

Gravesham Joint Transportation Committee

Wednesday, 02 December 2020

7.30pm

Present:

Cllr Peter Scollard (Acting Chair)

Councillors: Brian Francis
Leslie Hills
Nirmal Khabra
Bob Lane
John Burden (KCC)
Lauren Sullivan (KCC)
Bryan Sweetland (KCC)

Please note: Cllr Steve Thompson, Cllr Tony Rana, Cllr Emma Morley, Cllr Lee Croxton, Cllr Lenny Rolles and Cllr Lyn Milner were also in attendance.

Kevin Gore	District Manager – Gravesham (KCC)
Paul Leary	Schemes Programme Manager (KCC)
Claire Venner	Schemes Project Manager (KCC)
Nick May	Parking Services Manager (GBC)
Mick Clarke	Resident
Carol Crowther	Resident
Ben Clarke	Committee & Scrutiny Assistant (Minutes)

160. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from County Councillor Alan Michael Ridgers (Chair) and County Councillor Diane Marsh.

161. To sign the minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 09 September 2020 were signed by the Chair.

162. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Nirmal Khabra declared an interest as he was a local Taxi Driver for the Borough of Gravesham.

Cllr Peter Scollard declared an interest as he was a Governor for Lawn Community Primary School.

163. To consider whether any items in Part A of the agenda should be considered in private or those (if any) in Part B in public

164. Order of the Agenda

The Chair advised that due to the public being in attendance for the petition items; the order of the agenda would be amended to take items 9A-9C first.

165. Issues raised by Councillors with the approval of the Chair

165.1 Speed Limits and Traffic Calming in The Ridgeway, Shorne - Request by Cllr Bob Lane

Cllr Lane read aloud his written submission to the Board and requested that the Board reaffirmed its endorsement of the petition, and requested that KCC reconsidered its decision not to extend the 30mph speed limit in The Ridgeway.

The Schemes Project Manager (KCC) advised that she been liaising closely with Cllr Lane on the issue and had recently sent him detailed responses to his freedom of information (FOI) requests as well as to Parish Councillor Susan Lindley. That document should be with Cllr Lane soon and held all of the data collected from the tests and the justifications for the decision not to extend the 30mph speed limit in The Ridgeway. The Schemes Project Manager had spoken with her line manager and they were both in agreement on the decision that had been made; as such there were no plans to continue to investigate the matter. Although the Schemes Projects Manager did concede that it was possible further automatic traffic counters (ATC) would be carried out in the future, once the restrictions had eased, to further the findings that had already been made.

Cllr Lane advised that he appreciated the work that had been carried out by the Schemes Project Manager (KCC) and he only received the results of the traffic monitoring survey today; it found similar results to those in the existing 30mph limit zones. Cllr Lane felt that KCC should re-examine its decision as the two hundred residents that lived on that stretch of the Ridgeway were suffering from traffic travelling at high speeds.

The Schemes Programme Manager (KCC) advised that he had recently taken over the role from Emma Green; he advised the Committee that there would be new gateways installed on the Ridgeway soon and the team were looking to make positive changes in the local area. It was hoped that the Gateways would remind drivers that they were entering a village area; Parish Councils were always worked with when making changes to the local roads but KCC had to take a consistent approach when setting speed limits across the County.

In response to further Member discussion and the Committees backing of the request for the 30mph speed limit implementation along the Ridgeway, the Schemes Programme Manager (KCC) advised that the FOI response that was emailed to Cllr Lane presented a fully researched and well-presented answer to the request with numerous background information and evidence to support the decision taken. In addition, it was explained that there physically wasn't any space to install the speed signs that were requested.

The Board reaffirmed its re-endorsement of the original petition requesting an implementation of a 30mph speed limit along the Ridgeway and requested that KCC reconsidered its decision not to extend the 30mph speed limit in The Ridgeway.

165.2 Petition - Hamerton Road and Station Road - Request by Cllr Lauren Sullivan

A petition was submitted to the Council on Thursday, 12 November 2020; the petitioned stated:

We, the undersigned, petition the Council to: Amend the traffic regulation order to make Hamerton and Station Road one-way traffic, in the direction of Station Road entrance and exit via Hamerton Road, Northfleet. This is due to the increased traffic on these roads and the lack of available passing spaces leading to anti-social behaviour and damage to parked vehicles.

