

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

MONDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2015

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

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

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Hamilton and McDermott

OFFICERS: Nick Baldwin (Senior Traffic Engineer), Hilary Smith (Economic Development Manager), Vicki Hubert (Strategic Transport and Development Planner, Kent Highways & Transportation), Steven Noad (Traffic Engineer, Kent Highways & Transportation), John Reynolds (District Manager for Dartford, Kent Highways & Transportation) and Mark O'Callaghan (Democratic Services Officer)

APOLOGIES

TB15/15 Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Davies and Oakford and Parish Councillor Mackonochie.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

TB16/15 There were no disclosable pecuniary or other significant interests declared at the meeting.

NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS WISHING TO SPEAK

TB17/15 Councillor Sarah Hamilton had registered to speak on minute TB20/15.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING DATED 20 JULY 2015

TB18/15 Members reviewed the minutes. There were no amendments proposed.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting dated 20 July 2015 be approved as a correct record.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS TRACKER

TB19/15 The Board considered the Tunbridge Wells Tracker as at 19 October 2015. Comments were made in respect of the Tracker Items as follows:

Tracker Item 1 – Crescent Road central crossing refuge: Steven Noad, Traffic Engineer, Kent County Council, confirmed that funding had been secured and the project would move to design stage.

Tracker Item 3 – Longfield Road and North Farm: Councillor Bulman asked as to the nature of the delays to the scheme. Mr Noad advised that he was not directly involved but would endeavour to get an update from the major projects team and respond by email.

Trackers Item 4 – Borough Transportation Strategy: County Councillor Holden asked what progress had been made with the Strategy and whether it addressed the Hawkhurst traffic lights which had previously been requested. Vicki Hubert, Strategic Transport and Development Planner, Kent County Council, advised that the strategy had been adopted by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and would go before the Cabinet of Kent County Council in April 2016. The strategy identified the Hawkhurst traffic lights as an issue which would be addressed by the Local Plan Review in 2016.

Tracker Item 5 – King George V Hill: Councillor Neve noted the late start of the works and asked for a contact within Kent County Council should there be problems as it appeared that a couple of trees had been removed which was not part of the plan. John Reynolds, District Manager for Dartford, Kent County Council (substituting for Earl Bournier, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells), agreed to provide the requested details.

Tracker Item 8 – Grosvenor Bridge: County Councillor Hoare asked what was being done to speed up the works. Mr Reynolds agreed to provide an update from the major projects team by email.

Tracker Item 10 – Carrs Corner: Councillor Bulman noted that the planting of the roundabout was sub-standard. Mr Noad agreed and advised that the tree was due to be replaced in the autumn. Discussions were ongoing with the operations team regarding long term maintenance as it was particularly difficult in this location. Councillor Backhouse added that he had received a number of complaints in respect of the condition of the roundabout which was a high profile focal point at the entrance to the town. Councillor Scott commented that support had been given by the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum for a water themed structure to replace the tree which would be easier to maintain and would be in keeping with the idea of Water in the Wells. Mr Noad thanked members for their feedback and invited the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum to submit its ideas for a waterless water-themed feature directly to Kent County Council.

RESOLVED – That the Tunbridge Wells Tracker be noted.

JOINT REPORTS OF KENT COUNTY COUNCIL AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

20'S PLENTY

- TB20/15 Hilary Smith, Economic Development Manager, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, introduced the report which included the following comments:
- The report had been prepared in response to concerns raised both by this committee and other organisations.
 - There were several examples where 20 mph zones had been successfully implemented by other local authorities which had benefitted from reduced road collisions, improved quality of life for residents and the associated health benefits.
 - The report explored the national and local policy framework.
 - There appeared to be widespread support for 20 mph speed limits, particularly in residential roads and near schools.
 - The recommendations in the report provide a clear way forward which included setting up a working group to include two members of the Joint Transportation Board (one Kent, one Tunbridge Wells).

Mr Tom Swarbrigg, resident of Silverdale Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells and member of the Twenty's Plenty campaign group, had registered to speak.

