

## TUNBRIDGE WELLS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Monday, 15 October 2018

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

**Officers in Attendance:** Lisa Gillham (Tunbridge Wells District Manager), Vicki Hubert (Principal Transport Planner), Carol Valentine (West Kent Highway Manager), Hilary Smith (Economic Development Manager), Nick Baldwin (Senior Engineer, Parking), Jane Fineman (Head of Finance and Procurement) and Mark O'Callaghan (Democratic Services Officer)

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillors Dr Basu, McDermott, Moore and Podbury

### APOLOGIES

TB10/18 Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Oakford.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

TB11/18 There were no disclosable pecuniary or other significant interests declared at the meeting.

### NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS WISHING TO SPEAK

TB12/18 Councillor Moore had registered to speak at minute TB15/18.

The Chairman noted that three members of the public had registered to speak at minute TB14/18 and two members of the public on minute TB16/18.

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 16 JULY 2018

TB13/18 Members reviewed the minutes. No amendments were proposed.

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting dated 16 July 2018 be approved as a correct record.

### UPDATE REPORT

TB14/18 John Barber, for the Friends of Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons, had registered to speak and welcomed the completion of the Major York's Road crossing and progress on the Langton Road crossing. At a site visit on 31 January 2018 it had agreed that a traffic survey would be undertaken to inform the next steps and the cost of approximately £750 would be met jointly by County Councillor Rankin and Rusthall Parish Council. This was subsequently confirmed in updates at the April and July meetings of the Joint Transportation Board. He was concerned by an apparent lack of progress and confusion between officers and Rusthall Parish Council who appeared not to have received any quotes for the survey.

Adrian Berendt, for the Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum, had registered to speak and commented that there was a lack of progress and, in some cases, counteractive actions on many significant issues including congestion, safety

and pollution. Cars were being prioritised at the expense of people. Kent topped the list of road casualties with 811 in 2017. There had been very little progress on safety schemes and no progress on increasing the number of journeys taken by active travel. £20m was being spent on town centre parking which would not help with congestion or pollution but a small fraction of that amount would have a transformational effect on active travel. The Council's consultation on air quality clearly identified road traffic as the main component of poor air quality yet noting was being done to tackle it. 2019 should be the year to make radical changes, to protect vulnerable road users, to make reductions in pollution and to reverse decisions making things worse.

Lachlan Burn, resident of Pembury, had registered to speak and commented that traffic used the country lanes such as Kings Toll Road to access or bypass the A21. Several stables along the road catered for school children and disabled people who, along with the stable staff, were at risk from increasingly heavy traffic. The road also formed part of a designated route popular with walkers and cyclists. The narrowness of the road and the acute angle of the junction with the A21 was a hazard to all road users, some drivers were ignoring the no right-turn causing significant danger to oncoming vehicles. Action should be taken to dissuade drivers from leaving the A21.

Comments were made in respect of the following items (other items were taken as read):

#### **Pedestrian Crossing on Langton Road**

- County Councillor Rankin had not received confirmation from Rusthall Parish Council that it would share the cost of the surveys but on receipt of such she would complete the necessary paperwork to facilitate the use of her Combined Member Grant.
- The surveys only informed the next stages and did not guarantee that a crossing would be forthcoming.
- The Chairman of Rusthall Parish Council had confirmed to Councillor Stanyer in a recent telephone call that they were willing to share the cost.
- Lisa Gillham, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, KCC, agreed to liaise between Rusthall Parish Council and County Councillor Rankin to progress the matter.

#### **St Johns 20mph zone (including Currie Road)**

- 'Zone alterations' mentioned in the report referred to additional roundels and signage.

#### **Congestion on Kings Toll Road, Pembury**

- The problems had arisen as a result of the duelling of the A21, previously congestion started further along the route and there was no benefit to using Kings Toll Road to avoid traffic.
- Signs were being installed to dissuade drivers from leaving the A21 but the key would be to reduce congestion on the A21.
- Work was ongoing with Highways England and the Board's support would be welcomed.
- No significant disruption had been experienced during the particular day when officers inspected the area. However, quantitative data had been supplied by local residents.
- It was worth considering whether access to the road should be restricted.

