

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**27 May 2009**

**Report of the Director of Planning Transport and Leisure**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)**

**1 TONBRIDGE CONSERVATION AREA  
STREET FURNITURE AND SURFACES GUIDE**

**Summary**

**The preparation of a Street Furniture and Surfaces Guide is a commitment made in the Tonbridge Conservation Area Appraisal. The guide is proposed to be a material consideration for development control and provides best practice advice for those agencies responsible for street furniture and surfaces in the Conservation Area.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 One of the Council's Key Priorities is to "achieve a cleaner, smarter and better maintained street scene and open space environment". There is a commitment in the Tonbridge Conservation Area Appraisal for the Council to prepare a Street Furniture and Surfaces Guide and a draft of the document is enclosed with this report for Members' consideration.

**1.2 Purpose of the Guide**

1.2.1 Street furniture in the Conservation Area is the responsibility of a wide range of agencies, including the Borough Council. It is the purpose of the Guide to:

- Provide the basis for continuity between all agencies in relation to maintaining or providing new street furniture and or repairing or replacing street surfaces;
- Produce a set of "guiding principles" to assist in making decisions about the number type and location of street furniture;
- Establish a suite of co-ordinated elements of street furniture and street surfaces which integrate well into the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area and create a sense of place.

1.2.2 As street furniture is replaced, repaired or maintained, or new development brings forward opportunities for enhancement, there is a real opportunity to progressively upgrade and rationalise existing items of street furniture or surfaces in the Conservation Area to a common suite of specified components. The Guide is based upon a thorough audit of all of the street furniture and surfaces within the area. From the audit it has been possible to establish the suitability and general quality of the existing elements and the practicality of their progressive replacement or enhancement. In so doing a set of guiding principles has been established.

### **1.3 Guiding Principles**

- Preserve historic street furniture;
- Audit street furniture, particularly traffic signs and railings, and remove any which are unnecessary;
- Wherever possible, group together items of street furniture at the back edge of the footway, use existing elements for locating new signs or lighting, and install lighting on walls where possible;
- For any necessary new, or replacement, elements of street furniture, use a common suite of specified quality components finished in black which will integrate well into the overall appearance of the Conservation Area and offer best value for money;
- Ground surfaces should be kept simple and feature a limited palette of surface materials consistent with the function and location of the street or footway;
- Sustain a regular maintenance regime to ensure the appearance of street furniture and surfaces enhances the Conservation Area.

The Guide will be used to guide new development and to inform the County Council and other agencies about the most appropriate materials and street furniture to use in the different parts of the Conservation Area.

### **1.4 Consultation**

1.4.1 The Guide has been prepared in consultation with the Tonbridge Civic and Historical Societies, the Slade Area Residents Association and Kent Highway Services. The County Council has signalled that it supports the approach set out in the Guide and this will be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Transportation Board for endorsement. It has also been considered by the Council's Street Scene Officer Study Group.

## **1.5 Legal Implications**

- 1.5.1 The Guide will be a material consideration for development control but will not have the same weight as a Development Plan Document or Supplementary Planning Document.

## **1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.6.1 It is possible that there will ultimately be some additional cost for the Borough Council in maintaining and improving the quality of street furniture that it is responsible for in the Conservation Area. It may also be appropriate on occasions to make or seek a financial contribution to the County Council to ensure that the most appropriate surface materials and street furniture is used in accordance with the Guide. On the other hand the use of a common agreed suite of quality components may reduce acquisition and longer term maintenance costs.

## **1.7 Risk Assessment**

- 1.7.1 There are no risks directly arising from this document other than in relation to costs referred to above.

## **1.8 Recommendations**

- 1.8.1 That the Street Furniture and Surfaces Guide for Tonbridge Conservation Area:

- 1) be adopted as a material consideration for development control;
- 2) be paid regard to in designing, specifying and maintaining the Council's own schemes and facilities in the Conservation Area;
- 3) be commended as best practice to the County Council and other agencies responsible for the provision and maintenance of street furniture and surfaces in the Conservation Area.

The Director of Planning Transport and Leisure confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:  
Tonbridge Conservation Area Appraisal

contact: Brian Gates  
Mike McCulloch

Steve Humphrey  
Director of Planning Transport and Leisure