

## JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

MONDAY, 19 JANUARY 2015

MINUTES of the Joint Transportation Board held at the Council Chamber, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS on Monday, 19 January 2015

**PRESENT:**       **Borough Councillors** Backhouse, Bulman, Neve, Scott and Woodward  
                  **County Councillors** King (Vice-Chairman), Hoare, Holden, Oakford and Scholes  
                  **Parish Councillor** Mackonochie

**OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillors Rankin, McDermott and Tompsett

**OFFICERS:** Earl Bourner (District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, Kent Highways & Transportation), David Candlin (Head of Economic Development), Steven Noad (Traffic Engineer, Kent Highways & Transportation) and Nick Peeters (Democratic Services Officer)

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor Nicholas Rogers and County Councillor John Davies

### DECLARATION OF INTEREST

TB29/14       There were no declarations made by members at the meeting.

### NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS WISHING TO SPEAK (IN ACCORDANCE WITH CABINET PROCEDURE RULE 27.4)

TB30/14       No notifications were received.

### TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES

TB31/14       Borough Councillor Neve asked that minute TB28/14 be amended to reflect that St Barnabas School was in **Quarry Road**, Tunbridge Wells.

**RESOLVED:** that, subject to the amendment above, the minutes of the previous meeting, dated 20 October 2014, be accepted as an accurate record of the meeting.

Matters arising:

Borough Councillor Neve referred to TB28/14 'Grosvenor Bridge repair schedule' (also included in item 5 on the agenda - Tracker System). Councillor Neve advised that the top of the bridge was again damaged.

At the Chairman's discretion, Borough Councillor Rankin was allowed to address the Board and she expressed the following views:

Councillor Rankin referred to minute TB22/14 which detailed the discussion at the last meeting on the Carr's Corner roundabout, Tunbridge Wells. Councillor Rankin highlighted the disappointment felt by many at the lack of prominence given to the signage advising traffic to slow down. She did not think its position on the roundabout made it particularly visible. Councillor Rankin noted that the sign displayed the figure of an elderly person. She added, however, that it was not just the elderly whose safety was at risk, but

all pedestrians who chose to cross at this point. Councillor Rankin considered the works carried out so far to be palliative measures and she questioned their effectiveness. Councillor Rankin felt that, as well as the particular issue of crossing at Carr's Corner, the wider issue of the size of vehicles travelling on the stretch of road leading to the roundabout and on into the centre of the town should be addressed. Councillor Rankin further noted that part of the roundabout had recently been damaged and that it was likely the damage had been caused by a large vehicle.

Borough Councillor Bulman endorsed the views expressed by Councillor Rankin. He did not think that, from either the perspective of traffic flow, or pedestrian safety, that a satisfactory solution had been reached and he felt the accident referred to by Councillor Rankin served to highlight the need for action.

Borough Councillor Backhouse had brought up the issue (highlighted to him by residents) of signage on the roundabout at previous meetings. He had also approached Kent County Council (KCC) and had been informed that the programmed work had been completed. Councillor Backhouse had been advised by residents that they wanted more visible, road based signage, closer to the roundabout.

KCC Highways Engineer, Steven Noad, advised the Board that he was happy to take comments from members back to KCC and look again at the issue. Mr Noad cautioned however, that any further work would have to be carried out using existing funds, of which there were very little. He also welcomed the views of the Town Forum. Mr Noad acknowledged members' concerns regarding the flow of traffic through the town centre, including large vehicles and asked for their thoughts' on alternative routes and how this would be achieved.

County Councillor Scholes said that, if the measures discussed were achievable, he would consider using his member highway fund for further improvements.

The Chairman, County Councillor King, asked that, in response to the Town Forum's question as to how it would feed back to KCC, a report be made available for the next meeting of the Board.