The Chair invited the lead petitioners Mick Clarke and Carol Crowther to address the Panel for no longer than three minutes concerning their petition and its intended outcome.

Cllr Sullivan thanked the two residents for their submission to the Board and for all of their door knocking to attain the signatures for the petition.

In response to questions posed by Cllr Sullivan, the Scheme Projects Manager (KCC) explained that:

- The petitions were a very useful device which allowed KCC to understand residents' concerns on a deeper level as KCC wouldn't be aware of any issues without contact from local residents
- A discussion had been held with Cllr Sullivan prior to the meeting regarding the on-street traffic and parking issues; at KCC a 'dragons' den style meeting was held where officers pitched their ideas to senior management in order to bid for funding for local transport issues. A bid for funding for amendment of the traffic order for those roads would be submitted to the next meeting on Wednesday, 09 December 2020 and if the bid was successful then it would help fund the design work, the feasibility study, the TRO and consultation etc
- With regards to the cost of amending the traffic order, the Schemes Projects Manger (KCC) was unsure; the bid for funding would include an estimated figure but until the design was created and timescales were established then the total cost was unknown
- Other bids were being submitted on a priority basis but the Schemes Project Manager (KCC) was hopeful that the bid would be successful and work could be started to resolve the issue

The Chair thanked the KCC officers for the responses and looked forward to the issue being resolved in the future.

165.3 Petition - Covid-19 Road Closures Riverside Ward - Request by Cllr Alan Ridgers

A petition was submitted to the Council on Sunday, 22 November 2020; the petitioned stated:

We, the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders at Gravesham Borough Council and Kent County Council to act now on our behalf as we are against the plan to prohibit through traffic on part of Albion Terrace & Norfolk Road, Gravesend in place from Monday, 21 September 2020 for 18 months. We, the local residents, are against this action due to the inconvenience to all local residents, making parking very difficult & causing extreme difficulty to those who have to serve the vulnerable, disabled & elderly residents in the area. We hereby ask with this petition that the scheme be removed entirely.

Cllr Lenny Rolles, Cllr Lee Croxton, and Cllr Lyn Milner addressed the Board, in their capacity as Ward Councillors, and explained the concerns of residents on behalf of the lead petitioner.

The District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) shared Members concerns as the issue was only brought to his attention by Cllr Sweetland at the previous meeting of Gravesham Joint Transportation Board.

The Schemes Programme Manager (KCC) apologised to Members and explained that, in hindsight, it had been recognised by the team that the level of consultation was not up to its usual high standard but the Department of Transport had set very short time deadlines to apply for funding. With regards to the lack of responses to emails, the Schemes Programme Manager (KCC) apologised as there was an active mailbox for enquiries and the emails received should have been sent to the relevant Scheme Manager; the Schemes Programme Manager (KCC) promised to follow up any outstanding emails. Members were reminded that the schemes were in the trial stage and were being constantly monitored; all feedback received regarding the Schemes would be used to amend them where possible.

The Schemes Programme Manager (KCC) assured Members that he would feedback all of the comments about removing the restrictions placed in Albion Terrace and Norfolk Road to the relevant Project Manager.

Following further discussion on the petition, Cllr Burden and Cllr Sullivan expressed their desire for the restrictions to be removed as soon as possible and both offered some of their personal allowances to go towards the funding of their removal.

The District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) advised that the comments had been taken on board and he would organise a meeting with the Schemes Project Manager (KCC), the Schemes Programme Manager (KCC) and Russell Boorman to discuss it further. An update will be brought back to the next meeting of Gravesham Joint Transportation Board.

The Board thanked the lead petitioner for creating the petition and bringing it to the attention of Members and officers.

166. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

Minute 124. Corner Protection (Yellow Lines) at the junction of Cob Drive and Forge Lane - Requested by Cllr Bob Lane

The Schemes Project Manager (KCC) advised that the consultation was due to be advertised on the 11 December 2020 and would be live for six weeks; following the consultation any objections would be reviewed.

Cllr Leslie Hills requested an update on the yellow lines that were to be added to the junctions on Havisham Road, Chalk Road, Vicarage Lane and Lower Higham Road, parking on junctions in Chalk as well as the results of the speed test that was carried out in Lower Higham Road.

