

DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

**JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

**MINUTES** of the meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held on Tuesday 3 September 2019 at 7.00 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillor B Garden (Chairman)  
Mrs A Allen (Vice-Chairman)  
Mrs P Cole  
Mr J Kite MBE  
Mr P Harman

Councillor S P Butterfill  
Councillor R M Currans  
Councillor K J Grehan  
Councillor R J Wells

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mr T Whittingham (Highways England), Mr D Leslie and Ms D Sutton (KCC Highways), Mr L Agboola, Mr K Longley, and Teresa Ryszkowska (DBC Planning).

**13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors Julie Ozog and Lucas Reynolds and from Messrs J. Ozog and D Butler.

The Board noted the appointment of Councillor Rosanna Currans as a substitute for Councillor Ozog.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Thomas Whittingham of Highways England to the meeting in addition to Board Members, Officers from Kent County Council and Dartford Borough Council.

Additionally the Chairman welcomed a number of members of the public who were in attendance at the meeting.

**14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received from Board Members.

**15. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DARTFORD JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD HELD ON 11 JUNE 2019.**

That the minutes of the Joint Transportation Board held on 11 June 2019 be confirmed as a correct record of that meeting.

**16. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chairman confirmed that there were no urgent items for the Board to consider.

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS

## **17. MATTERS ARISING**

The Board received a report on the current position on a number of outstanding matters.

Arising from this the Chairman reported that, in regard to item 9, Kent County Council have advised that the planning permission granted to Brent School requires the drop off point to be available at the start and end of the school day and that they will advise the school accordingly and monitor the situation.

The Board noted the report.

## **18. REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES (IF ANY)**

It was noted that there no references from other Committees for the Board to discuss.

## **19. CONGESTION ISSUES ARISING FROM THE DARTFORD CROSSING**

The Board was reminded that at the meeting held on 11 June 2019, the Chairman had enquired about work programmed to take place surrounding the Dartford crossing, designed to alleviate traffic congestion issues.

It was noted that a sum of £10 million had been allocated for this work, and that such works were the responsibility of Highways England.

Accordingly the Chairman introduced Mr Thomas Whittingham the Highways England Route Sponsor M25 London Orbital (East) who has responsibility for works in the area.

Mr Whittingham explained that the funding identified had been devoted to the following four major work schemes in and around the crossing:

### Junction 2 Improvements

This scheme was completed in August, and consisted of the provision of an extra lane on the northern side of the junction, improved signage and traffic signals, upgraded road markings and the installation of a red light enforcement camera. This scheme has been constructed to reduce congestion and improve safety at the junction

### Junction 1b Improvements

The blocking of the roundabout at this junction, which causes major disruption in the surrounding roads stretching back into Dartford Town Centre, is of major concern. The yellow boxes at the junction have been refreshed, and signing erected to deter motorists from misusing the junction.

A scheme is currently in design to install cameras to enforce the misuse of the yellow box markings. Detailed design is programmed to complete in March 2020, with construction in summer 2020.

The cameras will be monitored and enforcement carried out by Kent Police. This in itself is a unique situation outside the TfL area, as camera

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enforcement of this nature is not permitted, and special arrangements are required to facilitate this.

### Junction 1a Improvements

The proposal is to widen the A206 westbound between the Littlebrook roundabouts from two lanes to three lanes by converting the currently isolated footpath on the overbridge. This will increase capacity at the junction and provide a dedicated lane for traffic wanting to enter the A282 northbound slip and two dedicated lanes for the westbound wanting to travel towards Dartford.

This scheme is currently in detailed design, which is programmed to be completed by March 2020. Construction funding is being bid for in 2020/21.

### Thurrock Approach Road

When the QE II Bridge is closed (maintenance/incidents/high wind speeds) it is necessary to divert southbound traffic through the east northbound tunnel. At present this is achieved using vehicles crossovers in the central reservation either side of the tunnels.

The crossover on the northern side of the crossing is sub-standard and only allows single lane traffic with a maximum speed of 30mph to use it when in operation. The new crossover will allow two lanes of traffic with a speed limit of 50mph to use it when in operation. This will reduce congestion at the crossing when the crossovers are in operation.

The scheme is currently in detailed design, with construction programmed for Spring/Summer 2020.

