

EXTRAORDINARY SEVENOAKS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting of the Extraordinary Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board
held on
24 February 2010 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, Lake, London and Parry.

KAPC Representative: Mr Robson.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr. John London

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

Cllrs. Bruce, R. Davison, Mrs Purves, members of the Sevenoaks Cycle Forum, members of Sevenoaks Railway Travellers and members of Transition Town Sevenoaks also attended.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Dibsdall declared a personal interest as a member of the Sevenoaks Cycle Forum.

Cllr. London declared a personal interest a commuter to London.

48. TRANSPORT STRATEGY (Report No. 2)

The Chairman stated that when the Board considered the Transport Strategy his main aim was to ensure that the facts explained in the document were accurate.

Kent County Council's Local Transport and Development Manager for Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells introduced this item. He informed Members that most of the document was finished, although a small amount of work to be finalised on the Implementation Plan. The document had been out to public consultation and the comments received had been incorporated into the documents. Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and Kent County Council (KCC) officers had also agreed some amendments which would be included in the documents with the Board's agreement. These amendments would ensure that the Transport Strategy was consistent with Sevenoaks District Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) Core Strategy.

Strategy Document

Executive Summary (2.0)

Page 9

Following a query from a member of the Board the Chairman requested that the wording of 'five settlements' could be reviewed by officers to consider whether it should read 'five parishes,' as the figures shown did not represent the settlements in the Sevenoaks District.

Page 11

The first amendment from SDC (see Appendix) was to be inserted to ensure consistency between the Transport Strategy and the LDF Core Strategy. This was agreed by members of the Board.

Introduction (3.0)

Page 13

It was agreed that the summary of the LDF Core Strategy: Preferred Options vision should be amended so that it reflects the vision from the now published Core Strategy: Draft for Submission. References to Core Strategy: Preferred Options should also be deleted.

Context (5.0)

Page 18

It was agreed to update Figure 1 to include the B2042 and the B2026 roads, to ensure consistency with the wording on page 28.

Page 19

A Member highlighted that footnote 7 was no longer correct in relation to New Ash Green, as a result of the reclassification of local service centres and service villages in the LDF.

Page 20

Members and officers agreed that the figures in the 2001 census on employees could be misleading. Officers agreed to look into the matter further, in particular the employee figures contained in the published LDF.

Page 22

It was highlighted that Table 2 only contained information on car travel and did not include information on commuter train travel. This would not reflect the numbers of commuters from Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge and other major stations outside of Kent who would be travelling through Sevenoaks. A Member of the Board also said that the new high speed line would take an increased number of passengers from

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Maidstone, but this would also affect Swanley.

Strategy Development, Aims and Objectives (6.0)

Page 29

Officers agreed to reconsider Figure 5 as it did not show any educational facilities in the northeast of the District.

Page 30

At a member commented that the document highlighted gaps in the bus network in the north-east of the district and queried if this was the same for the north-west. The Chairman drew the Board's attention to the map at page 60 of the appendices document. He stated that this map presented a positive image of the bus network coverage in the district. It was noted that where the map showed large areas with little coverage, such as Sevenoaks Weald, these places generally had low population levels. Another member of the Board commented that there were still improvements to be made and direct services from Hartley and New Ash Green to Sevenoaks town were needed. It was also highlighted that bus services were not consistent and often services were only operated at the beginning and end of the day.

Roads, Traffic and Congestion (8.0)

Page 32

The Chairman requested that officers add additional text to Figure 7 to make the information clearer and that the base numbers should be verified. Officers also agreed to check the numbers of LGV's against cars in Figure 7, as members of the Board felt the ratio of LGV's to cars should be smaller.

Page 33

At paragraph 4 a member of the Board said that the wording should be amended to read 'The installation of east-facing slip roads to M25/M26 could provide considerable capacity relief for the A25 and is a key consideration for this Strategy.'

Pages 35, 37, 39 & 41

Amendments were agreed by the Board at to ensure clarity that transport issues had been considered in the development of the LDF Core Strategy, ensure consistency between the LDF and the Transport Strategy and show that the Transport Strategy reflected the need to tackle Air Quality Management issues. (see Appendix)

The Board also discussed the possibility of a Park and Ride Service for the town of Sevenoaks. The Chairman felt that Sevenoaks Town was too small for a Park and Ride service, whilst another Board member highlighted this issue could become increasingly important with the development of the Thames Gateway and Darent Valley.

Page 40

A member requested that 'outside Kent' be added to the end of paragraph 9.9.

