

SEVENOAKS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Minutes of the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board held on
15 December 2009 commencing at 7 pm

Present: Chairman: Cllr Coates

Vice-Chairman: Mr Brazier

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

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

KAPC Representative: Mr Robson.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. Mrs. Dawson

Officers: Messrs. Ash (KCC), Aspinall (KCC), Burton (KCC), Mrs. Horton (KCC) and Wilson (SDC).

Cllrs. R. Davison, Fleming, Mrs. Hunter, Mrs. Parkin, Miss. Stack, Walshe and members of the public to speak on Items 3 a), 4 and 5.

31. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings of the Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board, held on 22 September 2009, be approved and signed by the Chairman as correct records.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Fleming and Williamson declared personal interests in Minute Item 38 as both were local traders in Sevenoaks town centre.

33. PETITION REQUESTING A NEW FOOTWAY IN WEALD VILLAGE (Report No. 4)

The Chairman introduced this item and explained that the petitioners were seeking the construction of a footpath on Long Barn Road. The Chairman had received a letter supporting the construction of a footpath from the Headteacher of Weald Community Primary School and this was read to the Board.

A Governor of Weald Community Primary School briefed the Board and explained that safety was the school's primary concern. The footpath was an essential part of the School Travel Plan, encouraging alternative and sustainable forms of transport. The school hoped to introduce a 'walking-bus' if the footpath was built as a recent risk-assessment had not recommended the introduction on the ground of risk to pupils. The school had looked in to the cost of materials and gave the Board an estimated figure of £9,000 - £10,000 to complete an asphalt footpath. The scheme was also supported by parents at the school and could be significant to the local

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economy as the village shop was located further down Long Barn Road.

A Member of the Board highlighted the dangers of the narrow junction near the school and supported the proposal. A representative from the Parish Council also expressed support and explained that the Parish Council were willing to provide funding towards the proposal, where possible.

Officers at KHS proposed to continue investigations on costs and land ownership and report back to the next meeting of Board.

Resolved: That the petition be supported and Officers report back to the next meeting of the Board with a progress update.

34. PETITION REQUESTING HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS IN COLD ARBOR ROAD, BESSELS GREEN (Report No. 5)

A resident of Cold Arbor Road briefed the Board on behalf of the petitioners and explained that their concerns focused on the lack of a pavement part way down the road and the speed of vehicles turning into the road from the A25. The resident also explained that vehicles entered the southern part of Cold Arbour Road from an unrestricted speed limit and this increased speeding on the road. The lack of street lighting was also highlighted as an issue.

A Member of the Board proposed that a footpath could be built inside the stone wall for greater safety. However, the resident felt that this might not fully address safety problems as residents would still have to cross the road. The ease with which drivers could speed when turning into Cold Arbor Road was also discussed and it was suggested that special road surfaces could be used to slow drivers down. Suggestions were also made with regards to the use of pavement 'build-outs' to slow drivers entering the road.

Officers at KHS had started initial investigations and hoped to see what issues could be addressed in the short-term to make improvements for residents.

Resolved: That the petition be supported and Officers report back the next meeting of the Board with a progress update.

35. MATTERS ARISING – UPDATE INCLUDING ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Chairman informed the Board that notification of road closures was now being sent out by email to all Members, Parishes and Districts and this was working well. Planning regulations for car parking spaces at new developments had also been circulated to Members.

a) Actions from Previous Meetings

ACTION 4 - A25 Route Study – Dryhill Lane to Surrey border (26/06/08) This action was on-going, the maintenance issues had been acted on and it was hoped problems with drainage could be addressed within six months. The Chairman requested that the Kent Highways Services (KHS) Officers inform the District and

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Parish Members of any progress.

ACTION 15 – 30mph sign between Riverhead Infant School and Riverhead Square. (16/12/08 and 17/03/09) Funds had been allocated to undertake this work in 2010/11 and it was hoped the work could be done in early 2010/11. The Chairman asked that KHS Officers inform Members of the Board when this work would be completed.

ACTION 19 – Parking in Westerham (16/12/08) The District Council was not aware of any displacement parking caused by the introduction of new restrictions.

ACTION 30 – Crossing at Otford (17/03/09) This action was outstanding, KHS Officers were due to meet with Otford Parish Council in early January 2010.

ACTIONS 1 – Bridge in Station Road, Edenbridge (16/06/09) Some of the issues had been addressed through new road markings, the height of the bridge still needed to be marked to complete works.

ACTIONS 2 – Phase 3 of the Speed Review (16/06/09) This action had been completed.

ACTION 4 – Roundabout at the 'Bat & Ball' junction, Sevenoaks (16/06/09) There was no further update from the report presented to the previous meeting of the Board.

ACTION 5 – Blocked drains at Hever Road, Uckfield Lane (16/06/09) Checks on drains in this area had showed little evidence of root damage. The need for additional gullies has been identified and it was hoped they could be installed by the end of the financial year.

ACTION 6 – Scheme Priority list 2010/11 (16/06/09) This action was addressed at Minute 43.

