

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **11th June 2019**.

Present:

Cllr. Heyes (Chairman);
Mr P W Bartlett (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Burgess, Forest, Mrs Heyes, Krause, Smith, Ward
Mr M J Angell, Mrs C L Bell, Mr S J G Koowaree

Mr. K Ashby – KALC Representative.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (c) Councillor Smith attended as a Substitute Member for Councillor Michael

Apologies:

Cllr. Michael, Mr D Farrell, Mr P M Hill, Mr C Simkins.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Campkin, Gideon, Iliffe, Wright.

Project Manager – J10A (Highways England), Stakeholder Liaison – J10A (Vinci Construction UK), Senior Highway Manager – (KCC) , Parking Enforcement Manager – (KCC) , Ashford District Manager – (KCC), Schemes Project Engineer – (KCC), Technical Support Officer – (KCC), Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing- (ABC), Deputy Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing - (ABC), Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager – (ABC) Parking, Highways and Transportation Technical Officer - (ABC), Civil Enforcement Officer Team Leader - (ABC), Economic Development Manager - (ABC), Member Services Liaison Manager – (ABC).

22 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Mr Bartlett	Made a 'Voluntary Announcement' as he lived close to Junction 10 of the M20	27

23 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 12th March 2019 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

24 Parking and Waiting Restrictions – Update Summary

The report provided an update and summarised parking and waiting restriction schemes that had been through the Joint Transportation Board. The Deputy Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing advised that one objection had been received in respect of the Amendment 7 Order in relation to proposals at Ashford Road Tenterden, which Officers had been able to accommodate.

Resolved:

That the update on schemes be noted.

25 Proposed Waiting Restrictions – Imperial Way, Ashford

The report gave details of the proposed No Waiting at Any Time restriction to be implemented on Imperial Way in Ashford.

The Schemes Project Engineer (KCC) explained that the proposal stemmed from concerns expressed by residents and the County Member about public service vehicles regularly having to mount the footway to negotiate parked vehicles on a short section of Imperial Way. There had been 9 letters of support and 8 letters of objection to the proposal. The Schemes Project Engineer (KCC) further explained that the proposal would only result in the loss of one parking space.

Resolved:

That the implementation of the proposed waiting restrictions on Imperial Way, Ashford be approved.

26 Proposed Permanent Traffic Regulation Order – Ashford HGV Overnight Parking Enforcement

The report gave details of the proposed permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to manage the overnight parking of HGV's on the A20 Ashford between Charing and Ashford and four Industrial Estates in the Borough. The advert for the TRO had been published on 19 April 2019, with a closing date for comments on 13 May 2019. A total of 17 responses in support had been received from local residents and one objection had been received from the Road Haulage Association (RHA).

In accordance with Procedure Rule 9.3, Mr Tom Cotton, Head of Licensing and Infrastructure Policy for the Road Haulage Association Ltd spoke and advised that

the RHA represented 7,200 members with over 76,000 operating licences and more than half of the UK HGV fleet.

He explained that lay-by's were an essential part of the road infrastructure and that roads were the workplace of the Haulage Industry. Lay-by's were road safety features which enabled all drivers to take a break, which was a mandatory requirement. If they were not taken there were serious consequences for example loss of vocational license and jobs for those who failed to comply.

Mr Cotton further explained that all food, medicine, and other essential products were delivered by road freight and many products had a short shelf life and could not be transported by any other means. He understood that KCC had identified a current shortfall of 1000 lorry parking spaces each night which meant that there was nowhere for drivers to stop. This was an historical problem and not a new one and KCC had failed to respond, or properly plan despite the warning signs and RHA stating this problem for many years. He believed that this problem had been created by KCC through their inactivity and forward planning. Mr Cotton said that even with the increase at Ashford Truckstop there was a net loss, because of losses at Folkestone Harbour and Airport Café.

Mr Cotton then referred to the DfT – National Survey of Lorry Parking published in 2018 which described the East of England as Critical and the South East as Serious, but 1% away from Critical. He said that this year Kent would reach critical and KCC and Local Authorities had not done enough to provide parking for road freight which was national critical infrastructure. Trucks were the “invisible supply line” and no delivery was free, despite many retailers offering free delivery.

In terms of the consultation exercise, he said that 16 responses supporting the making of this order permanent had been received along a five mile section of road with thousands of residents living adjacent to it and a Borough population of over 270,000 people. Mr Cotton considered that the needs of the Borough, Kent and the entire UK economy needed to come above the 16 opponents. The 16 opposition responses were from from hundreds, if not 1000's of addresses covering a 5 mile section of road and 4 industrial estates demonstrated to him that if there was a problem with lorry parking the response would have been much greater.

