

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

**15 December 2008**

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

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters For Information**

**1 RAILWAY RELATED TRANSPORT ISSUES**

**Summery**

**The South Central Franchise is currently at Invitation to Tender Stage and this represents the last opportunity to advocate the case to bidders for enhancements on the Tonbridge/Redhill/Gatwick/London line that exceed the requirements of the Base Specification issued by the Department for Transport in the summer.**

**In the Kent franchise area, the Train Operating Company, Southeastern Railway, continues to prepare its peak timetable for the period after the Channel Tunnel Domestic Service starts to operate in December 2009.**

**In the meantime, Network Rail is working on the Kent Route Utilisation Strategy that will define rail infrastructure planning over the next 30 years.**

**1.1 South Central Franchise**

1.1.1 At the last meeting of the Board I presented a copy of the submission that the Borough Council supplied to the Department for Transport (DfT) when it consulted on the Base Specification for the South Central Franchise. The new franchise will be operational from September 2009 through to July 2015.

1.1.2 The Borough Council's submission has been fairly reproduced as part of the DfT's recently issued Stakeholder Briefing Document. The document sets out the key objectives the government expects franchisees to achieve and it identifies the short list of bidders. These are;

- Nedrailways Ltd,
- National Express Group plc,
- Govia Ltd and
- Stagecoach Group plc.

- 1.1.3 Bidders have received the Invitation To Tender package and must submit their bids by 18 February 2009. The Borough Council has invited bidders to attend the next meeting of the Planning & Transportation Advisory Board on 6 January and this will probably represent the last real chance of impressing on them how critical proper promotion and operation of the Tonbridge/Redhill/Gatwick line is to West Kent and onward links to mid and east Kent.

## **1.2 The Integrated Kent Franchise**

- 1.2.1 The franchise in Kent with Southeastern Railway (part of the Govia group) has some considerable time to run. The main contract period runs through to the end of 2011 and there is a potential performance based two year extension after that to take it through to the end of 2013. Current focus within the franchise area is the timetable changes related to the introduction of the Channel Tunnel Domestic Service (CTRL DS) after December 2009.
- 1.2.2 The off-peak timetable has been known for some time and it reflects the base specification issued several years ago by the Strategic Rail Authority before it was absorbed into the DfT. The disappointing aspect of this is the loss of the off-peak service to the City on the West Malling line. Despite much lobbying by the Borough Council, in conjunction with Maidstone BC and others, to preserve this off peak service, Southeastern Railway has been immovable.
- 1.2.3 Similar work on the peak service patterns after December 2009 has been expected for some time and an announcement must now be imminent. I will inform the Board as soon as this information becomes available from Southeastern Railway.
- 1.2.4 The County Council has carried out some work on the CTRL DS in the form of a Select Committee scrutiny investigation into the benefits of the service and the impact that it might have on the wider rail network across the County. The Borough Council took the opportunity of making a written representation to the Committee and it is reproduced at **Annex 1**. The Committee's original timetable anticipated that its report would be ready for consideration by the County Council's Cabinet on 1 December. I shall endeavour to obtain a copy for tabling on the night of the meeting.

## **1.3 Kent Route Utilisation Strategy**

- 1.3.1 The final item that the Board will wish to be aware of for future monitoring and report is the work that Network Rail is currently carrying out on the Kent Route Utilisation Strategy.
- 1.3.2 The Strategy is aimed at providing a framework for rail investment in Kent over the next 30 years. The work is currently at an information gathering and analysis stage and the programme that Network Rail is working to envisages the release of a Draft for Consultation this winter. That is, it is imminent and it will be followed by

a consultation period expected to last into the spring during which time the Borough Council will prepare and submit its response to the consultation.

**1.4 Legal Implications**

1.4.1 None applicable

**1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.5.1 None applicable

**1.6 Risk Assessment**

1.6.1 Not relevant at this stage.

Background papers:

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Nil

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