Mr Swarbrigg welcomed the report. He commented that speeding traffic on residential roads was a particular concern and noted that 20 mph zones had worked well at his previous address in London. There appeared to be widespread support and clear benefits for borough-wide 20 mph limits, particularly on residential roads.

Parish Councillor Katrina Lyle, member of Speldhurst Parish Council and local school Governor, had registered to speak.

Parish Councillor Lyle welcomed the report and supported the concept of 20 mph limits in both the town centre and villages. Speldhurst Parish Council already had a policy of pursuing 20 mph zones around the schools and would like to see the zones expanded. There was approximately one near-miss per week on the roads around the villages of Speldhurst Parish therefore the Parish Council supported the recommendations in the report for both urban and rural areas of the Borough.

Councillor Sarah Hamilton, borough member for Paddock Wood (East), chairman of Paddock Wood Town Council and local school Governor, had registered to speak.

Councillor Hamilton supported the concept of borough-wide 20 mph limits and offered her services should the working group be established as set out in the report. Paddock Wood already experienced traffic problems and the town faced significant developments in the near future. Heavy Goods Vehicles and other vehicles travelled too fast in built-up areas close to schools and other amenities where people were walking.

Councillor Scott felt that safety should be the number one priority and highlighted the case of a resident of Upper Grosvenor Road who had several cars written off whilst parked in the road and being hit by speeding vehicles. He suggested that if a trial area was needed then the area forming a triangle between St. John's Road, Upper Grosvenor Road and Yew Tree Road would be suitable as a mainly residential area with many rat-runs.

County Councillor Holden advised members that a speeding working group had been established which was having some success by working with speed watch teams and the Police. Enforcement would be key if there was to be a change in behaviour. Physically barriers would be impractical owing to their cost so there had to be some enforcement for restrictions not to be ignored. County Councillor Holden added that reductions in the speed limit would only be supported by the Police or other authorities if the average speed was already at or around the proposed limit. Trying to install a 20mph limit where average speeds were 30 or 40mph would not be supported as they were likely to be disregarded. If the 20's Plenty working group was created as set out in the report it was suggested that it should collaborate with the speeding working group based in Maidstone.

Councillor Woodward supported the idea of wider 20 mph limits across the Borough rather than isolated zones. He asked whether the district mentioned in the report to be used for comparison had been identified, to which Mrs Smith confirmed that it had not.

County Councillor Scholes noted that there had long been various attempts to bring in 20 mph zones, particularly around schools, one such case had only been successful due to existing traffic calming measures. He warned against not setting deadlines as progress must be seen to be made.

Councillor Neve was pleased that national policy appeared to be changing to allow greater flexibility towards of 20 mph limits and agreed with the need for immediate action with updates at the next meeting. Councillor Neve suggested the London Borough of Bromley as a good example of where 20 mph limits had been successful.

Councillor Backhouse commented that progress in creating 20 mph zones had been disappointing in the past so the present opportunity should be given due urgency.

Councillor Scott added that he felt a cultural change was needed which may be easier to achieve in urban areas where most traffic was destined. It was also noted that at the last speed survey five years ago, the average speed on Upper Grosvenor Road was around 20 mph but that 15 per cent of traffic was significantly exceeding 30 mph making it a prime example of where a speed reduction should be viable.

County Councillor Holden questioned how a cultural change was to be achieved. He noted that the purpose of the speeding working group was to raise awareness and bring back Police enforcement of speed limits. Speeding was a particular issue in rural areas where speeds tended to be higher so the consequences of an accident would be greater. Cultural change would only come about as a result of enforcement.

Councillor Scott clarified that the cultural change needed would be different for rural areas where speeds were greater and most traffic was passing through. In urban areas, which was the source or destination for most traffic, pressure could potentially be more easily brought through the communities.

Councillor Neve gave an example at the bottom of Quarry Road where simple traffic calming measures had been taken which had proven to be successful in reducing speeds.

Councillor Stanyer supported the idea of widespread 20 mph limits throughout the Borough but suggested that some specific actions should be prioritised to focus attention and maintain momentum. Such an action could be 20 mph zones around all schools within a reasonable timeframe. There was a danger that the 20's Plenty working group's remit could become unmanageable whereas a focus on clearly identified priorities would be achievable and enjoy widespread public support.

