

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

22 October 2007

Report of the Director of Planning Transport and Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Council Decision

1 TONBRIDGE CENTRAL AREA – BOTANY AREA PLANNING BRIEF

Summary

This report reviews the results of a consultation exercise on the draft Planning Brief for the Botany Area. Overall the draft Planning Brief has been received positively and the consultation exercise has drawn out some constructive views and comments from various parties which can be readily incorporated into the document. The process has triggered further dialogue with a number of parties which has also been helpful in explaining the purpose of the Planning Brief and the expectations for this important site. With some recommended amendments the Planning Brief can be recommended for adoption by the Council.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 At the last meeting of the Advisory Board Members considered a draft Planning Brief for the Botany Area of Tonbridge Town Centre. On the recommendation of the Advisory Board, Cabinet approved the draft Brief for the purposes of a targeted consultation exercise with a view to its ultimate adoption by the Council for the purposes of development control. (Members are asked to bring the previously circulated draft brief to the meeting for reference purposes).
- 1.1.2 The purpose of the Planning Brief is to bring forward in more detail the planning considerations to be taken into account in respect of this major development opportunity that has been identified through the emerging Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan as part of the work on the Council's Local Development Framework.
- 1.1.3 Members will recall that the Planning Brief puts forward a mixed use development scheme for the Botany Area including retail, business/commercial, community, cultural, leisure and residential uses. The configuration and scale of land uses that are ultimately delivered on the site will, to a large extent, depend upon market forces. However, it is important for the Council as Local Planning Authority to set out a range of planning parameters for the area within which development proposals can be considered. This is the aim of the Planning Brief.

- 1.1.4 In some respects planning guidance is even more important on the site not only because of its size and scale within the content of Tonbridge Town Centre, but also because the Borough Council has a major land owning interest in the site and it is therefore important that its role as Local Planning Authority is seen as separate, transparent and in accordance with planning policy and practice.
- 1.1.5 The Planning Brief sets out the physical characteristics and constraints posed by the development of this site. It also outlines challenging phasing considerations and in particular is clear about the need for the re-provision and enhancement of community and leisure facilities and the careful attention needed to be given to car parking provision and management.

1.2 The Consultation Exercise

- 1.2.1 The vast majority of comments received from organisations and individuals were positive in their overall nature. There were inevitably some concerns raised particularly on transport issues and there were many helpful and constructive comments made by various parties that can be accommodated by building in changes to the Planning Brief. On the technical front many of the infrastructure and environmental agencies have been able to provide some useful additions to the document.
- 1.2.2 The comments made by the various parties and a response by officers have been summarised in **Annex 1**.
- 1.2.3 In **Annex 2** is a schedule of proposed changes to the draft Planning Brief that have arisen from the analysis of the consultation exercise. The recommendation to the Cabinet and Council is that these changes be incorporated within the Planning Brief prior to its adoption for Development Control purposes.
- 1.2.4 If the Members are minded to support the adoption of the Planning Brief, together with the recommended amendments and any others that Members might wish to consider, the Planning Brief will be published and made widely available including on the Internet. It will of course be sent to any interested parties on request.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 The Planning Brief when adopted will become a material consideration for Development Control.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 There are none arising as a direct result of this report.

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 This is an important site in the context of the Council's overall objectives for the regeneration of Tonbridge Town Centre and it is important that its development is achieved in accordance with good planning practice both in terms of following

process and in the eventual physical nature of the project. It is intended that this Planning Brief will contribute to ensuring that is the case.

1.6 Recommendations

- 1.6.1 That the summary of comments made on the draft Planning Brief during the consultation period, together with the response made by officers **BE NOTED**.
- 1.6.2 The recommended amendments to the Planning Brief **BE RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet for incorporation in the final document.
- 1.6.3 Cabinet be asked to recommend to the Council that the amended Planning Brief **BE ADOPTED** for the purposes of development control.
- 1.6.4 Those organisations and individuals taking part in the consultation exercise **BE THANKED** for their helpful contribution to the process.
- 1.6.5 The final document, if approved, by the Council **BE PUBLISHED** and made widely available.

Background papers:

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Nil

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