

Gravesham Joint Transportation Board

Wednesday, 29 May 2024

7.30pm

Present:

Cllr Deborah Croxton (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Aaron Elliott
Tony Rana
Alison Williams
Lauren Sullivan (KCC)
Bryan Sweetland (KCC)

Note: Parish Councillors Bob Lane and Susan Lindley were in attendance (Shorne Parish Council). Cllr Lee Croxton was also in attendance.

Andrew Walters	Highways Manager (Dartford and Gravesham)
Ryan Danton	Parking & Highway Officer
Ryan Shiel	West Kent Highway Improvements Programme Manager
Chloe Taylor	Committee Services Officer (Minutes)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Conrad Broadley (KCC), Cllr Alan Ridgers (KCC) and Cllr Jordan Meade (KCC).

2. To sign the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Gravesham Joint Transportation Board held on Wednesday, 06 March 2024 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

4. Matters Arising from Previous Meetings

Members were content with the responses provided by officers. The Highways Manager (Dartford & Gravesham) advised that he had gone over the historical information relating to JTB and had spoken to colleagues, but that there was nothing to note regarding the matters arising.

The board noted the matters.

5. Reports from Officers

5a) Highways Forward Works Programme: 2023/24

The Highways Manager (Dartford & Gravesham) introduced the board to the highways forward works programme 2023/24 and advised that it was an information only document.

Following questions and comments from members, the Highways Manager (Dartford & Gravesham) explained that:

- The micro surfacing is a surface treatment only that should protect the road for approximately another 10 years or so. The lining renewal was due to be applied 1-3 days after the new road surface had bedded, but the weather had prevented the team from doing so. Members were advised this would be taking place within the next week.
- The streetlights that had been cut to make safe (necked) will be batched by the partner contractor and would be programmed for replacement. They would also look at the viability of the streetlight. For example, if it was a common crash site, it may not be worth the replacement in terms of a reoccurring financial cost.
- Damaged railings, and any other street furniture, would be programmed for replacement within 28 days of notification generally, but will be prioritised as per the well managed highways code of practice based on risk assessments.

The board noted the report.

5b) Petition - Safety Improvements to Reduce Driver speeds and enhance crossing facilities at the Shorne Crossroads

The West Kent Highway Improvements Programme Manager introduced members of the board to a report in response to a petition received, and explained the following:

- The report detailed information following the receipt of the petition, which had gained over 1,200 signatures. The petition requested safety improvements at A226 Shorne crossroads junction with Green Farm Lane and Forge Lane.
- A lot of work had taken place prior in this area.
- Limited warning signs were already in place, but KCC highway improvements team were in the process of having yellow warning signs installed along with other signing and lining advising drivers to reduce their speed on approach to Shorne crossroads. The works for the new signage had been ordered and should be with KCC by October 2024.
- KCC had also been looking at other options.
- The West Kent Highway Improvements Programme Manager advised that the petition made reference to signalised crossing, but this was far more substantial than what they could do without a funding bid. Members were advised that instead of waiting for funding, they had commissioned a consultant to prepare a plan so that if they did receive funding, the scheme would be ready to go. In the interim, they were improving signage and were carrying out speed surveys and data analysis.

Following questions and comments from members, the West Kent Highway Improvements Programme Manager explained that:

- He was aware of two site visits that had taken place, including a meeting with Parish Councillors over teams to discuss the site. Members were advised that when a fatality occurs on the public highway, the highway improvements team and highway operations team were notified and must carry out a Safety Engineering Report within two weeks of receiving notification from Kent Police– this requires a site visit.
- Parish Councillors expressed their frustration at not being included within the site visits but were advised that they were unable to come along to the Safety Engineering site visits due to it needing to be carried out with officers. However, he explained that Michelle Norris would be happy to conduct a site visit with Parish Councillors.
- The Chair noted that members of the public had expressed their concerns within the petition.
- The West Kent Highway Improvements Programme Manager was asked to update the board regarding data on dangerous driving within the Borough. He advised that KCC received their injury related crash data from Kent Police, and it takes 4 to 6 months for the data to be issued to KCC. This includes information on any substance abuse resulting in an incident. Members raised particular areas of concern for that data to come back to the next meeting. The West Kent Highway Improvements Programme Manager advised that this would be a substantial project to review crash data for the whole borough so wouldn't be able to commit to this but will carry out an exercise to review crash trends at Shorne crossroads to ascertain if there has been an increase in crashes in this location involving driver impairment.