Mr Cotton further explained that if Kent and other local authorities had the correct lorry parking provision in place this would not be needed and said that the zonal approach was designed for urban and not rural areas. Kent County Council had permitted a 45 minute break, but had kept this secret, as it was not shown on the signage. He said that the Freight Transport Association (FTA) would have responded in similar terms to the RHA, but the short consultation period over Easter had prevented this.

In an interim report into the Future of Freight, published last December reference had been made to Freight Blindness and this report demonstrated that both government and Local Authorities often had little understanding of why and how it planned for freight, which left the needs of the freight system far down the priority list. This had resulted in policy makers or planners being unable to take account of, or plan effectively for, the needs of freight. Mr Cotton said that the Government's

current approaches to policy making for freight were piecemeal and fragmented into individual modes that had struggled to proactively confront future challenges.

In conclusion, Mr Cotton said that on the basis of the 16 responses from a population of more than 270,000 it was the contention of the RHA that this was not needed but if the Board decided there was a need, then proper infrastructure needed to be put in place, before restrictions were created. If appropriate overnight parking existed, Mr Cotton said that the RHA would not oppose restrictions. **Post Meeting Note: The 2011 Census figure shows the Borough population as 118,000.**

In accordance with Procedural Rule 9.3, Mrs Christine Drury, Chairman of Westwell Parish Council and speaking on behalf of Hothfield Parish Council wished to give thanks to the Traffic Regulation Order team at KCC and others in Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council for their work including discussions with the Department for Transport.

Mrs Drury said that residents were aware that this proposal for a permanent TRO was a follow on from the 18 month trial, and what was being proposed today was just the TRO, not the enforcement arrangements which were not yet ready to be discussed.

Residents also appreciated that the TRO being discussed had been informed by the trial and by discussions with the Road Haulage Association and others, as well as with communities and residents.

Mrs Drury said that Ashford fully recognised its location and the need to provide truck parking, and had set about doing it properly and fairly. This was why 200 additional spaces had been provided in the Borough. It was also why the operation of the 18 month trial had been a success, because it had been well operated. Residents did note that changed behaviours and the provision of truck parking with facilities may still depend on enforcement so the enforcement arrangements would be important. Meanwhile making the TRO permanent was simply the next stage in a process of continuous improvement of how HGV parking need was well managed in the Borough.

Mrs Drury explained that the waiting restrictions proposed in this TRO would discourage drivers and their operators from parking overnight and at weekends in places that were inappropriate for road safety or residential impact reasons. The restrictions would also encourage drivers to use high quality facilities available in the Borough, which allowed them to comply with the legal requirement for 45hr rest periods to be away from their vehicles. The flexibility needed in case of getting caught short on drivers hours was included in the exemptions built into the TRO. Mrs Drury said that as parishes they were well aware of how certain Eastern European HGV operators worked and if the exemptions were being abused there might be a need to ask the JTB to address the situation.

In conclusion, Mrs Drury said that overall this TRO was a small but important step forward in achieving better working conditions for drivers and transforming the road safety and environmental conditions for local residents and businesses just in the

TRO area in the Borough. It had the support of Westwell and Hothfield Parish Council's, and she said that they would like to see it approved today.

The Deputy Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing explained that ABC and the KCC had worked with the lorry park operators with a view to identifying any opportunity to enhance facilities and she accepted that throughout the County, Kent had a long way to go. She considered that the five mile stretch of the A20 was unique in terms of the location backing on to residential properties. Officers had met with the RHA the previous week and would continue to work with them over this issue. In terms of the comment about signage, the Deputy Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing said that it was not possible to incorporate information about exemptions and explained that this issue had been upheld at a Tribunal. The TRO was the first step in formalising the process and Officers would be meeting with the DfT shortly to discuss changes in legislation to enable offenders to be fined on the first offence and to increase the wheel clamp release fee.

The Vice-Chairman said that he wished to remind the Board that this issue had started over seven years ago when severe problems were starting to be experienced with lorries parking in industrial estates. Now that Waterbrook had increased its capacity by 200 spaces, he said that there was sufficient overnight lorry parking available in Ashford.

Resolved:

That the implementation of the proposed time limited overnight waiting restrictions on the A20 between Charing and Ashford and four Industrial Estates in the Borough be approved.

27 M20 J10A Construction Programme Update

The report advised on progress on the above scheme since the last meeting in March 2019.

The Project Manager outlined the work which included: the installation of the bridge deck of the Church Road footbridge; construction commencing on the eastbound off slip; soil nailing completed to embankment of Junction 10a London bound exit slip road; on the new slip roads, abutments on the North East, South East and South West had been poured; on the East and West interchange bridge the final deck pours had been completed; work was now starting on the construction of the load bearing supporting walls; and the reinforced Earth Wall at Kingsford Street was now complete. Various utility diversion works were also being accommodated.