Members welcomed the presentation given by Mr Whittingham but expressed serious concern at:

- The current non - enforcement of the traffic regulations on the junction 1b roundabout;
- The length of time being taken to introduce measures to alleviate congestion in Dartford;
- The difficulties encountered in making provision for camera enforcement;
- The possible provision of alternative schemes to alleviate traffic congestion;
  - a) The closure of the on slip road at junction 1b,
  - b) The attendance of Kent Police to manage traffic when congestion is at its worst,

- c) Additional traffic signals on the off slip road leading to the junction 1b roundabout to filter traffic,
- d) The introduction of a left turn restriction on Bob Dunn Way “Mercedes” roundabout to alleviate blocking,
- The current lack of communication about congestion issues with the public.

Mr Kite expressed particular disappointment at the length of time taken to introduce schemes and asked that Highways England liaise with him, as Leader of Dartford Council, to investigate ways to expedite the works.

Mr Whittingham undertook to report the matters raised by the Board, and members of the public, to colleagues at Highways England and agreed to respond to these and provide a progress report on the schemes to the meeting scheduled for March 2020.

The Chairman thanked Mr Whittingham for his report and the public for their contributions, and asked that he be invited to attend again in March 2020.

## **20. PROJECT PROGRESS UPDATE - DARTFORD TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PROJECT**

The Chairman introduced Mr Keith Longley, the Dartford Town Centre Regeneration Manager, who presented the Board with an update on the progress of the first phase of the development.

Mr Longley reported on individual aspects of the scheme, parking, street scene, paving, services and security and gave a projection of when each would be completed and its probable appearance when completed.

He explained that the late commencement of work and several problems relating to existing utility services had delayed the progress of this phase of the scheme, but that generally work was progressing well.

It was noted that the first phase was now programmed to complete in January 2020 with aspects of phase 2 commencing early that year.

Mr Longley further undertook to return to the Board at the next meeting to provide details of phase two of the scheme.

The Chairman thanked Mr Longley for his presentation, and looked forward to the update on phase two of the scheme.

## **21. CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO THE TRANSPORT FOR LONDON BUS SERVICES 428 AND 492**

The Board received a report on a proposed response to a consultation being undertaken by TfL on proposed changes to Transport for London (TfL) bus services 428 and 492 from January 2020. The consultation was due to run until 10 September 2019.

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The TfL proposal would terminate the current Erith – Bluewater service (428) at Crayford with passengers transferring to the 96 to continue eastwards. The Sidcup – Bluewater service (492) would terminate at Dartford with passengers again transferring to the route 96 to travel eastwards, or to the Arriva route 480 / 490 to reach London Road and Stone.

Members were reminded that the Council had only recently concluded discussions with (TfL) regarding the re - routing of bus services in the town centre and adjoining areas to improve traffic flows and better meet the need of some bus users, and this consultation was therefore a cause of some concern.

It was understood that TfL had taken the approach that its sole responsibility was to London's bus users. However the proposals affected users within Kent travel across the London/Kent boundary and hence had significant implications on cross-connectivity

It was also noted that whilst it might be appropriate for bus companies to examine services where they felt that there was duplication of services, this was not the case and one of the proposals for the 492 would remove an important cross border route at the same time as the new secondary school at Stone was due to open, thus disadvantaging travel from Erith / Bexley to this school as well as to Dartford schools from Stone.

Additionally it was believed that the proposed changes would result in a reduction in connectivity between certain parts of the London Borough of Bexley, including Erith and Sidcup, and the north-west part of Dartford through to Bluewater and vice-versa.

It was reported that there had been discussions with Arriva regarding the possibility of Arriva bus services covering the removed section of the 492 bus route but the Company were concerned about the commercial viability of the route.

The Board expressed concerns that the removal of the service would result:

- In increased costs for passengers arising from having to change buses in order to get to their destinations;
- In increased journey times and the safety implications for school children having to break their journeys;
- in reduced connectivity between Bexley and Dartford; and
- in a significant impact on people accessing Darent Valley Hospital both as patients and staff.

It was noted that Officers had prepared a formal objection to the proposals in respect of proposed changes to the 428 and the 492 and that this was to be considered by the Cabinet on 5 September 2019.

Having considered the draft response the Board agreed that the concerns outlined above should be presented to the Cabinet together with the data on the numbers and proportion of patients using Darent Valley Hospital who travelled from Bexley and south London.

## **22. MANAGEMENT OF UTILITY COMPANIES AND ASSOCIATED WORKS**

The Board received a report presented by Mr Daniel Leslie, the KCC Street Works Manager for West Kent, on the management of street works which take place on the public highway by Utility companies and similar highway contractors.

It was reported that KCC operate a permit scheme for both emergency and planned works on the highway and seek to coordinate works where more than one contractor is seeking to use the highway.

