
SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Monday, 8 September 2014 from 5.30 - 7.50 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Andy Booth (substitute for Councillor Prescott), Bryan Mulhern, Ken Pugh, Ghlin Whelan, Mike Whiting (Vice-Chairman) and Tony Winckless.

Kent County Councillors: Mike Baldock, Bowles, Tom Gates (Chairman), Lee Burgess, Adrian Crowther, Harrison and Roger Truelove.

Kent Association of Local Councils: Councillors Peter Macdonald and Richard Palmer.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mike Knowles, Philippa Davies, Brian Planner, Ruth Goudie and Kirstie Williams.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: KCC Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport and Councillor Mike Henderson.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Prescott, Pat Sandle, David Simmons and Parish Councillor Keith Johnson.

213 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 June 2014 (Minute Nos. 64 – 75) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

214 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mike Henderson, not a member of the Board, declared an interest on the Christmas/New Year 2013-14 Storms and Floods – Final Report item as he lived within the area of flooding. He was speaking on behalf of local residents.

215 PUBLIC SESSION

The Chairman invited Annette Jordan to speak. She spoke on item no. 8 on the agenda – Lansdowne Primary School, Sittingbourne.

Mrs Jordan spoke on the dangers of the drop-off point for school children on the Vincent Park Estate. She explained that expansion of the school would increase the problem and outlined the incidents that had taken place, including a child being taken to hospital. Mrs Jordan spoke of the blind corners and bends, with parked cars and speeding cars, with several near misses. She considered there should be a second entrance to the school, from the new development, and double yellow lines at the junctions.

Mrs Jordan stated that safety measures needed to be put in place before it was too late.

Part One - Minutes for recommendation to Kent County Council's Cabinet

216 SHEPPEY CROSSING

In Councillor Pat Sandle's absence, Councillor Ken Pugh read out a statement from Councillor Sandle which was tabled. The Chairman also brought Members' attention to the

tabled paper from Mr Darren Prescott. Both papers had previously been emailed to members of the Board.

The East Kent Highways Manager advised that a meeting was planned between the Highways Agency and Kent County Council (KCC) Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport regarding safety issues on the Sheppey Bridge.

A Parish Councillor representative outlined the financial costs of accidents from the Department of Transport 2011 figures and considered the costs for improvements to the Bridge were minor in comparison. He suggested that average speed cameras should be put in place, that a limit of 50mph would not increase journey times significantly, and that instant fines should be implemented on foreign vehicles and they be reported to customs. He considered the wind speed monitoring to be inaccurate.

Councillor Mike Whiting proposed that the Joint Transportation Board urges the KCC Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, when he met with the Department of Transport, to request a 50mph limit on the Bridge, to be enforced by average speed cameras. This was seconded by KCC Councillor Adrian Crowther.

Members made the following comments: do not agree with the proposal; the road was designed not to be dangerous, drivers made it dangerous; even 40mph was too fast in poor conditions; majority of drivers were sensible, some aggressive driving took place when speed limits were implemented; measures needed to be appropriate; work needed to be done behind the scenes, consultation was required with KCC Highways and the Police to get an informed picture; would like to see full report and options back to future meeting; need to find best way to resolve the problem; there was work going on behind the scenes on this; public wanted this to be resolved; need to keep pressure up to do something; support motion; advisory matrix signs were needed; blind summit on bridge was a problem; this was important for KCC to back; speed was a contributory factor to the problems, not sole cause; Bridge experiences unique micro-climate; surprised that there was not an official report following the serious multi-vehicle crash last year; support 50mph, but would like input from experts; support average speed cameras; incredible that there are no emergency telephones on the Bridge; conditions can change quickly on the Bridge, it was not solely dangerous driving that caused the crash; there should be a feasibility study for lighting on the Bridge; speed was the problem; and drivers drove too fast for the conditions.

KCC Councillor Roger Truelove proposed an amendment that the Board, on receiving serious public concerns on safety issues of the Bridge, resolves to have an item on the agenda at the next meeting with authoritative reports from appropriate agencies to look at the options, including speed limits. This was seconded by KCC Councillor Harrison.

Members made the following comments to the amendment: it would be beneficial to receive information on the Bridge from experts before a decision was made; the proposed amendment would delay any solution; it was frustrating that professionals were not doing anything; the substantive proposal would ensure that issues were looked into so that a solution could be found; the problem was for experts to decide, happy to not make a decision at this meeting; and do not support delay that amendment would cause.

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

On being put to the vote the substantive proposal was agreed.

Recommended:

That the KCC Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport requests a 50mph limit on the Bridge, to be enforced by average speed cameras, when he met with the Department of Transport.

217 SITTINGBOURNE NORTHERN RELIEF ROAD - UPDATE

A Member referred to paragraph 5 in the report and considered that the Northern Relief Road (NRR) had not been successful in a bid to the south eastern Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) fund because it was at the bottom of the economic development list. He considered it was not complete without a plan for the Southern Relief Road (SRR) and it was not being taken seriously. The Member stated that residents on the East Hall development had been let down as they had been told that the road would be completed, the industrial estate needed an exit to encourage more economic growth, this should be a high priority in Sittingbourne and there should be more progress on the road's completion.

The Strategic Transportation Planner explained that those projects which received funding from LEP were 'shovel-ready', had a high proportion of private funding and were in a more advanced stage of design.

Members made the following comments: consider that junction 5 of the M2 should be a priority as well; and the importance of NRR for East Hall residents.

