

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

16 May 2012

Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure
and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation

Part 1- Public

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

1 **TRANSPORTATION MATTERS**

This report provides an update on a range of current transportation issues affecting the Borough.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 At the last meeting the Board considered various reports on transportation issues currently affecting the Borough. This report provides an update on matters previously discussed and seeks endorsement of a Manifesto for Improved Rail Services.

1.2 Rail

- 1.2.1 The enhancement works at Tonbridge Station continue but due to some unforeseen circumstances will take a little longer than anticipated. However I understand that the works will be complete by early summer and before the Olympic Games commence. Southeastern has also announced that fold-up Brompton cycles will be available for hire from a new docking station at Tonbridge Station. This is part of a joint initiative funded by the County Council and the Department for Transport (DfT) who will provide similar facilities at Maidstone East, Canterbury West and Ashford International stations.
- 1.2.2 In the light of concerns relating to the deep dissatisfaction with the way rail services operate a '**Manifesto for Improved Rail Services**' has been produced with the aim of urging the Government to help improve rail services within the Borough. In view of the importance of this issue this comprehensive document was announced at the last Council meeting and has been sent to Theresa Villiers MP, the rail minister to deliver the important message that the Borough Council wishes to work with her officials to ensure that the interests of communities across the Borough are fully reflected in the next rail franchise. The manifesto, which is essentially a compendium of all the issues the Borough Council has previously produced, is reproduced at **Annex 1** and Members are asked to formally endorse this document.

- 1.2.3 At the end of April the County Council held its annual Rail summit. This was well supported with speakers from Southeastern, Network Rail and KCC Transport Planners. The opportunity was taken to raise key points from the Borough's Rail Manifesto. Pleasingly many of the concerns we have for our communities seem to be endorsed by the County Council and we will work with KCC to lobby the DfT and ensure that we get the best possible and cost effective service in the next franchise.
- 1.2.4 At the last meeting of this Board we were asked to write to the Mayor of London to express concerns on the potential impact of his proposal that responsibility for London's inner-suburban rail services in Kent should be devolved to the Mayoralty from 2014. We considered such a transfer could have an adverse effect on the communities we serve. The letter to Mayor for London and his reply can be found in **Annexes 2 and 3** respectively.
- 1.2.5 Pleasingly the response received has allayed some initial concerns and has given reassurances that services leaving for London from stations within the Borough should be unaffected by this proposal. It will be important to continue to monitor how any change in responsibilities impact on practical operations in due course.

1.3 West Malling Station Forecourt Remodelling Scheme

- 1.3.1 At the last Joint Transportation Board meeting the County Council presented the preferred design option following a comprehensive consultation with stakeholders. The Board endorsed the proposals and these are now being progressed to detailed design stage with the view to implementing this project early next year.

1.4 Access to Pembury Hospital

- 1.4.1 The situation regarding access to Pembury Hospital has still not been finalised. We have just received a further planning 'consultation' from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC). This includes a viability report which has been submitted as evidence to support the relaxation of the full liability of the original condition placed on the planning permission for the new hospital dealing with public transport provision.
- 1.4.2 The NHS is no longer proposing to provide bus services to Hadlow, Borough Green and West Malling as required by the planning consent but is willing to set up a funding structure to help support the Voluntary sector which serves the outlying areas to assist in accessibility to the hospital.
- 1.4.3 However, importantly, the submission to remove the condition doesn't actually have the alternative service arrangements in place or yet mapped out. Consequently there must be a risk that TWBC agree to amend the condition but that the alternative is some way from securing what we need for the rural communities in this Borough.

- 1.4.4 That seems to us to be unsatisfactory and we will be seeking to have these arrangements firmed up and conditioned.

1.5 Tonbridge Transport Strategy

- 1.5.1 The Transport Strategy for Tonbridge town centre is contained in the Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan adopted in April 2008 as part of the Borough Council's Local Development Framework. A key objective of this strategy review is to identify ways to improve traffic flows and pedestrian movement in the town centre and specifically to ease congestion and reduce traffic levels in the High Street in order to improve general environmental conditions and the poor air quality.
- 1.5.2 During the last few months the County Council has been reviewing a range of prospective highway improvements and will arrange to brief local Members shortly before presenting to the Joint Transportation Board in June a report outlining recommendations on some proposed amendments.

1.6 A21 Dualling

- 1.6.1 We continue to await any further announcements on the re-programming of this important project following many months of detailed work by KCC and representations made by the Borough Council and many other partner organisations. In particular following more detailed design and costing there has been a call for preliminary steps to be firmly programmed including the necessary public inquiry. Any further progress will be reported to the Board.

1.7 Green buses

- 1.7.1 We are pleased to report that Arriva has been successful in securing a DfT contribution to 11 new hybrid, low carbon buses for Route 71 which runs from Snodland to Maidstone.
- 1.7.2 This ties in well with the anticipated launch next year of the A20 Corridor Quality Bus Partnership Scheme and the planned improvements to West Malling Station forecourt. This has come about through good partnership working between KCC, Tonbridge and Malling and Arriva, utilising developer contributions from key sites in the locality and should have a positive effect on air quality issues along this corridor.

1.8 Parking matters

- 1.8.1 Phase 6a of our parking programme will be implemented shortly and progress with the Aylesford parking review is reported in detail elsewhere in these papers.
- 1.8.2 The parking review for West Malling has been the subject of consultation which will be considered by the local steering group. This will be programmed in due course and a further report made to the Board.

1.8.3 We are pleased to inform Members that our Parking Team has won a prestigious national award as active contributors to the South East Parking Group. The award was recently presented to the group in London for being the “Parking Team of the Year”, beating seven other nominations in the final. The South East Parking Group has gained national recognition from the industry by identifying and adopting best practice in many areas of parking management and enforcement.

1.9 Legal Implications

1.9.1 None

1.10 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.10.1 None directly for the Borough Council.

1.11 Risk Assessment

1.11.1 Not required.

1.12 Equality Impact Assessment

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

1.13 Policy Considerations

1.13.1 Community.

1.14 Recommendations

1.14.1 That the Cabinet be recommended **TO ENDORSE** the ‘Manifesto for Improved Rail Services’ and note progress on other matters.

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: Mike O’Brien

Nil

Steve Humphrey
Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure

Nicolas Heslop
Cabinet Member for Planning and
Transportation

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
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?	n/a	
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	n/a	
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

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.