The Chairman, County Councillor King, summarised that the Committee would like a report to the April meeting of the Joint Transportation Board outlining a number of specific priorities plus the milestones and timelines required to achieve them.

County Councillor Scholes warned that a significant barrier to the progress of engineering schemes was the scheduling of resources so the report should also identify the required resources. Furthermore, County Council Members should not refrain from supporting suitable schemes should an urgent need present itself.

Vicki Hubert, Strategic Transport and Development Planner, Kent County Council, advised members that the report had been deliberately phrased so as to not pre-empt the remit of the working party so that the working party could lead on how to progress.

Councillor Woodward was concerned that prioritising certain schemes or creating limited zones could fragment the Borough and may be counterproductive whereas the working group should have the flexibility to consider the wider picture.

The Chairman, County Councillor King, brought the discussion to a close and invited nominations to the working party. Members were asked whether the resolutions were agreed.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Board supports contacting another council with similar demographics to Tunbridge Wells which has successfully introduced 20mph speed limits to identify good practice and lessons learned;
2. That the Board supports key stakeholders who will have an important role to play in the progression of this debate being identified;
3. That the Board nominates Councillor Scott and County Councillor Scholes to represent it at meetings of key stakeholders;
4. That the Board supports key stakeholders being invited to an inaugural meeting to introduce the topic and begin the debate;
5. That the Board requests for the April meeting a comprehensive report making specific recommendations based on the experiences of other local authorities, experts in the field and the opinions of local stakeholders; and
6. That the Board requests for the January meeting an update on the progress made.

A26 AND A264 ROUTE STUDY UPDATE

- TB21/15 Vicki Hubert, Strategic Transport and Development Planner, Kent County Council, introduced the report which included the following comments:
- The report provided an update on the route studies currently underway on the A26 and A264 into Royal Tunbridge Wells.
 - Several key junction points were assessed for queue lengths, peak hour traffic and future modelling.
 - The results of the ANPR survey were also included which provided some interesting insights.
 - 14 per cent of traffic on the A26 and A264 passes through the town centre.
 - Only 8 – 11 per cent of all traffic was through traffic.
 - The report identified key areas requiring further investigation to enable recommendations to be made for improvement schemes.

A letter from Mr Nicholas Sturcke, resident of Kings Toll Road, Pembury, was read out at the Chairman's discretion.

Mr Sturcke requested that equal priority be given to the improvement of Halls Hole Road as part of the overall scheme to reduce congestion on the A264. He noted that the tight corner and narrowness of the lane greatly restricted the movement of vehicles and was a major safety concern. Improvements to the Halls Hole Road would allow more traffic to filter away from the worst areas and such a scheme should be included in any works proposed for Pembury Road.

Mr Scott Purchas, resident of Cleeve Avenue, Hawkenbury, had registered to speak on behalf of Tunbridge Wells Bicycle Users Group.

Mr Purchas welcomed the report and offered suggestions for the next stage of its development. Further vehicle capacity increases were likely therefore the only options were to build more roads or reduce vehicle traffic use by shifting more journeys to active travel modes. Evidence showed that more roads leads to more traffic through a process known as "induced demand". By contrast, increased use of alternatives reduced the overall congestion as well as reduced pollution, was lower cost and improved other quality of life factors. It was suggested that a working party should visit towns in the Netherlands to see first hand the benefits of a cycle-centric transport system. Mr Purchas noted that only 11 per cent of traffic passed through the borough therefore a bypass was not viable and the focus should be on moving people into or around the town. Minor changes to one junction was unlikely to yield significant results due to the proximity of other junctions and the entrances and exits to the main routes which were at or above capacity.

Mr John Coupe, resident of Farmcombe Road, Hawkenbury, had registered to speak on behalf of Tunbridge Wells Bicycle Users Group.

