

SEVENOAKS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Minutes of a special meeting of the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board held on
15 July 2009 commencing at 7 pm

Present: Chairman: Cllr Coates

Vice-Chairman: Mr Brazier

District Councillors: Mrs Davison, Dibsdall, London and Underwood.

County Councillors: Brookbank, Chard, Gough, London and Parry.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Williamson.

Officers: Messrs. Ash (KCC), Craddock (SDC), Dyer (SDC) and Wilson (SDC).

Cllrs. Brigden, Bruce, Chard, Darrington, Davison, Mrs Hunter, McGarvey, Mrs Parkin, Pett, Piper, Mrs Purves, Ryan, Miss Stack and five members of the public were also present.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs Davison declared a personal interest as Chairman of the Edenbridge Volunteer Transport Service (minute 17 refers).

Cllr Dibsdall declared a personal interest as a member of the Sevenoaks Cycling Forum (minute 17 refers).

Mr Parry declared a personal interest as a member of the Sevenoaks Rail Travellers Association (minute 17 refers).

Cllr Miss Stack declared a personal interest as friends of hers lived on Sevenoaks High Street (minute 17 refers).

Cllr Underwood declared a personal interest as a taxi driver in the District (minute 17 refers).

17. SEVENOAKS DISTRICT STRATEGY FOR TRANSPORT (Report No. 3)

The Chairman welcomed Councillors and members of the public to the meeting. He stated that the objective of the meeting was to discuss the strategic issues included in the Transport Strategy. He noted that many detailed comments had been passed to Mr Ash who would endeavour to include them in the amended Strategy.

Members discussed the Strategy in detail, section by section with comments and proposed amendments as follows:

3.0 Consultation

A Member reported that British Airport Authorities had produced a transport report. The Board agreed that the Member should provide Mr Ash of Kent County Council

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(KCC) with the report so that any relevant points may be taken into consideration in the Strategy.

7.0 Context

A 'Walking Network' was a network of pedestrian footpaths. This would be clarified in the document.

A Member asked that Ash and Hartley be taken into consideration as the third largest settlement in the District. It was also thought that there were over 100 villages and hamlets as opposed to the 40 stated in the document.

A map of Sevenoaks Urban Area was available from Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) Officers and it was requested that this would be included in the document.

SDC Officers agreed to provide information in order to update the last paragraph of section 7.0 where it stated that '...at 31 March 2007 approximately 1,500 dwellings had been developed, were under construction or had been granted planning permission...'.

It was noted that developments in other areas, as outlined in Table 1 on page 18, would have an effect on transport in Sevenoaks.

8.0 Key Transport Issues and Development Pressures

The third bullet point in the green box on page 22 would be deleted as there were no villages between Sevenoaks Town and Chiddingstone Causeway.

9.0 The Strategy Approach, Aims and Objectives

Members discussed the second bullet point in the third box on page 24, 'Reduce the need to travel'. A Member felt there was a difference between 'need' and 'desire'. However, a 'need' to travel was felt relevant as schools, jobs and health facilities were sited away from residential areas.

10.0 Bus, Community Transport and Taxi

Members discussed in detail bus provision in the District, including buses to hospitals and timing of circular buses. It was felt that buses would be patronised if reliable services were provided. The Chairman requested that a definition of what constituted a 'bus' be included in the document as there were many different types of local transport (i.e. mini-bus, dial-a-ride, taxi, etc.).

The word 'bus' was needed in paragraph 10.12.

Members felt that the Strategy needed to differentiate between acute and primary care hospitals.

Members were advised that KCC were willing to fund bus services in the District if there was a likelihood of volume in future.

It was agreed that all non-subsidised bus routes would be added to the Appendix as

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it would be useful for the public to see all permanent routes.

The Board felt that the Strategy should include a form of transport from villages to nearest town centres with a return journey in no longer than three hours. It was felt appropriate to target these services to people already using buses.

A Member stated that the document should set out support for greater 'through ticketing' for combined bus and train travel.

11.0 Rail Travel

The map on page 32 would be updated. The Chairman felt that it was important that the Strategy addressed concerns regarding capacity of services serving Sevenoaks Station and the ability of Thameslink to alleviate these concerns.

Figure 6 on page 32 would be updated to recognise that the South East Plan had been adopted and that the extension of CTRL Domestic Services to Dover had been agreed.

The target date for the new Cross Rail line on page 31 would be updated.

Members felt that the Strategy should comment on the fact that the ability to increase capacity on trains was limited as physical infrastructure was unlikely to lend itself to improvements (i.e. tunnels, termini and rail widths). They requested capacity be clearly stated in the document with clear diagrams of all major rail routes.

The Board agreed that the Strategy should include lobbying for improved security measures on trains and in stations.

Members believed that longer franchise terms would offer a better, long term rail service.

12.0 Roads, Traffic and Congestion

A key to Figure 7 on page 34 of the Strategy was requested along with statistics relating to school run congestion which would be included in the Appendix.

It was also requested that the new national permit scheme for when utilities could undertake maintenance be mentioned in the Strategy and that traffic volume figures for major congestion spots be added to the Appendix.

The Board was advised that an Intelligent Transport System had been implemented in Maidstone which had greatly improved congestion. It was expected that similar systems would also be implemented in Sevenoaks.

