

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

**28 November 2011**

**Report of the Director of Highways and Transportation  
and the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matter for Recommendation to Borough Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)**

**1 WEST MALLING STATION ACCESS**

**Summary**

**The report updates progress on the station forecourt remodelling project. It explains the links with the bus gate and the assessment and survey work earlier in the year and seeks endorsement for the principle of dealing with these two matters jointly.**

**1.1 Background**

- 1.1.1 It has been apparent for a number of years that the West Malling Station forecourt and approach road is no longer fit for purpose due to the increasing volume of traffic using it, which has itself resulted from the significant level of housing growth in the Medway Valley area and at Kings Hill. A masterplan for the remodelling of the station forecourt was adopted by the Joint Transportation Board in April 2004, which included proposals to radically improve multi-modal access to the station. Until recently, however, further progress was limited, primarily due to the lack of defined funding for the scheme beyond the agreed Section 106 contribution of £250,000 (index-linked) from the Leybourne Grange development. A wider partnership with the developers of the major sites in the area will therefore be essential if Kent County Council (KCC) and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council are to secure sufficient funding to enable the scheme to be implemented in full.
- 1.1.2 Over the past year representatives from KCC, TMBC, Southeastern Railway, Network Rail and local bus companies have been working to progress the project and have recently agreed a brief for design work, which was commissioned earlier this month. This will involve transforming the broad outline concepts of the earlier masterplan into firmer detail and, crucially, identifying a firm budget estimate for the project.
- 1.1.3 The recent opening of the privately operated, independent car parking facility at West Malling Station has helpfully provided some of the additional parking

capacity needed to meet the increasing local demand. Yet in so doing it has further highlighted the existing access issues at the site. These centre around the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) that prohibits all but bus and taxi access through the bottom of the link road to the forecourt from the A228 West Malling Bypass. The TRO was implemented to deter rat-running between the A228 and West Malling via Lucks Hill and Swan Street. However, it has proven a matter of some contention and confusion for local road users and is the subject of continuing review by KCC and TMBC, including a recent traffic survey commissioned by the County Council which revealed that contravention of the 'bus gate' is widespread. It is clear that this position needs to be reviewed as soon as possible, but in the context of the proposals for the forecourt.

## **1.2 The proposal**

1.2.1 The achievement of optimal multi-modal access to West Malling Station, including the accommodation of an increasing number of bus services in line with development in the Medway Valley area, is the principal objective of the design work for the station forecourt remodelling project. It is therefore proposed that the ongoing requirement for the bus gate and its wider implications are considered as part of this work. This will enable KCC, TMBC and the wider project partners and stakeholders to make informed decisions on both aspects of the project in an integrated and complementary manner.

## **1.3 Legal Implications**

1.3.1 None at this stage.

## **1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.4.1 None directly for the County or Borough Councils. The proposed strategy seeks to maximise the value for money of the developer contributions secured through the planning process in the Medway Valley area.

## **1.5 Risk Assessment**

1.5.1 Not required.

## **1.6 Equality Impact Assessment**

1.6.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

## **1.7 Recommendations**

1.7.1 That the Cabinet be recommended **TO ENDORSE** the principle of joint consideration of the West Malling Station forecourt remodelling and the planning obligations associated with the bus gate.

The Director of Planning Transport and Leisure confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Paul Lulham

Nil

Steve Humphrey  
Director of Planning, Transport & Leisure

John Burr  
Director of Highways and Transportation

<b>Screening for equality impacts:</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Explanation of impacts</b>
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	The proposed strategy seeks to enhance inclusive access to high-quality public transport services at West Malling Station.
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	Yes	As above
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		N/A

*In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.*