## **TUNBRIDGE WELLS TRACKER SYSTEM**

TB32/14 The Board considered the updates on the Tunbridge Wells Tracker System as at 19 January 2015. The following additional comments were made:

1. St John's Road - Kent County Council (Highways District Manager), Earl Bourner, advised that Borough Councillor Scott had received the plans he had previously requested and the programme of works was due to start in 2015. Councillor Scott thanked KCC officers for the update that had eventually been received but asked for it to be noted that additional work needed to be done to the corner in question and that this should be reflected in the plans. Councillor Scott was concerned that this issue would not be addressed and asked that his views be reflected in further updates.
2. Longfield Road North Farm Industrial/Retail Park – Mr Bourner advised that work at the site was ongoing and any further questions would be taken back to the relevant KCC officer. Councillor Scott asked members

to note that the Borough Council's Urban Design Officer, Alan Legg, had experienced difficulties in engaging the various stakeholders who were responsible for providing the larger conduit needed for water features in North Farm. Councillor Scott felt there had been some foot dragging in this area and wanted to see the issue progressed. Mr Bourner agreed to feed Councillor Scott's comments back to the relevant KCC officer and report back to him directly. The Borough Council's Head of Economic Development, David Candlin, advised the Board that the signage had changed at North Farm to indicate that the completion date for works was now anticipated to be Summer 2015. He added that KCC had discovered some uncharted services, which had caused delays, however the County Council was working to get the programme back on track.

3. Borough Transport Strategy – Mr Candlin advised members that an offer had been received from KCC, to undertake further technical work and in particular around the A26 and A264, to strengthen the evidence base for the transport strategy. Mr Candlin further advised that the bid for £1 million funding had been sought through the 'local growth fund' and the investigative work KCC was offering to do should be welcomed as it would strengthen both this bid and the Transport Strategy itself. Mr Candlin further advised that County and Borough Council officers were meeting on-site to look at the additional work to be undertaken. Mr Candlin asked members to note however, that although the Borough Transport Strategy itself would be delayed as a result of the offer from KCC, the Borough Council was continuing to progress individual schemes.

Councillor Scott hoped that work would not be delayed, as he continued to receive complaints from residents in areas where roads were being heavily used by traffic, to bypass the North Farm works. Mr Candlin reiterated his earlier point, in that work was continuing and in particular, a scheme being progressed to look at the Pembury Road issue as an active work-stream. He added that this had been shortlisted by the Local Enterprise Partnership as one of the schemes going forward to round two of bidding. Mr Candlin further added that the Council was actively seeking solutions, rather than focusing solely on production of the Borough Transport Strategy, in its own right.

4. Identifying Schemes – Mr Bourner advised that the full report was to follow. However, there were additional comments within the Tracker System, which explained how: the capital funding budget was divided - via kilometre lengths of carriageways and footways per district; and the revenue budget – using kilometre lengths. Consideration of the number of customer enquiries received per year was also taken into account. Mr Bourner went on to notify members that he had recently received the list of over 30 sites where micro-surfacing or surface dressing was due to be undertaken in 2016. Mr Bourner highlighted a number of roads included in the list and advised that the full list could be made available for Board members.

Borough Councillor Bulman asked if, under 'distribution of resources', whether the full report would take the condition of roads into account. Councillor Bulman felt this point needed highlighting, as he asserted that the condition of roads in West Kent and Tunbridge Wells in particular, to be in a worse state than other parts of Kent. Mr Bourner advised that, from an operational point of view, the road condition was not a factor.

However, from the data collection survey, referred to in the Tracker System, the condition of the road would be included as part of the assessment. Mr Bourner added that the resources for road resurfacing was finite.

Borough Councillor Neve asked members to note that, he had raised the issue of the poor road conditions in Tunbridge Wells by comparison to other areas of the County, ten years previously. Councillor Bulman felt that input from local members should be included in the assessment. Mr Bourner advised that the views of local members were not currently part of the assessment but he would note comments made by Board members. The Chairman felt it was important that the views of the Board be taken into account and that resulting actions from those views be seen to take place.

5. White lining refreshment programme - Mr Bourner advised that a full report on white line refreshment was to follow. However, he could confirm that KCC was continuing to refresh white lines, when incidents of deterioration were reported and he confirmed that KCC had responded recently to a request for this work from the Borough Council. In response to a question from Councillor Neve, Mr Bourner confirmed that white 'dog bone' lines on dropped curbs were still included in the programme.
  