ACTION 2 – Highway Scheme Improvement Proposals 2010/11 (22/09/09) The scheme had been deferred to a later date for consideration.

ACTION 5 – Highway Improvement Scheme progress report (22/09/09) This action was addressed at Minute 43.

b) Flooding at Seven Acres, Crockenhill

The Board was pleased to note that no flooding had occurred at Seven Acres during the recent heavy rainfall. Members thanked Officers for the work that had been undertaken.

c) A25 Riverhead – Seal Hollow Road 30mph Speed Limit

An Officer from KHS explained that the 30mph speed limit would be extended for vehicles travelling eastbound on this section of road. The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) had been activated and it was hoped the work could be completed in February 2010. Orders had been put in place to extend the barriers on the footway on the south side of the road and it was hoped they could be installed in January 2010. KHS had also placed a bid for an interactive speed sign. KHS were currently

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awaiting accident information from Kent Police with regards to a recent incident. A Member of the Board agreed that it was important for officers to know the circumstances of incidents in order to ensure that appropriate work could be progressed in the area.

Following a query from a local resident and a representative Greatness Residents' Association, Officers from KHS proposed to report back to the next meeting of the Board in March. It was agreed that they would also liaise with Sevenoaks Town Council to inform them of any progress.

A representative of the Town Council commented that issues of speeding along this stretch of road were made worse by the changes in speed limit over such a short distance. A member of the public also commented that posters at the southerly side of the road could be a distraction to drivers and suggested they be removed.

d) Highway Drainage

Officer's from KHC were currently waiting for work on drainage maps to be completed. It was proposed to carry this matter forward to the next meeting.

36. SPEED LIMIT REVIEW SEVENOAKS DISTRICT (Item No. 12)

Mrs Horton (KHS) was welcomed by the Board and gave a presentation highlighting that the speed limit review was mandatory for all local authorities with regards to A and B roads. The aims were to provide consistency across the county by looking at various issues and priorities when setting speed limits. It was explained that 50-60% of the current limits were in line with guidance and changes that were being recommended largely concerned the lowering of speed limits. With regards to the Sevenoaks District it was explained that the review would be starting in April 2010 and County, District/Borough and Town/Parish Members would be key players during the consultation aspects of the process.

In response to a query, it was hoped that the review would be able to report to the Board, for information only, by February 2011. It was also outlined that the review on C roads would begin after 2014.

A Member of the Board expressed concerns that the review of C roads could not wait until after 2014. The Member explained that the neighbouring London Borough of Bromley had a blanket 40mph on all rural roads which contrasted with unrestricted limits in the Sevenoaks District. It was suggested that the Sevenoaks area could take priority in the assessment of C roads as its borders were shared with other highway authorities.

Following a query, it was confirmed that Members would be able to put forward their concerns regarding roads under the control of the Highways Agency as 'additional comments' to the review. In response to another query, it was explained that 20mph speed limits would not be designated on A Roads.

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37. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION FOR THE SEVENOAKS DISTRICT STRATEGY FOR TRANSPORT 2009 - 2026 (Item No. 6)

The Chairman explained that over 175 comments and replies had been received on the Transport Strategy. It was highlighted that the Strategy did not currently include a cycling plan, but Officers at KHS were working towards the inclusion of this. The Chairman explained that he had held a meeting with the Sevenoaks Cycle Forum where the distinction had been made between leisure and day to day cycling.

In response to a query, it was proposed to set up a special meeting of the Board to consider the Transport Strategy in early February 2010. This would allow the Strategy to inform the LDF as a background document.

Resolved: That the report be noted and an extra meeting of the Board be set up to consider the Transport Strategy.

38. MINUTES OF THE MEMBER/OFFICER WORKING GROUP ON AIR QUALITY HELD ON 26 OCTOBER 2009 (Report No. 15)

It was explained to the Board that the consultant's brief had been to come up with various options which were outlined in the report. With a focus on reducing traffic congestion in the Sevenoaks town centre Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and improving air quality by reducing NO₂ levels. A scheme had also been prepared for the Bat and Ball AQMA. Future investigations will be concentrated on the Seal and Swanley AQMA's.

A Member raised concerns regarding the options produced by the working-group. He felt that more could be done to look at the Pembroke Road crossroads and the implementation of filter lanes, rather than making a commitment to the introduction of a one-way system in the centre of Sevenoaks. The Chairman agreed to consider the Pembroke Crossroads at the next meeting of the Board and confirmed that the Sevenoaks town centre AQMA covered both the High Street and London Road.

A Member of the Board said that, in his view, a one-way system would not on its own enhance the pedestrian experience in the centre of Sevenoaks. He thought that more should also be done in the town centre to widen pavements and this could be incorporated as part of a one-way scheme. This could be a means to make the area more attractive to shoppers.

Another Member of the Board highlighted that it was important to look at other issues as well as Air Quality. Instead consideration needed to be given to the situation as a whole and other factors, such as traffic.

The board were informed that the criteria for the designation of AQMA's was solely based on traffic congestion causing increased NO₂ emission and the District Council had a duty to improve air quality in these areas. It was, therefore, necessary that solutions were found to reduce traffic congestion in these areas, on the KHS road network. All existing AQMA's would be considered in due course.