### **Strategic Planning**

- Consultants were being appointed to provide evidence in the development of the Local Plan, following which a meeting of the Local Plan Working Group would be convened.

### **Brick Paving**

- The County Council's response had been disappointing.
- Advance notice of any future removals of brick paving had been requested.
- Previously removed bricks from Royal Chase had not been located.
- It was a condition of granting permission that any removed bricks were returned to the Highway Authority, unfortunately enforcement of said condition was difficult.
- Granting of permission should be subject to the posting of a bond secured against the return of any removed bricks, thus avoiding the need of pursuing enforcement through the Courts.

**RESOLVED** – That, subject to the comments made in the discussion, the report be noted.

## **RESIDENT PARKING RESTRICTIONS - GROVE HILL ROAD AREA, ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS**

TB15/18 Nick Baldwin, Engineer, TWBC, introduced the report and noted that having considered the wider implications of the proposals the Council was proposing alternative restrictions to those which had initially been discussed. Details were set out in the report.

Councillor Moore, member for Park Ward, had registered to speak and commented that elected members needed to demonstrate leadership and responsiveness. Through the Board's support, the revised restrictions set out in the report provided an appropriate response to reasonable concerns and she supported the recommendations.

The discussion included consideration of the following matters:

- Current parking on roads adjacent to Grove Hill Road was tight but provided sufficient space to allow vehicles to turn, thus avoiding the need for vehicles to reverse out on to Grove Hill Road.
- The support for the proposals expressed by local residents and the local member was satisfactory justification for approving the recommendations.

**RESOLVED** – That the Board endorses the proposed minor amendment to parking restrictions in the Grove Hill Road area to extend restrictions for one hour parking between 8am and 8pm Monday to Saturday with no return for four hours, to between 8am and 10pm Monday to Saturday still with no return within four hours.

## **HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME**

TB16/18 Lisa Gillham, District Manager for Tunbridge Wells, KCC, introduced the report which included the following comments:

- Resurfacing of the A26 through St. John's Road was completed in August 2018.

- All sites listed for micro-surfacing and surface dressing as set out in the report had been completed on schedule.
- Resurfacing of Langton Road was due to commence this evening.
- Six surface drains in the Nevill Street area had been disconnected from the Southern Water sewer and connected to the River Grom to help reduce the risk of flooding in the area.
- A drain cleansing 'blitz' had recently been completed.
- A full drainage report would come to the next meeting. In the meantime, it was confirmed that drains on minor roads were cleansed in response to reports whilst drains on major roads were routinely cleansed on an annual basis or biannual basis in high risk areas.
- Gully cleansing had commenced in October and was due to complete in November 2018.

John Coupe, for Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group, had registered to speak and questioned how the reduced provision for the A26 cycle route achieved the objectives of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, as set out at Appendix D4 to the report. Previous proposals enjoyed support from 70 per cent of respondents to the public consultation which, whilst not perfect, were a significant improvement. The designs to be implemented were much poorer by comparison. Retention of six on-street parking spaces would reduce the benefits of the scheme and there were more examples where the scheme was being undermined. Actions were failing to live up to promises.

Paul Mason, for Tunbridge Wells Bicycle User Group, had registered to speak and noted that the purpose of TWBUG was to get more people to cycle. Appendix E to the report contained 15 examples where a bell-mouth junction was to be installed, some of which had already been completed. Tight-curve junctions were considerably safer and should be preferable. Bell-mouth junctions were no-longer best practice and in many instances were being replaced by tighter curves, doing so now would reduce future costs and demonstrate the Council's commitment to making it safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Comments were made in respect of the following matters:

**A26 Cycle Route (page 32):**

- A26 cycle route was a priority route for TWBC and efforts were ongoing to improve it further.
- The diminishing of the cycle route and the lost opportunity of completing the raised tables at the same time as the resurfacing was disappointing.

**Bell-mouth Junctions (pages 33-36):**

- The design of junctions was inline with established standards and dependent on local conditions, turning curves needed to accommodate larger vehicles as well as cars.
- Bell-mouth junctions had lower long-term maintenance costs.
- Design standards had been slow to take account of increasing trends towards more walking and cycling.
- Clarification was sought as to whether there was agreement with the principal of tight-curve junctions being safer.
- Officers were increasingly mindful of local conditions in determining the most appropriate junction for the location.