7. Redbrick Update – Mr Bourner advised that a follow-up report had not been produced and following rejection of KCC's previous report on the issue, it had been agreed that all future redbrick footways schemes, would be subject to a full consultation prior to a decision on the most appropriate materials. Mr Bourner added that the length of schemes (meterage) could reduce due to cost factors and additional methods of funding in these instances could be explored. Mr Bourner went on to advise that the recommendations in the original report would be adopted by the County Council and they had already been endorsed by the County Council Cabinet member for Environment and Highways, Councillor Brazier. Mr Bourner informed members that the County Council was adopting a common sense approach to the scheme and in the majority of instances redbricks footways would be replaced with like for like. However, there would be instances where only a small percentage of the footway would be redbrick and in these cases, the redbricks would be stored for later use and tarmac used as a replacement. Mr Bourner highlighted the impact of austerity measures on areas such as reactive maintenance.

Councillor Scott felt the retention of redbrick in all areas was more of a common-sense approach as the bricks lasted longer and he asked that Highways note the longevity of redbrick pavements in Tunbridge Wells, with little maintenance required. He added that a proportionate and appropriate amount of KCC's budget should be allocated to towards the Town's redbrick pavement. Councillor Scott referred to the Board's original wishes which were, not only that existing redbrick pavements be maintained, but that they be expanded to areas now tarmacked.

Councillor Neve supported the views expressed by Councillor Scott and added that the issue was not just about the cost, but also about quality and providing value for money, which he considered would be better provided by maintaining and reusing redbricks. Councillor Neve had been advised that Tunbridge Wells had an experienced team who could replace

bricks efficiently and make the process as cost effective as laying tarmac. Councillor Neve referred to Hilbert Road and Queens Road where a mixture of tarmac and redbrick allowed cars to park.

Mr Bourner reiterated that in most cases, bricks would be retained but there were areas, such as around tree roots and where cars parked on redbricks, that continued to cause problems. He further added that KCC would try its best to save redbrick footways areas, both in and outside of the conservation areas.

8. Street Lighting Review - Mr Bourner advised that a full review would be carried out in 2015 and that any borough members that had concerns should raise them directly with KCC. Borough Councillor Backhouse highlighted complaints he had received from Sherwood residents following criminal damage to vehicles as a result of the reduction in street lighting. Councillor Backhouse said the residents had not received a satisfactory response from KCC and he looked forward to positive feedback as a result of the review. Councillor Scott also highlighted a serious assault in Chandos Road where identification by witnesses had proved difficult as there was no street lighting.

Democratic Services Officer, Nick Peeters, provided members with an update on the petition for pedestrian crossings on Major York's Road and Langton Road which had been omitted from the tracker. Members were advised that feasibility, design and costing works would be undertaken during 2015/16 by KCC, as part of a Local Transport Plan bid and both schemes would go forward for investigation and design funding in the next round of bids. Members were asked to note that the number of schemes throughout Kent outstripped the level of funding available and that success could not be guaranteed.

**RESOLVED:** That the 'Tracker System' for monitoring the progress of the Joint Transportation Board recommendations be noted.

### **PETITION REQUESTING A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING OR CENTRAL REFUGE IN CRESCENT ROAD, ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS**

TB33/14      The Chairman, County Councillor King introduced the report which informed members of the receipt of two petitions by Kent County Council (KCC) that were organised by a parishioner from St Augustine's Church. The petitions, both paper and Internet based, contained a total of 1,027 responses and asked for a pedestrian-crossing or refuge in Crescent Road, to allow residents accessing the multi-story car park to cross the road safely.

Mr Gerard Garcia, a member of the St Augustine Parish Council, addressed the Board and expressed the following views:

- Up to 12,00 people visited the church at weekends and it had visitors during the week also. Visitors to the town also accessed Calverley Grounds from the car-park, via Crescent Road.
- The church parish was asking the Council for urgent assistance in providing a safe crossing or traffic calming measures for visitors to the church, from the public car-park opposite.

- Drivers approached the corner often in excess of the 30mph speed limit, leaving pedestrians stranded in the middle of the road. Mr Garcia had been struck himself by a vehicle when trying to cross the road.
- The church parish was not asking the responsible authority for a costly solution, but that serious consideration be given to the issue of pedestrian safety. If it was decided that a pelican crossing was too expensive, the church would welcome alternative measures, that provided a refuge for pedestrians and assured safety.