Mr Coupe asked that the report be enhanced by the inclusion of other statistical information from a variety of sources to build up a view of travel patterns and behaviour. He was concerned that the count point data seemed to be inconsistent with the projections for increased traffic. Several large scale developments and their potential impact on the number of vehicles were omitted from the report, it was noted that any new developments within one mile of the town centre should be geared towards walking or cycling rather than car travel. The completion of the duelling of the A21 must inevitably have an effect on the amount of traffic on the A26 and A264. Mr Coupe suggested that there should be a number of objectives to be achieved by the route study.

Mr Gerald Plastow, resident of Cornford Lane, Royal Tunbridge Wells, had registered to speak.

Mr Plastow asked that when considering improvements to Pembury Road it should also include Hall Hole Road which was inadequate to handle the current level of traffic. Improvements would particularly be needed owing to the 250 homes and a primary school planned for construction in Hawkenbury. He suggested that a new section of road could be built between the junctions with Cornford Lane and Pembury Road on vacant land at the water tower with other minor improvements. This would allow much of the traffic to avoid to worst of Pembury Road. There was an urgency in this matter as there was a one-off opportunity to recover some of the cost from the developer in Hawkenbury.

Councillor Neve was frustrated that many of the issues raised in the report had long been established yet little action taken and pressed the need for urgent progress.

Ms Hubert advised that the assessment was due to complete in December with outline-designed and costed proposals being presented to the Joint Transportation Board at its meeting in January.

Councillor Scott noted that most of the traffic originated or was destined in the town therefore a park and ride type scheme such as the driverless vehicle proposal currently being investigated should be considered for the medium term.

Ms Hubert commented that park and ride was not being considered at this time, the report focuses solely on immediate improvements to the worst pinch-points. County Councillor King suggested that park and ride should be considered and if not then there needed to be explanation as to why.

County Councillor Hoare commented that cycling would be a good way to reduce congestion but that a much greater effort was needed to realise a viable system which included green spaces and parks being used for quality cycle ways. County Councillor Scholes noted that the issue of park and ride had been talked about since the 1990's but kept being put off.

In response to a question from Councillor Neve, Ms Hubert clarified that the purpose of this report was to provide an update on the work to establish the precise nature of the worst problems in the borough. This would lead to specific designs for solutions to be brought forward.

The Chairman, County Councillor King, invited further questions and comments. There being none, members were asked whether the resolution was agreed.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

REPORTS OF TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

NORFOLK ROAD

- TB22/15 Nick Baldwin, Senior Traffic Engineer, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council introduced the report which included the following comments:
- This matter had been considered at the previous meeting as part of a package of proposed regulation changes but further information had been requested before the Joint Transportation Board was able to give a recommendation.
 - The matter was simply whether the restrictions as they were marked were adequate for the intended purpose or if they need to be extended across the driveway of 31 Norfolk Road in order to secure safe access to Grove Hill Road and the Bowling Club beyond.
 - It was the opinion of both Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Parking Department and Kent County Council Highways Department that the current marking are appropriate.

- The original complaint was based upon vehicles being parked in such a way that they extend beyond the mouth of the junction and obstructed Grove Hill Road. The current markings prevent this from happening.
- Agreement was sought to amend the traffic regulation order to match the situation on the ground.

Mr Roy Thompson, director of The Grove Bowling Club, had registered to speak on behalf of the Club.

Mr Thompson referred to an email he had sent to members prior to the meeting and added that the Bowling Club was requesting that the restriction be implemented as agreed and advertised by Kent County Council. The length of the double yellow lines was significantly shorter than expected and was insufficient to prevent people from parking in such a way as to cause an obstruction around the junction. The recommendation from the Joint Transportation Board and decision of Kent County Council had been overturned on the strength of one resident objection. The effect of the reduced restriction was to create a private parking space for the resident which when occupied obstructed the road for other residents and the many who used the Bowling Club. Mr Thompson added that at the other end of Norfolk Road at the junction with Claremont Road it was deemed necessary for double yellow lines to extend much further on both sides, the same was needed at the junction with Grove Hill Road.