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39. HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES MOVEMENTS ON THE HIGHWAYS NETWORK (Report No. 8)

The Chairman explained that he had spent a morning observing the road network in Sevenoaks Town with KHS Officers. An Officer highlighted that some signage to industrial estates in the town was poor in places. There was also inadequate signage to discourage HGVs from travelling through the centre of the town. A photograph of an exit sign from the Chaucer Business Park was shown to the Board as an example of good practice in directing traffic out of the industrial estate, onto the main routes.

The Board also identified issues surrounding car transporters and other HGVs short-cutting through the town in early mornings. The Chairman explained that there were some issues around the perceptions of HGVs in terms of classification and many were now categorised as large goods vehicles. The Board also felt that more work could be done in industrial estates to better direct traffic out and back onto the main routes. The Board discussed the possibility restricting vehicles in the town centre to those below 7.5 tonnes, except for access. However it was agreed that more work should be done first on signage before any such measures were introduced.

The Chairman also discussed road designations and felt that Seal Hollow Road had a higher designation than the actual situation required. The Chairman suggested that more work could be done to better understand and investigate the road designations.

Resolved: That Members note the information in the report.

40. UPDATE ON B2026 HARTFIELD ROAD, COWDEN (Report No. 7)

a) Junction Improvements

An Officer from KHS introduced this report and informed the Board that since the report had been written, a further letter had been received from the Parish Council explaining that they were in favour of improvements to the southbound visibility splay. A Member of the Board explained that the local Parish Council accepted the recommendations in the report and was pleased that the landowner had agreed to cut back the over hanging hedges.

It was noted that the dead trees were still yet to be removed. Members of the Board were also keen to see a written arrangement with the landowner and KHS Officers explained that they were currently working towards this position.

Resolved: That KHS take no further action with the compulsory purchase of land and KHS enter into the voluntary arrangement with the local landowner.

b) Speed Limit Reduction

A Member of the Board introduced this item and explained that local residents were pleased to see the speed limit reduction to 50mph. Following a query, it was explained that KHC were currently in talks with East Sussex County Council with a view to harmonising the speed restrictions across the two counties.

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Resolved: The report be noted.

41. HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES – PROGRESS REPORT (Report No. 9)

An Officer from KHS explained that, due to savings, they were able to carry out additional road resurfacing. Members were pleased that the additional work would be taking place. Following a query, it was explained that Wested Lane had been prioritised as the road had little residual life. Plans were to strengthen the road when resurfacing.

Resolved: Members noted the progress of the programmed highway improvements.

42. HILDENBOROUGH ROAD, LEIGH: NEW FOOTWAY (Report No. 10)

The Board was informed that while money was reserved for the completion of the footway, the prolonged period without any progress suggested that the funding should be returned to the countywide capital highway budget. Members were disappointed that if the funding were withdrawn then it would not be ring-fenced to be spent in the Sevenoaks area and instead returned to a county-wide pool.

The Board acknowledged that the KHS Officers had worked hard to provide the footpath, which was much wanted by local residents. A Member of the Board also identified problems with signage in the Powdermill and Gibbsfield area.

Resolved: That funding for the scheme be formally withdrawn and the savings returned to the countywide capital highway budget.

43. SCHEME PRIORITISATION SYSTEM – 2010/11 (Item No. 11)

Officers from KHS explained that they were using the Scheme Prioritisation System (SPS) to bring forward some of the smaller schemes in the District. Where as previously smaller schemes had to wait to come forward as part of a larger scheme.

44. MY KENT HIGHWAYS ONLINE (NEW NAME FOR PARISH COUNCIL PORTAL) (Item No. 13)

Officers from KHS explained that the new system was an important means of increasing accessibility. At that time only County and Parish Members had received training but it was the intention to train District/Borough Members. Sevenoaks District Council had been identified as a pilot area for the new scheme.

The Chairman had visited KHS and had a demonstration of the system, he commented that it worked very well and Member's were able to track enquiries and see how Officers dealt with requests.

45. KENT HIGHWAY SERVICES JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD UPDATE (Item No. 14)

The Board was briefed that at its meeting in September the Environment, Highways and Waste (EHW) Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed the revised

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Winter Service Policy for 2009/10. The new winter season had started on Monday 19 October and would run through until mid April 2010. Salt stocks were at the expected 20,000 tonnes start level and would be topped up as requested throughout the winter months.

For this winter period KHS would be introducing a new salting system that sprays a saline solution on the crushed rock salt as it is fired out of the lorries. This new, pre-wet salting system made salting more effective at preventing icing of roads and used less salt.

Throughout the last 6 months KHS had been using a new carriageway repair method called "Jetpatcher" in rural and quieter areas. This was a quick and efficient system and positive feedback had been received.

46. WORK PLAN (Report No. 16)

The Chairman explained that he hoped the Highways Agency would attend a future meeting of the Board to explain the polices of major roads which affected the District.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9:40 P.M.

Chairman