At the Chairman's discretion, Borough Councillor Rankin addressed the Board and expressed the following views.

- The petition and concerns of the church users demonstrated how inappropriate the level and speed of traffic on the stretch of road was. There was inadequate provision for a pedestrians crossing at this point.
- A community existed in this part of town and consideration needed to be given to the impact of a major through road running through it.
- Large vehicles which were travelling on to other areas of the borough seemed to take precedent over pedestrians and there was a need to redress the balance by providing crossings along Crescent Road.

County Councillor Hoare, who had raised the issue at a previous meeting of the Board, gave some background to the concerns of the church parish and reminded members that the issue had been looked at in previous years. Councillor Hoare went on to say that St Augustine's was a large parish, with the church well attended; five masses were held on Sundays with baptisms and funerals throughout the week. Councillor Hoare added that, with this level of attendance next to a large arterial road with heavy traffic, a crossing was needed. Councillor Hoare also pointed out that the wider community would benefit from a safe crossing and he reiterated Mr Garcia's point, that visitors were often left stranded in the middle of Crescent Road when trying to access either the church, or Calverley Grounds.

Borough Councillor Bulman supported the proposals in the petition as he felt that, even at 30mph, the road was dangerous to cross. He also thought the issue needed to be considered within the context of Carr's Corner. He asked for consideration to be given to 20mph speed restriction zones on Crescent Road and whether the road was a suitable candidate for this type of scheme.

County Councillor Scholes felt there was a problem to be solved, as when crossing from the car-park side of the road, pedestrians were unsighted. He had also observed that vehicles were travelling at an inappropriate speed along the stretch of road and if suitable he would, in principal, look at his Member Highway fund to support a 20mph speed restriction zone.

Borough Councillor Neve asked Mr Garcia for clarification as to whether the provision of a central refuge solely, would be acceptable to the church parish. Mr Garcia said the parish understood the current economic conditions and although a central refuge would be acceptable, he asked the Council to be mindful of the potential technical difficulties that could arise from a refuge being sited near to two car-park entrances and exits. Following on from this, Councillor Neve supported further investigation into the provision of a central

refuge. Councillor Hoare also supported this proposal.

Councillor Scholes advised that, should he consider providing member highway funds to a scheme, he would need assurances that the provision of a central refuge would provide a safer environment for pedestrians and not add to current difficulties.

Borough Councillor Scott advised that there were a number of residents with disabilities from Cadogan Gardens who crossed Crescent Road and he also supported any proposals that made crossing the road safer.

KCC Highways Engineer, Stephen Noad, thanked Board members for their comments. Mr Noad felt there was potential for an investigations that included outstanding concerns over Carr's Corner and he asked that KCC be given an opportunity to provide a report to a future meeting of the Board. Mr Noad stressed that he did not want to commit to a particular course of action until the issue and available options had been looked at thoroughly. He went on to say that he did not want to elements introduced that caused undue risks to be taken by pedestrians, who currently, were taking great care when crossing. In response to Councillor Bulman's question regarding the introduction of a 20mph zone, Mr Noad advised that, again, he would like to look at the available options before committing to further actions.

Councillor Scholes asked that an indication of available options be provided before the Board's next meeting in order that an early opportunity to consider funding could be looked at.

The Chairman asked that a report be made available for the next meeting of the Board.

## **HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME**

TB34/14 The Chairman, County Councillor King, introduced the report which provided an update to Members on the identified highways schemes approved for construction in 2014/15.

Kent County Council (KCC) District Highways Manager, Earl Bourner, advised members that the report was for information only and welcomed comments from Board members.

Borough Councillor Neve referred to page 21 of the agenda and the work programmed for Ferndale. Councillor Neve said the work had started, the tarmac was in good order and so far overall, was satisfactory.

County Councillor Holden referred to recent road works in Cranbrook which had caused three months of disruption and had been harmful to businesses in the village. He said this had been followed by further work in Carriers Way which was ongoing and due to last for several months also. Councillor Holden had spoken to local businesses in Cranbrook who said they had not applied for compensation because they considered the process to be too convoluted. Councillor Holden had received a response from KCC Cabinet member for Environment and Highways, County Councillor Brazier, addressing Councillor Holden's concerns. Councillor Holden urged, however, that future road work schemes be coordinated to minimise the impact on the village and its businesses. Councillor Holden went on to referred to anecdotal evidence that suggested workers on the schemes were from outside the county and were

finishing earlier than normal to avoid traffic when returning home. Mr Bourner advised that the schemes referred to were not KCC works, but statutory works that had been undertaken through licence and with permit regulations.