County Councillor Scholes asked for clarification on how the length of the lines was calculated. Mr Baldwin confirmed that the restriction was measured from the intersection of the centre lines of the roads and as such the length of the painted lines would appear to be shorter than the stated restrictions. County Councillor Scholes noted that he was also the Borough Councillor for the relevant ward and had been aware that there was a problem but it was unclear whether the specific length of the line was the issue as he had not visited the site recently. Mr Baldwin reiterated that the purpose of the restriction was to prevent people from parking adjacent to the access to the driveway which would consequently involve them sticking out on to Grove Hill Road, the markings in their current form prevented this. County Councillor Scholes commented that there was no precedent for effectively allowing someone to create private parking on a highway. Mr Baldwin advised that in fact it was the normal case that everyone where there was a white line across their driveway effectively has private parking on the road as they can block their own driveway which nobody else can do.

Councillor Scott commented that he was in favour of extending the double yellow lines across the driveway of 31 Norfolk Road. Councillor Stanier agreed that the lines should be installed as originally stated across the driveway of 31 Norfolk Road.

Councillor Woodward sought to clarify that if the double yellow lines were extended across the driveway the resident would still be allowed to park there. Mr Baldwin confirmed that the resident would not be allowed to park there. The measure was unnecessary and contrary to the privilege enjoyed by every other resident with a white line across their driveway.

Stephen Noad, Traffic Engineer, Kent County Council confirmed that the Highway Authority supported the amendment to the traffic regulation order as the extension of the double yellow lines was unnecessary in view of the particular circumstances.

County Councillor Scholes was of the opinion that the officer recommendation should not be taken forward and most of the Board were in agreement.

The Chairman, County Councillor King, invited further questions and comments. There being none, members were asked whether the resolution was agreed.

RESOLVED – That the Board does not endorse an amendment to the traffic regulation order.

TOWN HALL SERVICE ROADS

TB23/15 The Chairman, County Councillor King, advised members that no representations has been received in respect of this topic. Therefore the report was for information only.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CAR CLUB PARKING BAYS

TB24/15 The Chairman, County Councillor King, advised members that no representations has been received in respect of this topic. Therefore the report was for information only.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

REPORTS OF KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

STREET LIGHTING LED PROJECT UPDATE

TB25/15 John Reynolds, District Manager for Dartford, Kent County Council (substituting for Earl Bourner, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells), introduced the report which included the following comments:

- The trial and consultation in respect of switching off or dimming street lights was underway.
- The campaign was widely advertised in local papers, radio, Kent County Council's website and social media channels.
- Street lights in residential areas would be converted to LED within the next fourteen months. Other routes would then up updated.

Councillor Woodward questioned the timing of the consultation which appeared to show that a report would be made to the Joint Transportation Board prior to the conclusion of the consultation. Mr Reynolds advised that he would ask the Project Manager, Robert Clark, to provide clarification.

The Chairman, County Councillor King, summarised the consensus of the Board and asked members whether the resolutions were agreed.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Board requests clarification of the timings of the consultation and an update on the proposed work streams prior to any decisions being taken; and
2. That the report be noted.

HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME

TB26/15 The Chairman, County Councillor King, invited questions and comments in respect of the Highway Works Programme.

County Councillor Scholes noted that the resurfacing works on the A26 London Road was marked as complete and asked whether a specific report on the recent flooding which had been promised was ready. He added that the extent of the flooding on 23 August 2015 and 1 September 2015 appeared to have been contributed to by the drains being blocked with tarmac. John Reynolds, District Manager for Dartford, Kent County Council (substituting for Earl Bourner, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells) agreed to make enquiries.

Councillor Bulman commented that the A26 was still in need of significant upgrade and that the long time waiting for such works should be considered when the various work streams were prioritised. Mr Reynolds advised the Board that a survey in the area had recently been undertaken and the condition of the A26 had been noted. It was hoped that funding would be made available in the next financial year.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Board requests a report on the causes of the flooding around The Pantiles on 23 August 2015 and 1 September 2015; and
2. That the report be noted.

TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

TB27/15 The following topics were raised for consideration at a future meeting:

- Self-driving vehicles
- Debate on the efficacy of traffic lights

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

TB28/15 The next meeting of the Joint Transportation Board would be on Monday 18 January 2016 commencing at 6pm.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 7.35 pm.