Rail Travel (10.0)

Following a query it was confirmed that information on the reduction in overcrowding of trains at peak times, following the introduction of the High Speed One line, would not be available until the end of March 2010.

Page 45

The Board agreed an amendment to lobby to maintain services from Sevenoaks to Cannon Street (see Appendix). This would ensure that priority initiatives reflect priority issues within the district. The Board then undertook to discuss the amendment and a representative of the Sevenoaks Railway Travellers addressed the Board further on this issue and explained that the introduction of the Thameslink service would lead to the withdrawal of a direct service to Cannon Street. Instead commuters would have to change trains at London Bridge, this would directly affect Rail users who travelled from Sevenoaks to Cannon Street. It was highlighted that the Kent Rail Utilisation Study, published in December 2009, had reflected the intention to withdraw the direct Cannon Street service.

The Board agreed the additional information on the impact to service of the Thameslink Project would be included in the Transport Strategy.

The representative also highlighted the issue of train services to Gatwick Airport. Previously passengers from West Kent could travel to Gatwick airport via Redhill, where the train would have to turn around at the station. However a change of service provider at Redhill, from South-Eastern to Southern, had deemed the traffic volume so high at Redhill that it could not allow the disruption to service caused by a train turning in the station. Subsequently the service had been withdrawn to Gatwick. A member stated that such matters were outside of the remit of both Kent County Council (KCC) and SDC. While both Councils could lobby for such issues it was important that the Transport Strategy was realistic and did not contain commitments that KCC could not deliver.

Page 46

The Board agreed an amendment to ensure consistency between the Transport Strategy and the LDF Core Strategy. (see Appendix)

Cycling (12.0)

Before Cycling was discussed the Chairman said it was important to distinguish between day to day cycling and leisure cycling.

A representative of the Sevenoaks Cycle Forum addressed the Board explaining that Sevenoaks was the only district in Kent without a cycling plan and that there was not one formally planned until 2012. The representative explained that there was now a national consensus on cycling and expressed concern that the Sevenoaks District

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could fall behind as the cycling agenda progressed and developed. The representative felt that the 2% annual growth in cycling up until 2026 was not ambitious enough. The Forum wished to see more information on spaces for bicycles at stations and a reference to cycling in the Air Quality Management Action Plan section of the Transport Strategy.

A member of the Board said that more could be done to improve facilities at stations to further encourage cycling and there was the potential to get grant funding from central government. Another member of the Board suggested that the number of other vehicles that could be taken off the road through improvements to cycling facilities was minimal. A Member commented that 46% of journeys under 2 miles were done by car and they felt there was a need for better facilities and the progression of a Cycling Plan before 2012.

A representative of Transition Town Sevenoaks addressed the Board and explained that changes to travel habits needed to be done in conjunction with education of residents.

Page 48

A member of the Board explained that 42.2% growth in Dover during 2007-08 showed what could be done to improve cycling when the provision was made available.

Action 1: The Chairman requested that the Transport Strategy be updated with information on how many cycling racks are available at each station and public car park in the district. This additional information was to be included in Tables 9 and 10 on pages 44 & 45 of the Appendixes document.

The Local Transport and Development Manager for Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells highlighted that the Transport Strategy had given careful consideration to cyclists and KCC recognised the demand for additional facilities in the Sevenoaks District. KCC had been involved in talks with Network Rail regarding the re-development of railway stations and part of this process included extra provision for cyclists. It was anticipated that this re-development would commence in 2011/12.

Page 47

Members of the Board noted that the 2001 census statistics did not capture the number of people that walked to train stations as part of their daily comment. It was agreed that this information should be treated with caution.

Page 49

The Board agreed to amend the wording of the second bullet point to read, 'Promoting and targeting resources it will be necessary to develop a district wide cycling strategy looking at all aspects including both leisure and commuter cyclists and their journeys and such a move will be reflected in the Implementation Plan where it is practical to do so.'

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Freight & Heavy Goods Vehicle Movement (16.0)

Page 56

It was confirmed that the figure of 400 heavy vehicles per day, should be 400 heavy vehicles per hour.

Car Parking (17.0)

A member of the Board raised the issue of parking standards and suggested that LDF polices should reflect the need for adequate parking. It was confirmed that parking standards sat separately from the LDF. The Chairman suggested that the issue of parking Standards could be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

Page 60

The Board agreed an amendment to reflect the actual situation with regards to parking relaxation. Following a query the Head of Environmental and Waste Operations explained that the issue of 'parking relaxations' referred to on-street parking, rather than parking in car parks.