Mr Bourner said the companies had specific time frames for undertaking the work and could be subject to fines should they overrun. However, the companies had the right to undertake the work and as programmed works, KCC would be aware in advance. Mr Bourner added that, in these types of programmed works, other roads would be used as diversions and therefore roads could often only be dealt with one at a time. Mr Bourner further advised that he would take any concerns to the road works team.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

## **HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEME - PROGRESS REPORT**

TB35/14 The Chairman, County Councillor King, introduced the report which summarised the progress to date and anticipated progress over the next three months of all programmed highway improvements and those schemes that were expected to be included in Kent County Council's 2014-15 Capital Programme.

Kent County Council District Highways Manager, Earl Bourner, advised members that the report was for information only and welcomed comments from the Board.

Borough Council Neve referred to page 33 of the agenda and asked for confirmation as to which County Councillor was funding the work on Sandrock Road and what progress was being made on the schemes for St Barnabus and St James's School.

Borough Councillor Hoare advised that the work on St Barnabus school would be underway by May 2015. In response to the question of funding for the Sandrock Road scheme - although not in his division, Councillor Hoare had funded the scheme in response to concerns from residents within his constituency, whose children attended St James's School.

County Councillor Scholes asked the Board to note the difficulties he had experienced in trying to fund schemes such as the proposals for Cornford Lane, which were based on cost estimates provided by KCC. Councillor Scholes advised that the eventual costs of other schemes had been grossly overestimated in the first instance and this, along with the length of time it was taking schemes to come to fruition, had left him in the difficult position of having funds from 2013/2014 which were yet to be allocated.

Councillor King felt this was an issue that had effected other County members' highway funds and he urged all KCC members to enter into discussion and then make a formal approach to the KCC Director of Highways and the cabinet member for Environment and Highways. Councillor King asked that the results of the discussions be brought back to the next meeting.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.



## TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

TB36/14 Board members asked for the following topics to be considered for future meetings:

Borough Councillor Scott asked for his proposals for a Driverless Transport System (tabled at the meeting) to be considered at the next meeting. Councillor Neve went on to provide some background to the topic and advised members that he considered traffic and congestion to be the number one issue in Tunbridge Wells and the main source of complaint from residents. Councillor Scott said his proposals were not the only concept that could be looked at. However, depending on funding, it was a realistic idea that would use existing technology and that addressed the town's traffic issues.

County Councillor Hoare asked members to consider proposals for the reopening of the disused Tunbridge Wells West rail line and for its linking up to the Brighton Mainline 2 rail line as a topic for future meetings. Councillor Hoare considered the proposals to be a strategic solution to the town's congestion issues, however, the scheme was dependent on housing not being built on the disused line.

Borough Councillor Backhouse asked for the Board to consider the repair and upgrading of the Tunbridge Wells Variable Messaging System (VMS). Councillor Backhouse explained that the VMS provided drivers with information on vacancies in the town's car parks and was available as a phone app. Councillor Backhouse advised that Sevenoaks Borough Council had upgraded its own system and he wanted to see Tunbridge Wells's VMS brought up to at least the same standard as Sevenoaks.

Borough Council Neve asked that the condition of the grass verges on King George VI (Pigs) Hill be looked at. Councillor Neve said the continual parking on the verges by commercial and large vehicles had damaged them considerably and he asked alternative solutions be looked at.

Borough Councillor Woodward asked that, following a request from residents of Neville Court, a scheme for extending double yellow lines at the junction of Neville Park and Major York Road be considered. Councillor Woodward said that limited sight lines made the current situation dangerous for residents egressing from Neville Park into fast moving traffic, as well as drivers travelling on Major York's Road.

The Chairman, County Councillor King, advised members that, due to the number of items raised, it was likely they would be considered over the next two meetings of the Board.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 7.05 pm.