It was noted that contractors can be charged fees for use of the highway and that these aim to reflect the level of disruption caused by the works, and that works are regularly inspected to ensure that safety conditions are being observed and that reinstatement is carried out correctly and to the required standard.

Members agreed to note the report.

## **23. GOVIA THAMESLINK RAILWAYS.**

The Chairman provided a brief update on the outcomes from a consultation meeting organised by Govia Thameslink, to decide upon ways to use a fund established to compensate users for recent disruptions to services.

Arising from discussions on this, the Board agreed that the following suggestions be passed to Govia Thameslink for their consideration:

1. Combine the Swanscombe and Greenhithe allocation to enable improved DDA access to Swanscombe Station.
2. Book-Swap Cabinets be installed at all stations except Dartford where one is already in planning
3. The installation of Water Bottle fillers on platforms
4. Defibrillators be installed at Stations together with associated rail staff training - with the equipment sited such that it is accessible even if the station is closed/unmanned
5. Additional seating be placed on platforms. In the case of Swanscombe Station, should 1 above not be feasible, seating in a more enclosed shelter then currently available, thus being more protective than current facilities.
6. Improved CCTV at Swanscombe Station, again dependent on 1 above not being feasible

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### **24. FASTRACK**

The Board was informed that there was not a report on Fastrack for this meeting.

### **25. CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**

At the meeting of the Board held on 11 July 2019, Councillor Grehan presented information on the availability of funding for road safety works from Central Government and the number of accident black spots in the Borough, with the intent that this matter be discussed by a future meeting of the Board.

Unfortunately this intent was not recorded in the Minutes of that meeting, and the Chairman therefore agreed that he would progress the matter at this point in the meeting.

Accordingly the Board considered the information provided and noted that the sites fell under the control of Highways England, and that any application for funding should be made by them.

Accordingly the Chairman asked that the Clerk to the Board look into the process of lobbying Highways England to encourage them to apply for such funding as was available, and to inform the Board what road safety works are programmed for the areas identified.

### **26. MEMBERS ENQUIRY ITEMS**

Members of the Board raised the following matters:

Mrs Cole raised the issue of traffic congestion and parking in the area of Hill House Road, Dartford where residents believe that that the introduction of a one way system may alleviate problems.

It was noted that for this to progress it would be necessary for a traffic survey to be undertaken and funding for this, and indeed any scheme suggested, may not be available from KCC. It was suggested that the survey could be financed from within the Member Grant Programme.

Ms Sutton undertook to discuss this with KCC colleagues.

Councillor Mrs Currans asked if KCC Officers were aware of the reasons for a survey being undertaken of resident's views on the introduction of a "no right turn" regulation at Sussex Road, at its junction with East Hill. Residents were somewhat concerned that this would cause considerable traffic problems in Sussex Road and the surrounding streets.

Ms Sutton confirmed that she was unaware of the survey and undertook to enquire of colleagues what this concerned.

Mr Kite informed the Board that as part of proposed environmental works to the Tree Estate in Dartford the introduction of a blanket 20mph speed limit has been suggested. If this is to be introduced details will be presented to the Board in due course.

Additionally Mr Kite reported that there was an on - going issue with flooding of the private road at Langafel School. Ms Sutton informed the Board that works by GEN2 may alleviate this problem and agreed to liaise with Mr Kite relating to this.

## **27. ROAD WORKS IN THE BOROUGH OF DARTFORD**

The Board received a report from KCC highways which updated Members on roadworks which were to be underway or proposed to take place in Dartford.

## **28. TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKS: CABINET REPORT**

At the meeting of the Board held on 11 June 2019 Members received a petition and deputation relating to the charging period for the Highfield Road (Spring Vale) car park. Arising from this it was agreed that a report be presented to the Cabinet reviewing the charging period and usage levels for the car park.

Having now received a copy of the Cabinet report the Board was informed that it had also been considered by the Cabinet Advisory Panel B and that the Panel had made recommendations for the Cabinet to consider at its meeting to be held on 5 September 2019.

It was suggested that the purview of the report be extended to consider all Town Centre car parks but it was explained that such an extension would not be viable at this time.

The Board therefore noted the report.

## **29. KCC - ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND WASTE**

The Board received the Minutes of the Kent County Council Cabinet Environment and Waste Committee held on 24 May 2019.

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The meeting closed at 9.36 pm

CHAIRMAN

- (a) FIELD
- (b) FIELD\_TITLE

CHAIRMAN'S INITIALS