

Notices of Motion Submitted Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 5.18

To receive the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor N Heslop, seconded by Councillor M Balfour:-

A21 Improvements

The Council will have been concerned to learn earlier this year that revised cost estimates for the proposed improvements to the A 21 between Tonbridge and Pembury and Kippings Cross and Lamberhurst had raised uncertainty over the funding and programming of these regionally important infrastructure projects.

These schemes are critical to the functioning of the A 21 as a part of the strategic road network linking the M 25 with the South Coast. Locally the continued uncertainty and delay in bringing forward the dualling of the Tonbridge to Pembury section causes significant levels of congestion that seriously harms the functioning of the network serving Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. Most particularly the lack of investment on this part of the A 21 continues to give rise to poor traffic conditions in Tonbridge town centre and Hildenborough, inhibiting local efforts to improve accessibility and public transport services.

Tonbridge is defined as a Regional Transport Hub in the Regional Transport Strategy. Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells is also designated as a Regional Hub in the South East Plan where regional policy is to secure economic development and improved accessibility. In short any further delay in the implementation of the A 21 Tonbridge to Pembury improvements will significantly reduce the meaning and effectiveness of this policy. It will also hamper the strong local efforts being made by the Council, its partners and others to bring forward regeneration and redevelopment projects in the town centre and the accompanying transport strategy contained within the Local Development Framework which has been adopted by the Council following independent endorsement.

Although confirmed as regional priorities by the Regional Transport Board, latest information from the Department of Transport indicates that these schemes could now be subject to a further two year delay to 2012/13 and will need to go through a 'refresh' process involving further evaluation.

Recently an A 21 reference group has been formed including Council Leaders and Members of Parliament to co-ordinate a campaign to the Government for the funding to be made available to enable the early construction of these schemes. In line with these efforts it is recommended that the Borough Council provides the clearest and strongest message of support.

Accordingly the following motion is moved by Councillor Nicolas Heslop, Cabinet Member for Community Development and seconded by Councillor Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation:

“The Council strongly endorse the Regional Transport Board’s recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport that the proposed improvements to the A 21 should proceed as a matter of urgency in view of the strategic importance of the A 21 and the particular local significance of the dualling of the A21 Tonbridge to Pembury section to the future success of Tonbridge in view of its status as a Regional Hub.”