

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

30 November 2009

Report of the Leader (TMBC) and the Deputy Leader (KCC)

Part 1- Public

Matters For Information

1 PARISH REPRESENTATIONS ON TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY MATTERS

Summary

The Borough Council's Parish Partnership Panel has included frequent requests for items on highway, traffic and transportation matters. These are matters that might more appropriately and constructively be dealt with at this Board and in order to promote this way forward it is proposed that Parish Chairmen be made aware of the arrangements contained within the current JTB Agreement.

1.1 Context

1.1.1 Over time, there has been a steady stream of requests for items related to highway, traffic and transportation matters to be considered by the Borough Council's Parish Partnership Panel (PPP).

1.1.2 Before 2005, this was readily accommodated because the Borough Council dealt directly with local highway network and traffic management as the Local Highway Authority's agent under the Kent Highway Partnership (KHP).

1.1.3 Following the end of the KHP in April 2005, the PPP generally dealt with traffic and highway items on the agenda by noting them and forwarding them out-of-meeting to the relevant officers at Kent Highway Services.

1.1.4 There has been a recent change in the operation of the PPP with an increased emphasis on County Council business areas and issues of partnership at meetings of both the Panel and the Tonbridge Forum. Unsurprisingly, given how important the local highway network is for the local community and Parish Councils, highway, traffic and transportation continued to feature strongly among the items Parishes wished to discuss in the realigned PPP when agenda items were invited.

1.2 The Role of the Joint Transportation Board

- 1.2.1 We have been prompted to question whether this is the most constructive and helpful way for Parishes to raise and discuss such matters. The current arrangements tend to create a degree of confusion as to where these issues should be targeted by Parish Councils and also duplicates effort unnecessarily since the Joint Transportation Board (JTB) exists with the primary purpose of providing a democratic overview of all local highway and transportation matters within the Borough. Moreover, the JTB provides a sharper focus for these matters to be considered and offers a potentially direct route for action to be pursued by the Highway Authority.
- 1.2.2 Although little used to date, there is provision within the Agreement constituting the JTB for Parish representation. It gives Parishes an opportunity to raise and speak to items of interest to them.
- 1.2.3 The Schedules to the Agreement as approved by both Councils allow for a representative of the Kent Association of Local Councils to be a speaking Member of the JTB. This is one route whereby highway issues can be raised by Parishes.
- 1.2.4 Another way of doing so is for Parishes to attend themselves and speak on any item of particular relevance to them. Section 2.4 of the Agreement states that:
- *The Chairman of any Parish or Town Council within the area of the Council (or a Parish Councillor of that Parish nominated by him/her) may attend any meeting to speak with the permission of the Chairman on any item on the agenda of particular relevance to that Parish.*
- 1.2.5 There is of course a direct route for day to day highway business to be raised with and that is for a Parish to request Kent Highway Services to address a matter of relevance either by direct contact or through the new Parish Portal arrangements that are being currently refined.

1.3 Procedure

- 1.3.1 There is a formal basis, therefore, that provides an opportunity for Parishes to raise traffic items at the JTB and we commend raising awareness and encouraging the use of these arrangements as the most effective way forward.
- 1.3.2 We have considered how this should be done in practice and have concluded that it can best be achieved by avoiding rigid procedures and keeping things reasonably informal and flexible. This will allow arrangements to be adjusted in the light of practice and experience.
- 1.3.3 Therefore, we suggest Parishes simply forward items that they wish to speak about at JTB to the Chief Engineer of the Borough Council and he will discuss

these with the Chairman in line with the terms of the Agreement, in liaison with appropriate Kent Highway Services officers.

- 1.3.4 Subject to the views of the Board, the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure will write to each of the Parish Council Chairmen to make them aware of the current opportunities for discussion contained in the existing JTB Agreement. It will also indicate how they can raise items for the agenda using the informal procedure outlined in the pervious paragraph.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 None because the suggested procedure is in line with the current JTB Agreement.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 None

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 Not applicable.

Background papers:

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Nil

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