

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

19 September 2011

Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters For Information

1 TONBRIDGE STREETSCENE AUDIT

Summary

An audit of the streetscene in central Tonbridge has been carried out. Its principal aim was to identify low cost but effective interventions that could make a significant contribution to improving the streetscene. A schedule of work has been drafted and the intention is to implement this in partnership with Kent County Council Highways.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 One of the items in the Tonbridge Town Centre Streetscene Action Plan deals with 'Street Clutter and Street Furniture'. In recent months we have carried out an audit of street furniture along the High Street and the results of this assessment are contained in the report reproduced at **Annex 1**.

1.1.2 The report describes in general terms various deficiencies that contribute towards a less than ideal appearance producing a streetscene in need of some attention. The principal product of the exercise is the work schedule reproduced at **Annex 2** containing a list of readily achievable and low cost tasks that can help towards a substantial improvement in the appearance of the area assessed.

1.2 Scope of the Initiative and Implementation

1.2.1 The Borough Council is responsible for some of the items flagged up within the work schedule. However, the greater proportion fall to the local highway authority, Kent County Council, to deal with either directly because the piece of street furniture belongs to it, for example street lights, or indirectly because the item belongs to one of the utility companies, for example a service box.

1.2.2 The scope of the audit was the corridor between the old Star & Garter corner at the northern end to the junction of Quarry Hill Road and Brook Street at the southern end. The extent of the audit had to be deliberately constrained for logistic, operational and cost reasons. However, it could have kept on going and it would certainly have continued to identify a similar range of streetscene

deficiencies. That is really a matter that will need to be addressed at another time and the focus for the moment is on the Town Centre as just described.

- 1.2.3 The key to implementing the work schedule will be carrying it out as part of a coordinated effort with the County Council. The groundwork for such an approach is already in place because county council officers are already represented on our Streetscene Officer Study Group. They regularly contribute to the work of the Group and this has been helpful, for example, with the cleansing and repainting that KCC Highways carried out on and around the Big Bridge in the weeks before the Freedom March earlier this summer.

1.3 Funding

- 1.3.1 Many of the individual tasks in the schedule might be considered fairly cosmetic and of questionable priority at a time of considerable financial pressure. However, the assessment has identified that there is real visual blight in this area that can be easily remedied at no great cost. Overall, the aim is to meet this within existing County and Borough streetscene budgets supplemented as necessary by an approach to the County divisional councillors for support from their Member Highway Fund.

1.4 Policy Context

- 1.4.1 Relevant context for this initiative is contained in several documents.

- The recently adopted Tonbridge Conservation Area Street Furniture and Surfaces Guide
- Tonbridge Conservation Area Appraisal
- Quarry Hill Conservation Area Appraisal
- Tonbridge Guard Rail Assessment - considered earlier in the agenda.

- 1.4.2 Each of these documents illustrated how crucial it is to have a continuing commitment towards cleansing and maintenance and it is hoped this current audit serves to reinforce this message.

1.5 Next Steps

- 1.5.1 The work in the schedule has not yet been firmly programmed but I intend that it should be implemented reasonably soon, subject to coordination between County and Borough Council officers and the allocation of existing funds to particular items. .
- 1.5.2 There is therefore an opportunity for local Members to study the contents of the schedule and identify anything that they might consider to be obvious omissions that justify inclusion, it being understood that this is all about small-scale, low cost interventions and not larger items of construction requiring considerable levels of

funding. If there are any such omissions within the area of the initiative, I would welcome it if Members were to make me aware of them.

1.6 Legal Implications

1.6.1 Not applicable.

1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.7.1 As described in the report.

1.8 Risk Assessment

1.8.1 None that need be considered.

Background papers:

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Nil

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