The Schemes Project Manager (KCC) explained the following in response:

- The results of the Automatic Traffic Counter Survey on Lower Higham Road were emailed to Cllr Marsh, Cllr Ridgers and Cllr Lane at their request; they can be emailed to Cllr Hills after the meeting
- With regard to vehicles parking on junction in Chalk, officers had previously carried out site visits to the area to monitor parking and investigate all complaints. Another visit was due to be carried out before Christmas and the Schemes Project Manager (KCC) added that any evidence of illegal/nuisance parking would be very helpful to the team. Cllr Hills agreed to forward evidence of nuisance parking/parking obstructions to the Schemes Project Manager (KCC)

On a more positive note, Cllr Sweetland was happy to report that yellow lines had been placed on Northumberland Road in Istead Rise.

Minute 127. The Hill, Northfleet - Speeding issues and Accidents - Requested by Cllr Peter Scollard

The Schemes Project Manager had previously discussed the traffic counter surveys results with Cllr Sullivan at a previous meeting; the Schemes Project Manager (KCC) agreed to chase the results of the survey and report them to the next Board meeting.

Minute 148. Any Other Business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency

Whitehill Traffic Issues – raised by Cllr Tony Rana

Cllr Rana requested that the results of the recording device placed on Whitehill Road to monitor traffic levels be reported to the Board.

The District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) had not received any results.

The Board were dismayed that there were no results to report to the Board and expressed concern that things were not being progressed as previously assured.

In response to further questions, the District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) advised that:

- He sat on the KCC Board for the Lower Thames Crossing and they had created a project group; the team that completed the traffic recordings were slow in their responses to the team but the District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) would raise the issue with them during the next project group meeting
- The minutes of the site visit meeting with Cllr Rana were shared with KCC Members by the Schemes Project Manager (KCC)
- The team had received no additional funding for this financial year and the budget allocations for the next financial year were not currently known. However a small sum of money was being allocated to districts in February to fix potholes during February to April 2021

The Schemes Project Manager (KCC) added that the minutes of the Cllr Rana meeting could also be shared with Gravesham Members; it was further explained that meetings with Parish Councils had also been held to address issues raised previously. The Schemes Project Manager (KCC) advised that she was happy to have meetings with any Gravesham Councillor's about any transport issues that they may have.

The Chair thanked the Schemes Project Manager (KCC) for her response and asked the Committee & Scrutiny Assistant to circulate details of the District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) and the Schemes Project Manager (KCC) to all Members.

Minute 150. Highways Works Programme 2019/20 onwards (Information only) Bus Hub at Garrick Street

The District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) informed the Board he was awaiting the last details of the final consultation for the Bus Hub but he had put it forward to include taxis. Further details and the outcome of the consultation would be brought to a future meeting of the Gravesham Joint Transportation Board.

The Parking Services Manager (GBC) requested a discussion on taxis with the District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) after the meeting. If taxis were allowed to drive through the bus gate then a white list of approved registered taxis would need to be created to ensure they could pass through the ANPR camera.

Minute 159. Gravesham Highway Forward Works Programme - 2019/20 onwards

Church Path/South Kent Avenue Lights

The Chair reported an issue with the street lights on Church Path in Northfleet and asked that the power box on South Kent Avenue have its repairs completed as it was still currently broken and lying on the ground.

The District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) advised that the Street Lighting Team replaced the fuses in the lights and Church Path was now fully lit; the District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) agreed to check on the power box repairs on South Kent Avenue.

No Entry Sign – Stone Street

Cllr Hills requested an update on the 'No Entry' sign where vehicles exited Stone Street.

The District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) explained that the team had looked at the site and redid the road lining to make the wording more visible to drivers. The sign itself could not be made any bigger due to wind loading on the column however a new sign had been designed to be erected onto Stone Street which outlined the new road layout and showed the location of the dead end to drivers. The District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) hoped the new sign would resolve the situation and agreed to share the design with Cllr Hills.

167. Reports from Officers

167.1 Formal Consultation for the remaining Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ's) in the Borough

The CPZ notices attached to the report were submitted to the previous meeting of Gravesham Joint Transportation Board on 09 September 2020. The Parking Services Manager (GBC) updated the Board on the outcome of the Formal Consultation and sought the Board's approval to implement the changes as per the Notice of Intentions.

The Parking Services Manager (GBC) advised that the formal consultation went live from 03 September 2020 and ran for the statutory period of 21 days; the responses reviewed were very low but it was likely low due to the two informal consultations that had been carried out already. Across all of the Schemes, 31 responses were received supporting the proposals and 34 received comments complaining of things such as the cost of the permits but there were no objections raised about safety or traffic concerns. Only two objections were received, one in Higham as they felt the CPZ could increase the amount of traffic and a second in Meopham where they requested more double yellow lines. To date, both of the objections had been responded to and the general feedback was more positive than negative which is why the Board approval was sought to implement the CPZ's as advertised.

