public consultation process. The matter was to be discussed further out of the meeting.
- Addressing and monitoring Highways Improvement Plans raised as future regular Agenda topic, based on dissatisfaction from residents and Parish Councils about the Plans.

Actions:

- Chairman to discuss with KCC Officers about adding Highway Improvement Plan discussions to meetings regularly.
- TWBC to engage with KCC regarding the potentials and practicalities of a 20mph Zone within the whole town and/or residential areas as well as holding an extraordinary meeting.
- Near Miss Register to be discussed at future meetings.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

TB20/21 The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 11 April 2022 at 6:00pm.

NOTES:

The meeting concluded at 8.05 pm.