Cllr Bob Lane (Shorne Parish Council) addressed the board, and highlighted the following key points:

- Site visits should take place at peak times.
- They were unaware as to why KCC originally proposed plans for the speed limit reduction on A226 in 2021 but did not follow up on them.
- The existing interactive sign was introduced to address safety issues, but accidents were still occurring.

In response, the following was explained by the West Kent Highway Improvements Programme Manager:

- Reducing the speed limit would be a front of house cost of £3k for writing and advertising of the legal Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).
- The previously proposed plans had been carried out in conjunction with a Lower Thames Crossing order and officers who took part in that were no longer working in KCC.
- Based on speed data, lowering the speed limit on a road where speeding is already an issue can increase the danger and doesn't discourage speeding and can often increase driver frustration – experience has shown that without supporting physical engineering works, lowering the speed limit could be more dangerous.
- The West Kent Highway Improvements Programme Manager agreed to organise a site visit with the Parish council within the following two weeks from the date of the meeting.
- The board agreed for this topic to be brought up again at the following JTB meeting with a report on the site visit.
- The funding for the consultant was part of the KCC consultancy framework. They agreed to allocate some of the budget towards a consultant for the A226 Shorne

crossroads. However, they were still working towards smaller scale options. Widening the traffic islands would involve lane and possibly road closures, which would be a substantial engineering scheme.

- Members advised that it would be useful for the consultant to include the Parish Council, and for the consultancy report to be included within the next JTB agenda pack.
- Funding for Highways Improvements had remained largely unchanged, but the cost of schemes had nearly doubled within the last 5 years, with average zebra crossings costing a predicted sum of £30k.
- The crash remedial measures (CRM) budget was approximately £1m, but large priority schemes, such as the Running Horse Roundabout scheme in Maidstone, which cost around £500k, was one of the biggest crash cluster sites in Kent and consequently became a priority.

Members of the board noted the report subject to the above-mentioned actions being carried out ahead of the next meeting of JTB.

5c) THE GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL (OFF-STREET PARKING PLACES) (VARIATION NO.5) ORDER 2024

The Parking & Highway Officer introduced members of the board to the report and advised the following:

- The building safety team had received feedback from Kent Fire and Rescue, advising that how individuals were parking around the building was deemed unsafe. They initially placed additional signage, but this did not improve the situation.
- Alternatively, they needed to look at an enforcement option, but this did not involve any changes or permits. It just means that they can enforce action on those who are parking where they shouldn't be such as in restricted areas and outside of bay markings etc.
- They had written to all residents ahead of the consultation with an explanation that had been drafted in conjunction with GBC's Housing and Building Safety teams, referencing the concerns raised by Kent Fire and Rescue.
- The Parking & Highway Officer was informed that residents had welcomed the guidance and it had been well received.

The board noted the report.

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

a) Double Parking and Parking at Dropped Footways

Cllr D Croxton advised this could be brought to the next meeting of JTB but queried whether GBC issued fines for individuals who parked behind dropped kerbs and consequently restricted access for people with disabilities.

The Parking & Highway Officer advised that they do enforce this regularly, but that if there were any places in particular where this was a regular occurrence, to let the team know and this could be passed on to the enforcement officers.

Cllr Lauren Sullivan asked if any communications could be put out in regards to this. The

Parking & Highways Officer agreed to discuss with Nicholas May (Parking & Environmental Enforcement Services Manager) on their return from annual leave.

b) Meopham Parade

Cllr Sweetland (KCC) asked for a follow-up on the current status of Meopham Parade in terms of timescales. He raised concerns about the narrowing on the roads and the impact this could have on the shops who regularly receive deliveries.

The West Kent Highway Improvements Programme Manager advised that they were in the process of a safety audit for the plans, but they were ready to be shared with Cllr Sweetland (KCC) and the parishes. As long as they could get the road space and correct time restrictions, they were hoping this could be implemented in autumn. Michelle Norris had picked up on the loading restrictions and were looking at alternatives but would keep Cllr Sweetland (KCC) and shop owners involved in discussions.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 8.21 pm