- Given that there was general agreement for a review of the policy of the use of bell-mouth junctions, the current proposed works should be halted.
- KCC Officers undertook to provide greater explanation on the particular factors that impacted on the decision for the proposed junctions. However, review of the wider policy and Kent Design Guide may have a number of implications and would need to be subject to the usual County Council decision making process.

#### **Footway and Carriageway Improvements (page 25-26):**

- The schemes set out in the report were only those recently completed or due to be completed. Previously completed schemes had been removed from the list so there had been substantially more throughout the year.
- Approximately £2m had been spent on remedial works in Tunbridge Wells.
- Works were generally scheduled to take advantage of summer weather and most had been completed before the winter.

#### **Street Lighting (page 29-30):**

- The columns of recently replaced lights would be removed.
- All columns were subject to a routine scheme of structural testing and replacement columns were ordered for all lights which failed tests.
- KCC had agreed to maintain district-owned assets in Tunbridge Wells.
- Private street assets were the responsibility of the owner.
- Permission was required to attach flower baskets, Christmas lights or other items to light columns. Such permission would only be granted if appropriate.

**RESOLVED** – That, subject to the comments made in the discussion, the report be noted.

### **TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

TB17/18      Comments were made in respect of the following items:

#### **Reporting of Performance Indicators**

- Following a request from the Chief Executive, the reporting of some key performance indicators may be possible, however, consideration was ongoing and would be reported to a future meeting.
- Thousands of fault reports were received and acted upon in Tunbridge Wells each year, any such reporting must be effective and appropriate.
- Numbers of people killed or seriously injured on Kent roads was the worst in the UK and there should be a regular item to monitor both numbers and actions taken to mitigate incidents.
- If statistics were to be provided, a standard method of comparison would need to be established.
- The number of people killed or seriously injured was a national data point required by the government.

- A limited number of key points would be helpful to determine the actual state of affairs rather than having to rely on anecdotal evidence.
- Any statistics would need to be considered in context.
- Crash statistics were key in determining the necessity of crash remedial works which reduced the amount of money for other improvement works. Any such spend needed to demonstrate a reduction in crashes.

Members agreed that the item come forward to a future meeting.

#### **Criteria for 20 mph Zones**

- A recent response from KCC for a 20mph zone in the Banner Farm area had set out the criteria for future consideration of such schemes and were noted here for members information.
- Community led schemes which were not safety schemes required external funding.
- The Schemes Planning and Delivery Team are only able to initiate 20mph schemes if either a crash remedial scheme or if led by a public health agenda with evidence to suggest that the local area is highly ranked in terms of priority based on public health indicators.

Members noted.

#### **On-Street Parking Enforcement Reserve**

- The JTB had no budget.
- The reserve consisted of the surplus from penalty charge notices after costs had been deducted. TWBC held the money on KCC's behalf.
- The Borough Council could put a business case to KCC to access the reserve. Applications would be made through officers.
- Only small surpluses were made so the reserve needed to accumulate funds over long periods. The reserve was currently £317k.
- The Council could not 'profit' from penalty charge notices therefore any surplus must be spent on road transport projects.
- JTB could recommend priority projects, within the criteria, for consideration of an application for funding from the reserve.
- There had not been any recent applications to the reserve but a number of projects were expected from the forthcoming review of the Parking Strategy.
- Use of the reserve should be positively publicised to avoid accusations of profiteering from penalty charge notices.

Members agreed that the item come forward to a future meeting.

#### **High Brooms Rail Bridge**

- A heavy goods vehicle had again become stuck under the High Brooms Rail Bridge leading to considerable disruption.
- Given the unlikelihood of physical alterations to the bridge, creative solutions would be needed.
- This was a key consideration in the development of the new Local Plan.

Members noted.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

TB18/18      The date of the next scheduled meeting was Monday 21 January 2019 at 6pm.

**NOTES:**

The meeting concluded at 7.40 pm.

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