In response to a request for clarification, the Parking Services Manager (GBC) advised that the 34 comments were mainly due to the cost of permits as many residents felt that they should be free of charge or there shouldn't be any limits on residents. Unfortunately, a small charge had to be charged for permits due to the administration behind running the schemes including the Civil Enforcement Officer patrolling of the additional roads.

A question from the Board asked about whether visitor permits would be available. It was explained that in the new schemes each household will have the opportunity to purchase one visitor permit for use during the restricted times by anyone visiting the property as they would not be registration specific. This was proposed due to feedback on the original survey asking for visitor permits to be introduced and will be more important in the new schemes as the restricted times have in some areas increased. In the current schemes visitors could generally park outside of the restricted times which were usually only 30 minutes to one hour (dependant on the road) during the day.

167.2 Local Winter Service Plan

The Board were presented with a report that outlined the arrangements that had been made between Kent County Council and Gravesham Borough Council to provide a local winter service in the event of an operational snow alert in the Borough/District

The District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) explained that the report was just a summary document giving a brief overview of the arrangements that had been made; The District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) had already agreed to send a plan to Cllr Lane that only showcased the plans for the area of Shorne. The District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) was happy to provide Members certain plans or all of the plans for their wards if they requested it.

The District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) advised that none of the gritting routes had changed and all of the salt bins would be filled up by the end of next week including the new ones that had just been placed. Salt bags would also be delivered to all of the Parish Councils next week.

167.3 Highway Forward Works Programme - 2019/20 onwards

The Board were provided with a report that updated them on the identified schemes approved for construction.

The District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) pulled key headlines from the report:

- The machine resurfacing on Milton Road was moving ahead and due to be completed in early 2021
- Discussions were ongoing for the footway improvements in Valley Drive
- The Gas Board works should be completed soon in Chalk Road which would allow the surface treatments in Chalk Road to also be completed
- Bellway reported to KCC that the land around Factory Road and the Lawn Community Primary School had been cleared and should be accessible for drainage works. The Chair reported issues on the site with rubbish still there; the District Manager – Gravesham (KCC) agreed to look into it
- There were a multitude of structural replacements being carried out on Street Lights in the Borough; they should all be completed by the end of the financial year
- The transverse bar markings had been completed on the A289 Wainscott By-pass which should decrease the amount of accidents at that location

With regards to the Cycle Hub to Cyclopark cycle route, the Schemes Programme Manager (KCC) agreed to discuss it with Nichole Floodgate and bring an update to the next Board meeting.

168. Any Other Business which by reason of special circumstances the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

The Chair advised that he had received a request from Cllr Steve Thompson to consider 'Minute 126. Parrock Road, Gravesend – Speeding – Requested by Cllrs Marsh and Thompson' from the 09 January 2020 meeting of Gravesham Joint Transportation Board under AOB.

Cllr Thompson advised that the request had originally been sent to him by a resident that was concerned that the matter had not been progressed since it was discussed at the Board meeting held on 09 January 2020.

Cllr Thompson addressed the Board and raised his concerns that the matter had not progressed as it should have been outside of the meeting as he had requested that more action be taken than just the installation of new lining, bollards and signage. In addition no update reports were brought to the March or September meetings of Gravesham Joint Transportation Board to discuss any additional potential traffic speed measures or the current measures effectiveness. Cllr Thompson requested an update be submitted to the Boards next meeting

Following Cllr Thompsons address to the Board, the Schemes Project Manager (KCC) advised that the matter had been raised at her quarterly meetings but from her perspective the issue had been addressed with installation of new lining, bollards and signage following the 09 January 2020 Board meeting. The Schemes Project Manager (KCC) advised that she needed to review the previous actions and the root cause of the problems on Parrock Street to better understand what was going on before anything further actions could be progressed.

The Schemes Project Manager (KCC) requested a meeting with Cllr Thompson to hold further discussions regarding Parrock Street and the traffic measures he wanted in place.

Cllr Thompson agreed to discuss the issue further with the Schemes Project Manager (KCC) outside of the meeting along with Cllr Marsh.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 21:07pm.