
Swale Joint Transportation Board

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Monday, 2 October 2023 from 5.30 pm - 7.38 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Simon Clark (Chair), Alastair Gould, Elliott Jayes, Richard Palmer and Karen Watson.

KENT COUNTY COUNCILLORS: Mike Baldock, Mike Dendor and Mike Whiting and John Wright (Vice-Chair).

KENT ASSOCIATION of LOCAL COUNCILS: Parish Councillor Peter MacDonald.

KENT COUNTY COUNCILLORS (VIRTUALLY): Parish Councillor Jeff Tutt.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Billy Attaway and Adrian Oliver.

OFFICERS PRESENT (VIRTUALLY): Alan Blackburn, Mike Knowles, Sophia Ramm, Daniel Rollinson and Donna Seager.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (VIRTUALLY): Councillors Lloyd Bowen, Carole Jackson, Tony Winckless and Dolley Wooster.

APOLOGIES: Councillors James Hall and Paul Stephen, Kent County Councillors Andy Booth, Antony Hook and Rich Lehmann and Eddie Thomas.

331 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chair outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

332 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 June 2023 (Minute Nos. 133 – 145) were taken as read, agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

333 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

334 **Public Session**

There were no registered speakers.

Part One Minutes for recommendation to Swale Borough Council's Policy and Resources Committee

335 **Formal Objections to Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) - Swale Amendment 45 2023**

The Seafront & Engineering Manager introduced the report which provided details of objections, comments and indications of support received in relation to the recently advertised TRO, Swale Amendment 45 2023, which covered various amendments. He outlined the recommendations for each scheme as set-out in the report.

Recommended:

- (1) That the proposed extension to the parking bay in Tanners Street, Faversham, be progressed, subject to confirmation from the waste contractor that the proposals would leave adequate carriageway width for refuse collections.**
- (2) That the disabled persons' parking bay outside 19 Burley Road, Sittingbourne, be formalised in the Traffic Regulation Order.**

336 Results of Informal Consultation - Proposed Bollard Removal, James Street, Sheerness

The Environmental Campaigns & Performance Officer introduced the report which provided details of recent informal consultations which had taken place with residents and statutory consultees on proposed amendments to bollard removal in the Sheerness area.

The Chair invited Members to speak and points raised included:

- Local residents struggled to put their refuse collection out because of the bollards;
- there was an increase in fly tipping in the surrounding area because residents could not get their bins collected;
- James Street, Sheerness was one of the few areas on the Isle of Sheppey that had extremely narrow roads;
- the bollards were there to stop people parking on the footpaths and should remain there;
- this seemed to be asking Members to sanction parking on pavements;
- thought that the gaps between the bollards were big enough to park a car in between;
- had officers considered whether double yellow lines would be more appropriate?;
- the officer needed to consult Kent County Council (KCC) and the Highways Authorities about the impact of removing the bollards;
- the emergency services had not been consulted and thought this was key to the decision about removing bollards to access a narrow street;
- had officers considered using slim collection vehicles?;
- refuse lorries struggled to get down the road so how would emergency vehicles access the road?; and
- concerned that the emergency services had not been consulted.

Kent County Councillor Mike Dendor proposed a motion that the report be deferred to the December 2023 Swale Joint Transportation Board (JTB) meeting so that the officer could consult with the emergency services and KCC Highways and Transportation. This was seconded by Councillor Karen Watson.

Members raised concerns that deferring the item to a future JTB would delay the decision and result in residents having increased problems with their bin collections. The proposer and seconder of the motion withdrew the motion.

Kent County Councillor Mike Whiting proposed that the bollards on either side of James Street, Sheerness be removed, subject to the emergency services and relevant highways authorities being consulted on the removal of the bollards. This was seconded by Parish Councillor Peter MacDonald.

Resolved:

- (1) That the results of the recent informal consultation be noted.**
- (2) That the bollards on either side of James Street, Sheerness be removed, subject to the emergency services and Kent County Council Highways and Transportation being consulted on the removal of the bollards.**

337 LCWIP - Rural Highways Review - Borden & Grove Park Ward

The Active Travel Coordinator introduced the report which provided a summary of the rural road network in Borden & Grove Park Ward as part of the Swale Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

The Chair invited Members to make comments which included:

- This was a good start but other nearby rural areas needed to be looked at;
- encouraged officers to look at Lower Halstow, Hartlip and Newington next as these were the areas that would also be impacted on the nearby roadworks in Swale;
- any damage to the rural lanes cost KCC money that they do not have;
- there were regular issues with diversion routes which cause gridlocks throughout the Borough;
- better co-ordination was needed before road works commenced to stop gridlocks;
- concerned that the report did not consider the impact on residents' mental health caused by traffic problems;
- the bus companies were struggling to organise a proper bus timetable and it could eventually lead to no bus services at all;
- how often would the multi-agency group meet?;
- had all the agencies agreed to this approach?;
- what resources were being used to set this multi-agency group up?;
- it was important that utility companies were brought on board to avoid unnecessary emergency road works;
- the traffic problems were unlikely to improve after the road works were completed so was it suitable for the multi-agency group to carry on meeting after the initial works were completed?;
- the multi-agency group approach was necessary to respond to 'live' traffic events that occurred so people could give local knowledge about the correct diversion routes;
- communication to the public needed to be improved;
- could an app be developed so residents were notified of all possible diversion routes available to them;
- thought that temporary traffic lights needed to have someone 'manned' on the lights to keep the traffic flowing smoothly; and
- thought that one group to oversee and plan for all types of future road works was better than creating several different groups to communicate between each other.