The Project Manager also explained that a trial was underway to increase the coast bound speed limit on the M20 to 60mph, which if successful, could be applied to the section of the London bound carriageway through the road works. In conclusion he advised that the works to install traffic lights for the Barrey Road junction with the A2070 would be undertaken in September 2019.

The Chairman explained that the Ward Member had informed him that certain properties in Kingfisher Close were experiencing flooding and light pollution issues. The Stakeholder Liaison (Vinci Construction) said that he was aware of this but explained that the profile of the land had not changed significantly in the vicinity of Kingfisher Close but he would continue to monitor the situation. In terms of light pollution, the levels at the new roundabout were higher, but properties should become protected when the vegetation and planting grew. Contractors did not generally work at night, but if evening work was planned residents were informed. In response to a further question, the Project Manager said that he did not think that a temporary bund was feasible but undertook to contact the Ward Member direct to discuss the matter. The Stakeholder Liaison also referred to excellent artwork produced by students from the Norton Knatchbull school which had been applied to hoardings near the playground and encouraged Members to see it before it was removed.

A Member referred to the current closure of Newtown Road and asked whether it was possible to open two lanes from the Orbital Roundabout to Junction 10 to ease traffic congestion during this period. The Project Manager said that he would be happy to take this request away for consideration but doubted whether this could be done as it might be a financial burden on the project.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

28 Ashford International Station and Eurostar Update

The report updated Members on the project to enable new Eurostar trains to access Ashford International Station. The Economic Development Manager advised that Atkins had completed a feasibility report in March 2019 and detailed design work was being undertaken. Delivery of the solution was due to take place at the end of the year, with the commissioning of the works by the end of December 2019. The new KBV signalling had operated without fault since it had been commissioned.

A further report would be submitted to the next meeting in September 2019 at which stage a detailed programme for the implementation would be available. In response to a question, the Economic Development Manager explained that it was hoped that a new Eurostar timetable would commence from January 2020.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

29 Highway Forward Works Programme 2019/20 onwards

The report updated Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2019/20.

The Ashford District Manager explained that KCC had increased its budget for Highways and therefore subsequent reports might incorporate new schemes not currently shown in the report.

In response to a question about the works planned at Evergreen Way, the Ashford District Manager undertook to let the Chairman know the diversion route for the G line bus. She also undertook to keep the County Member informed of progress in terms of the drainage works at The Street, Warehorne Road, Ruckinge Road and Ashford Road, Hamstreet.

Mr Ashby referred to the different terms used for the various types of road surface works and suggested that definitions be included in subsequent reports. The Ashford District Manager agreed that this could be done and she also undertook to check the position in terms the works at Appledore Road/Warehorne Road.

The Ashford District Manager also agreed to let the County Member have details about the works planned at the Hythe Road/Church Road junction, and for the Vice Chairman, information about the A2070/Finberry junction improvement works.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

30 Operation Brock – M20

The report of the Vice Chairman referred to the issue of the continued use of the barriers on the M20 to restrict London bound traffic to two lanes which he had raised with Highways England. The report included the text of the response from Highways England which advised that the restriction to two lanes on the London bound carriageway was essential to enable Brock to be implemented within a short timeframe if necessary.

The Senior Highway Manager said that KCC supported the view being taken by the Borough Council and advised that they were pressing the case with Highways England. He said that he understood that the principal problem was the uncertainty over when Brexit would happen. He also said Highways England may have to undertake survey work on the hard shoulder as the current design had not envisaged the level of use it was currently experiencing. In terms of the carriageways between Junction 9 and Junction 13 it was likely that Highways England would be carrying out resurfacing work and Officers would be closely monitoring this via the Kent Corridor Coordination Group (KCCG) to ensure that they were coordinated.

The Vice Chairman considered that the repositioning of the steel barrier just at either end of Brock was a small piece of work and in his view would take just 48 hours to implement. He said that it was unacceptable for Ashford and Folkestone residents to suffer for 6 months to save Highways England 48 hours work.

The Board discussed whether it would be appropriate to request that the temporary speed limit be increased from 50mph to 60mph, but on safety grounds were not minded to support such an increase.

Resolved:

That the Chairman of the Board write a letter to the Secretary of State requesting that the London bound section of the M20 between Junction 9 and 8 be returned to 3 carriageways.

31 – Deputy Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing

The Deputy Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing explained that this was the last JTB she would be attending as she was moving to another post within Ashford Borough Council. She said that she had enjoyed the challenging work and said that her role would be taken over by the Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager.

The Chairman, on behalf of all Members of the JTB, thanked the Deputy Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing for all of her work for the Board and wished her well in her new role.

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Member Services:
Telephone: 01233 330564 Email: memberservices@ashford.gov.uk
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: <http://ashford.moderngov.co.uk>