

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE and PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD

13 July 2005

Report of the Director of Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Council Decision

1 TONBRIDGE TO PENSHURST CYCLE ROUTE – ADDITIONAL OFF-ROAD SECTION TO AVOID USE OF HAYSDEN LANE

Summary

The Capital Plan evaluation of this 'fast track' item is considered, and proposed funding arrangements are suggested. It is recommended that the scheme be included in List A of the Capital Plan and be progressed during the current and next financial years.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Borough Council, together with Penshurst Place and other partners, has been developing a leisure cycling route between Tonbridge Castle & Penshurst Place. Members will be aware that this route is due to be officially opened on 27 July 2005. The route is essentially an off-road route, which is appropriate for use by families with children, but one section currently uses a length of Lower Haysden Lane. Some Members have expressed concerns about the conflict between cyclists and motor vehicles on Lower Haysden Lane, and I have been seeking an alternative route avoiding the use of Lower Haysden Lane.

1.1.2 A possible alternative route has been identified, which uses part of Haysden Country Park on land owned by the Borough Council, but it also requires the purchase of a strip of land of approximately 0.5 of an acre along the southern side of the River Medway, which is in the ownership of a local farmer. Negotiations in liaison with the Estates Manager are continuing, and I am hopeful that agreement can be reached.

1.1.3 A plan of the proposed section the route is attached at **[Annex 1]**.

1.1.4 In partnership with Kent County Council, the scheme has been included in a Cross Channel Greenways Interreg funding bid, and I have reported previously to the Leisure Facilities, Culture & Advisory Board that this bid has been successful, bringing forward £26,000 towards the cost of constructing the route.

1.2 Evaluation

1.2.1 The scheme has been evaluated in accordance with the criteria set out in the Capital Strategy and the result is shown in the agreed format at **[Annex 2]**.

1.3 Funding

1.3.1 As noted in para 4 of **[Annex 2]**, there is sufficient balance in hand to undertake the works, from the sum set aside to cover the 2005/06 Capital Plan 'fast track' schemes.

1.4 Implementation

1.4.1 In order to implement the scheme it will be necessary to advertise for an ad hoc list of suitable contractors to be invited to tender to undertake the work, and to let a formal contract to the successful tenderer. Due to the seasonal constraints applying to this type of work, the construction of the route will not take place until early summer 2006.

1.4.2 If Members are mindful to progress the work earlier, it would be necessary to suspend Financial Rules in respect of contracts, and negotiate a contract with a suitable proven contractor, based on the rates tendered previously for earlier sections of the work.

1.5 Conclusion and Recommendation

1.5.1 The evaluation confirms that a scheme to create an off-road section of cycle route to avoid the use of the majority of Lower Haysden Lane is feasible, and can be funded, subject to the land acquisition being completed.

1.5.2 It is **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that:-

- 1) Subject to the land acquisition being concluded satisfactorily, the scheme be included in List A schemes for progressing during the current and next financial year; and
- 2) If Members are mindful to progress with the scheme in the current financial year, Financial Rules relating to contracts be suspended and a negotiated contract be let to a suitable proved contractor, based on the rates tendered previously for the construction of earlier sections of the route.

Background papers:

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Nil

Peter Wright
Director of Leisure