The penultimate paragraph on page 36 discussed the impact of increased traffic on the local highway network, including in Riverhead. Members felt that this paragraph needed reconsidering to ensure that it was robust.

A Member felt that half of traffic movements from the inner four points on the map on page 34 converged at Bat and Ball Junction in Sevenoaks and that this should be factored in to the Strategy. Mr Ash undertook to include volumes of traffic in the Bat

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and Ball area in the Appendix.

An example of congestion was Worships Hill.

The Board expressed the need for an alternative route to the A25 as it was an old and outdated road, no longer fit for purpose. East facing slip roads were suggested as one solution.

13.0 Freight

Mr Ash explained that 'Freight Quality Partnership' would be added to the list of acronyms at the end of the document.

Sevenoaks High Street, which was thought narrow and unsuitable for large vehicles, was regarded as being dangerous due to the amount of lorries using it as a way through the town. Mr Ash advised that KCC was involved in discussions with producers of satellite navigation systems in order to reduce this issue. Members discussed the provision of signs which could also deter large vehicles from using the roads in towns and rural areas and agreed that this and discussions with satellite navigations producers should form part of the Strategy. It was noted that lorry drivers were as frustrated as local residents with regard to navigation in the District.

14.0 Kent's Airports

The Board felt that issues relating to transport to and from Gatwick should mentioned in the document.

15.0 Climate Change and Transport Planning

The first paragraph should be amended to say 'concern' rather than 'evidence'.

16.0 Air Quality Management

The Head of Environmental and Operational Services advised that Environmental Health would review this section and pass comments to Mr Ash.

The section would be adjusted to include reference to east facing slip roads.

The Chairman advised that there were a number of things that could improve pollution in Air Quality Management Areas such as implementing an Intelligent Transport System which would keep traffic moving thus reducing pollution.

17.0 Road, Rail and Bus Travel Safety

A typo in the figures for Ashford and Sevenoaks in Table 3 on page 46 would be corrected.

Table 4 on page 40 of the Appendix would be brought up to date.

It was noted that the conclusion of the figures in Table 6 on page 41 of the Appendix did not give an accurate description of the situation relating to the number of serious injuries or fatalities prior to and following installation of a camera. The presentation of

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the figures would be re-considered.

18.0 Car Parking

Mr Ash undertook to include not only District Council operated, but all public car-parks in the District, in the table on page 44 of the Appendix.

Members discussed in detail the planning requirements for parking provision. They were advised that this issue would be discussed at the next meeting of the Board. However, it was requested that the Strategy indicate that the policy for parking provision was a government policy but emphasise concern regarding inadequate provision of parking.

20.0 Walking

The Board discussed the lack of use of footpaths in purpose built areas. They wondered whether an indication could be given on how long/far it was reasonable to ask the public to walk. Mr Ash advised that this section of the Strategy had been intended as an option for people who wanted to walk.

Safety for walkers was a concern and it was agreed that the Strategy should refer to improved safety but only in areas where there was a proven need.

21.0 Cycling

A Member was concerned that creating cycle routes along already congested roads, such as the two roundabouts in Riverhead, could increase pressure on the roads. Mr Ash advised that the words, 'where appropriate and justifiable' could be added to the first bullet point in the box on page 53.

The word 'urban' would be removed from the first bullet point in the box on page 53.

Signposting of cycle routes and secure storage for bicycles had already been included in the document.

The Chairman commented that Sustrans guidelines suggested gradients for cycle routes should be less than 5% and a Member of the public highlighted that this would be a design consideration.

23.0 Disability Access

A Member noted that the Strategy did not mention disabled access to trains. It was requested that the Strategy refer to the national policy for disabled access to public transport and that rail service providers be encouraged to improve access at train stations.

26.0 Setting, Achieving and Monitoring Targets

The Board requested that types of hospitals be defined in the Strategy.

It was agreed that volumes for targets were needed as well as percentages throughout the document.

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The fourth bullet point in the box on page 62 should say, 'to 100%'.

It was agreed that additional hospitals to those outlined on page 10 of the Appendix were used by residents of the District and should be added to the document. These included East Grinstead, Farnborough, Orpington and Queen Mary's in Sidcup.

The second bullet point on page 62 of the Strategy referred to access to GP surgeries. It was suggested that the words 'by public transport' be added as they were included in the corresponding part of the Appendix.

A Member felt that the earlier sections of the strategy should contain information on how pupils currently travelled to school and how congestion relating to the school run may be reduced.

Although some targets were County targets and not relevant to Sevenoaks, it was felt that it was important to indicate what the Strategy was trying to achieve.

Kent Fire Brigade would be included in paragraph 26.5.

27.0 Conclusion

It was requested that east facing slip roads and possible improvements to satellite navigation systems be mentioned in the Conclusion because if they were implemented would possibly be two major improvements to transport in the District.

Mr Ash requested that Members forward any detailed comments directly to him.

The Chairman advised that the Strategy would be considered by the Environment Select Committee (29.07.09) along with amendments suggested by the Board, amended and considered by Cabinet (27.08.09). Mr Ash would send all Members of the Board the amended version of the Strategy for information before it went to Cabinet.

Public consultation was expected to last for eight weeks.

Resolved: That, subject to the above suggested amendments, the Sevenoaks District Strategy for Transport be forwarded to the Environment Select Committee for consideration and comment.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.49 P.M.

Chairman