Climate Change & Transport Planning (19.0)

A member of the public expressed concern to the Board that in areas where air quality is poor the Transport Strategy made no mention of vulnerable groups. Wilderness school was sited as an example where there was no pavement on the road leading to the school. It was explained that these such issues had been covered by the Strategy as part of the walking aspect which captured where additional facilities were needed.

Page 62

A member of the Board highlighted that the final sentence of the first paragraph on should read 'may lead to at least a further half a degree warming.'

Travel Safety (21.0)

Page 68

A Table 4 a typographical error was highlighted, as Sevenoaks should be before Shepway to make the figures correct.

Setting, Achieving & Monitoring Targets (23.0)

Pages 73, 74 & 75

A member of the Board highlighted that the Transport Strategy should contain base figures, the issue had been raised at a previous meeting of the Board and the Chairman felt this would better contextualise the percentages provided.

Appendices & Figures

Existing Strategies and Policies (Appendix 01)

Page 6

The Chairman asked that base figures be provided to help put the percentages into context.

Bus, Community Transport & Taxi (Appendix 03)

It was agreed that the Appendices & Figures document contained additional information on all bus routes in the district.

Page 9

It was agreed that Figure 1 would be updated to show the location of hospitals in Bromley and West Sussex.

A member of the Board highlighted that many bus services were not available for commuters as they were used for school services.

Page 15

The Chairman asked if a definition of 'medium sized rural village' could be clarified so that it was clear what was meant.

Rail Travel (Appendix 04)

Page 20

It was explained to the Board that officers at KCC were currently waiting for an update from Southern-Eastern Rail, with regards to Table 3, before more data could be added.

Page 30

Officers agreed to amend typographical errors in Table 4.

Cycling (Appendix 14)

Page 48

Members of the Board noted Table 11 as it showed how successful cycling schemes had been elsewhere in the county. Members agreed that this issue needed to be looked at more frequently than once a year. Members requested that data be added to this appendix on the numbers of bicycle racks at stations. This additional information was to be included in Tables 9 and 10 on pages 44 & 45 of the Appendixes document. A meme of Sevenoaks Cycle Forum added that speed reduction was important means of promoting cycling.

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Setting & Achieving Targets (Appendix 19)

Members requested that a list of bus routes be inserted at this appendix with the aim of providing a link with Table 1 at page 12.

Consultation Responses (Appendix 21)

Officers from KCC agreed to consider this appendix to understand why references to comments from Sevenoaks Cycle Forum and Transition Town Sevenoaks had not been included.

Implementation Plan

The Board requested that more specific dates be added to the document to show when schemes would be brought forward.

Page 6

It was agreed to amend the first row of the table to read 'M25/M26 – Provision of east facing slip lanes to existing motorway.'

Following a query the Local Transport and Development Manager for Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells explained that 'Visum' related to a model to test developments and changes in traffic systems, this was a strategic tool to look at the Sevenoaks urban area. It was also confirmed that Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) system was a means of changing traffic flows (through traffic light patterns or signs) depending on which roads were busy or congested in Sevenoaks and Swanley. Members of the Board were offered a site visit to Miller House, in Maidstone, for a demonstration, which could be arranged for a future date.

Page 7

It was explained that bus services were slowly being upgraded and this was taking place alongside a step by step audit of all routes.

The Local Transport and Development Manager for Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells explained that with regards to request for new footways it was important that KCC looked at the demand before the installation on the actual usage after. This would allow them to produce a robust cost/benefit analysis.

Page 10

It was agreed that officers would investigate further if a district wide cycling plan could be progressed before 2012

It was agreed that the reference to regeneration of New Ash Green village centre be deleted. This was considered to be primarily a matter for the LDF.

The Board agreed two amendments, as previously agreed between SDC and KCC officers, to ensure that the Transport Strategy was consistent with the proposals of the LDF Core Strategy and with Network Rail's plans for station improvements at Swanley station, as well as Sevenoaks.

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The Head of Environmental and Waste Operations requested that an additional item on traffic congestion and Air Quality Management Areas be added to the list.

Resolved:

- (a) That subject to the agreed amendments the Sevenoaks District Strategy for Transport be recommended for formal adoption by Sevenoaks District Council.
- (b) That subject to the agreed amendments the Sevenoaks District Strategy for Transport be referred to the Kent County Council Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste for approval.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9:45 P.M.

Chairman

