

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

18 June 2009

**Report of the Director of Planning Transport and Leisure
and the Head of Community Operations**

Part 1- Public

Matters For Decision

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 Context

- 1.1.1 One of the Borough 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 Borough Council to prepare a Street Furniture and Surfaces Guide. A draft of the document is enclosed with this report for consideration by Members of the Board.
- 1.1.2 The Borough Council has itself considered the document at its recent meeting of the Planning and Transportation Board and recommended that it be adopted as a material consideration for development control. The Joint Transportation Board is invited to lend further weight to the document by approving it as a template for highway maintenance and improvement purposes as well as a guide for County officers when considering the highway aspects of specific developments.

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 and County Councils. 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 in respect of new development and as advice and guidance to 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 liaison with Kent Highway Services and in consultation with the Tonbridge Civic and Historical Societies and the Slade Area Residents Association. 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 both the Borough Council and Kent Highway Services in maintaining and improving the quality of street furniture that they are respectively responsible for in the Conservation Area. 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 in respect of the highway implications of development proposals;
 - 2) be paid regard to in designing, specifying and maintaining the streetscene in the Conservation Area;

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Mike McCulloch
Andy Moreton

Steve Humphrey
Director of Planning Transport & Leisure

Kim Hills
Head of Community Operations