Councillor Mike Whiting proposed that KCC be urged to draw-up the NRR to the A2, push the LEP for funding for the scheme, and for it be included in the Local Plan. This was seconded by KCC Councillor Bowles.

In response to a question, the Strategic Transportation Planner advised that research work had been carried out on the SRR, but a decision had been made to de-couple the SRR from the NRR three years ago.

Members' comments on the proposal included: NRR and junction 5 were both priorities, with different issues; cannot de-couple NRR from SRR; and a lot of money had been spent on traffic modelling, now needed to see the reality.

A Member reminded the Board that the JTB had voted to de-couple the NRR and SRR, he suggested that further lobbying was needed.

On being put to the vote the proposal was agreed.

Recommended:

That KCC be urged to draw-up the NRR to the A2, to push the LEP for funding for the scheme, and for it to be included in the Local Plan.

218 LOWER ROAD JUNCTION WITH BARTON HILL DRIVE, ISLE OF SHEPPEY

The Strategic Transportation Planner explained that the option for this junction had been explored, considering a mini-roundabout or small roundabout to replace the traffic signals at the junction. The mini-roundabout was considered not to be suitable for this type of environment and would still require land to be acquired, and therefore only a small roundabout, to match the one at Thistle Hill Way, would be progressed. She reminded Members that the JTB meeting in June 2014 had not wanted a ban on the right hand turn from Lower Road to Barton Hill Drive.

Members made the following comments: land needed to be purchased to enable the junction to be improved; tailbacks were frequent in the area; good report, and support larger of the two roundabout options.

Recommended:

That the preferred option for the Lower Road junction with the Barton Hill Drive junction be a small roundabout, rather than a mini-roundabout.

Part Two - Minutes for recommendation to Swale Borough Council's Cabinet

219 LANSDOWNE PRIMARY SCHOOL, GLADSTONE DRIVE, SITTINGBOURNE

The Strategic Transportation Planner stated that it was not possible to request yellow lines in a planning application, but a Travel Plan had been requested which would review traffic in the area.

A Member advised that safety outside the school was already atrocious, without an increase in pupil numbers. He advised that a meeting at the school had resulted in a plan to include a walking bus; suggestions for direct access from the Stones Farm development by foot and vehicular access into the school grounds; and SBC Cabinet to look at yellow lines, especially on the apex of the bends.

KCC Councillor Bowles proposed that a report be submitted to SBC's Cabinet to explore the implementation of double yellow lines on the bends in the roads and that the JTB recommends that the Planning Committee looks at a second entrance to the school, both vehicular and pedestrian, to the Stones Farm development. This was seconded and on being put to the vote the proposal was agreed.

Recommendation:

That a report is submitted to SBC's Cabinet to explore the implementation of double yellow lines on the bends in the roads and the Planning Committee looks at a second entrance to the school, both vehicular and pedestrian, to the Stones Farm development.

220 PRESTON AVENUE, FAVERSHAM - PROPOSED EXTENSION OF DOUBLE YELLOW LINES

Recommendation:

That the existing waiting restrictions in the near vicinity of 38 Preston Avenue, Faversham be extended as on the consultation plan.

Part Three - Information items

221 HIGHWAY WORKS PROGRAMME 2014/15

The Board considered the Highway Works Programme which updated Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2014/15. Members went through the report and made the following comments:

Page 17

Pleased with proposed works at The Broadway, Minster.

Page 19

Concern with gullies not emptied – an increase in gully sucker numbers may be needed.

Page 20

More identification of location of street lights was needed. Welcome dark skies with lights-off programme, although concern with increased burglaries. Needed to be a process to request lights to be switched on again. Happy with lights off on Old Ferry Road, but they needed to be switched on when there was fog.

In response to a question, the East Kent Highway Manager explained that it was not possible to adjust the time settings for the lighting to fit it with summer/winter times.

Page 30

Needed clarification on traffic signals at Mill Way, Sittingbourne and whether they were complete; there was discrepancy with the Progress Update report on page 63 of the report.

The East Kent Highway Manager agreed to check on notification of information on the closure of Queenborough by-pass.

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Welcomed all the information, but considered that Member-subsidised bus routes should also be included on the schedule.

Recommended:

That the report be noted.

222 CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR 2013-14 STORMS AND FLOODS - FINAL REPORT

A Member, who was not a member of the Board, considered there was a lack of mention of Faversham in the report and also a lack of funds for Faversham after the floods. He considered Faversham was not included in the Draft Action Plan. He explained that local residents were concerned with the Faversham Creek and that there had been no indication in the report of concern regarding Faversham flooding issues. In response to discussion on responsible agencies, the Member advised that various agencies were involved in the issues that could help to mitigate flooding.

A Member referred to paragraph A8.4 in the report and the multi-agency involvement and acknowledgement of the issues at stake.

Members made the following comments: drainage maintenance by KCC could help to mitigate flooding problems; there had been other flooding issues since December 2013, lessons had not been learnt; KCC needed to liaise with Parish Councils to determine the location of gullies in their Parish; some KCC officers had visited Parish Councils; the report could have been more comprehensive, rather than focussing on time scales and certain areas; multi-agency intervention was important; the problem of sea grass, after the tidal surge, stopping drains from functioning; the report did not give the confidence of agencies pulling together, more co-ordination was needed; flood barriers on the creeks in Swale were needed; and concern that there was no investment on coastal part of Swale at all.

Recommended:

That the report be noted.

223 PROGRESS UPDATE REPORT

The Board considered the report that gave an update on the progress made in relation to previous recommendations made by the Board.

Recommended:

That the report be noted.

Chairman

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All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel