

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

08 September 2008

Report of the Director of Planning Transport and Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters For Information

1 SOUTH CENTRAL FRANCHISE CONSULTATION

Summary

The Chairman has agreed to take this as an item of urgent business to raise the awareness of this important issue.

The South Central franchise is due to commence on 20th September 2009. The Borough Council was consulted by the Department for Transport as was, I understand, Kent County Council. My concerns and comments focus entirely on the connection between Tonbridge and Redhill and the journeys onward to London or Gatwick. The closing date for consultation was 14 August 2008.

1.1 Context

- 1.1.1 Govia has operated the current South Central franchise since 2001, having taken over from Connex South Central. The current franchise agreement came into force in May 2003, and had the ability to continue to 31 December 2009. The termination date was brought forward to September 2009 to enable the incoming operator some months of operation before implementation of the major timetable change.
- 1.1.2 The consultation document appears to consolidate the changes that Southern is just about to introduce and casts an even greater threat over a service that for many compelling reasons should be protected and enhanced rather than destroyed.
- 1.1.3 The Borough Council previously objected in the strongest possible terms to the imminent timetable and route changes proposed by Southern and which it will be introducing from December this year.
- 1.1.4 I have attached at **Annex 1** a copy of the Council's response to this important consultation document. I hope the Board will agree the Council has made a well argued and compelling case for reversing the existing and implied continued service degradation of the Tunbridge Wells/Tonbridge/Redhill/Gatwick lines. The

proposals in the consultation document must be amended if a major threat to a sustainable transport policy in this area is to be avoided.

1.2 Legal Implications

1.2.1 Not applicable

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.3.1 Not applicable

1.4 Risk Assessment

1.4.1 Not applicable

Background papers:

contact: Mike O'Brien

South Central Franchise Consultation : 22 May 2008

Steve Humphrey
Director of Planning Transport and Leisure