The Active Travel Coordinator clarified that the funding for the road works and the multi-agency approach to the mitigations for the road works had already been agreed in the works schedule and explained that it was the responsibility of the Highways authority to cover the costs where necessary. He added that the focus of the report was to react to the problems that occurred during the road work schemes and reduce the impact that they had on the rural networks in Swale. He said that other areas would be considered throughout the whole of the Borough whilst the number of different road schemes

commenced.

The Kent County District Manager (Swale) added that the street works team at KCC were working extremely hard with the different agencies to answer any queries and ensure the road networks ran smoothly. He referred to the Highways Utility Committee that met quarterly and mentioned that there was a mechanism for Members' concerns about utilities to be raised and discussed at the Committee.

The KCC Assistant Project Manager said that there were ongoing discussions with Highways authorities on the different schemes at Swale. They had recently met to review the way they communicated with different stakeholders and asked Members that had any ideas on improving the communication with residents to bring them forward to the KCC projects team.

Kent County Councillor Mike Baldock proposed the recommendations and this was seconded by Kent County Councillor Mike Dendor.

Recommended:

- (1) That a Multi-Agency task force be formed to monitor the wider road network to ensure that the current programme of works and any future planned works, delivers the mitigations to allow for the regeneration of the shared space rural lanes and implement the interventions where and when appropriate.**
- (2) That the Task Force encompasses Hartlip, Newington & Upchurch Ward and Bobbing Iwade & Lower Halstow Ward.**
- (3) That the group designs, implements and monitors traffic management during the Key Street and Grovehurst roundabout works to ensure a continual flow of traffic on the A2 through Sittingbourne.**
- (4) That the group liaised with large employers, logistics companies, public transport providers, Medway Council, Utilities, and other organisations, including schools to reduce the impact of congestion during the works.**
- (5) That the group was managed publicly to help drivers avoid and reduce congestion.**

Part Three Minutes for Information

338 Verbal update from Kent County Council on the M2 Junction 5 Stockbury Works

Daniel Rollinson, National Highways M2 Junction 5 Project Manager, gave a verbal update on the M2 Junction 5 Stockbury Works, Sittingbourne.

The Chair invited questions from Members and points raised included:

- Concerned with vehicles approaching the traffic lights too fast due to the layout of the slip road;
- had the layout of the slip road undergone adequate safety tests?;
- were the works on schedule?
- thought that all the teams involved were doing a good job;
- Oad Street, Sittingbourne had always been used as a 'rat run' and thought it would only get worse as the works progressed;
- concerned with diversion routes that could cause the Bobbing roundabout to become dangerous and this was used by school children to get to Bobbing school;

and

- had officers considered other temporary traffic solutions at the Bobbing roundabout to ensure children's safety?

The National Highways projects officer responded to points raised and explained that works were currently on target and hoped that the flyover would be completed by the summer of 2024 and that the whole scheme would be completed by the end of 2024. He added that all slip roads and proposed changes to the layouts had been subject to standard testing and were constantly monitored. He referred to the Bobbing roundabout diversion and said that National Highways would not be able to fund any additional mitigations that were not already agreed by the schedule of works at the beginning of the project.

The Chair thanked the officers for the update.

339 Verbal update from Kent County Council on the Grovehurst Road Junction works

The Project Manager (Major Capital Programme Team, KCC) gave a verbal update on the Grovehurst Road Junction Works, Sittingbourne.

The Chair invited questions from Members and points raised included:

- The North slip road had been shut for some time and wanted to check when it would be opened again?;
- were there any plans to close Swale Way, Sittingbourne?;
- was Nichols Transport a part of the focus group?; and
- thought that if businesses were getting daily updates on the road works and roundabout projects, so should Councillors.

The Project Manager responded to say that Lane one, North Bound Slip road at Grovehurst roundabout had been shut due to some important drainage works. She added that the northbound exit and entry slip roads would be closed for 12 months and that Nichols Transport were part of the focus group. The officer hoped that there was no need to close Swale Way, however, there was a possibility that it would be closed for one or two evenings.

In response to the daily updates the project officer said that there were bi-monthly stakeholder group newsletters that any interested party could be part of and asked for any Members that would be interested in receiving the newsletter to let the projects team know.

The Chair thanked the officers for the update.

340 Highways Forward Works Programme: 2022/23 and 2023/24

The KCC District Manager (Swale) advised Members that the incorrect Highways Work Programme report had been circulated to Members and an up-to-date version was circulated to Members after the meeting.

341 Progress Update Report

Resolved:

(1) That the report be noted.

342 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of Swale JTB would be at 5.30 pm on Monday 4 December 2023.

Chair

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