

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

18 March 2013

Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters For Information

1 BOROUGH TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Summary

This report brings together a range of currently important transportation matters in the Borough.

1.1 A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling

1.1.1 The Department for Transport, through the Highways Agency, has recently announced the resumption of the statutory planning process for this proposed scheme.

1.1.2 Due to the time since publication of the proposals in 2009 the Agency has published an updated Revised Environmental Statement, a copy of which we have recently received. The public inquiry opens on 14 May.

1.1.3 This is very welcome news for all those campaigning to have the statutory process confirmed by Government as it provides another positive step forward towards the delivery of these much-needed improvements.

1.1.4 The Borough Council is a statutory consultee and has the opportunity to comment on the detail of the proposals. Initial discussions have been had with colleagues at KCC and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to ensure that we have a coordinated approach to any involvement in the public inquiry

1.1.5 The public notice is reproduced in **Annex 1**.

1.2 Pinch Point Fund – Junction 4 A20

1.2.1 As part of the 2012 Autumn Statement the Government announced the creation of a Local Pinch Point Fund worth £170m to remove bottlenecks on the local highway network which are impeding growth. This fund reflects the Government's commitment to supporting economic growth by tackling barriers on the local highway network that may be restricting the movement of goods and people. The Pinch Point Fund is intended to secure immediate impacts on growth and is

therefore aimed at those schemes that can be delivered quickly, with the Department's funding contribution (in the form of capital) only available in financial years 2013-14 and 2014-15.

- 1.2.2 KCC has submitted three bids for this funding, which if successful will remove severe congestion problems on our road network. One of these is in Tonbridge and Malling on the M20 at Junction 4. The scheme relates widening of the Eastern Overbridge. Clearly this is an excellent opportunity to secure some additional funding to secure the delivery of this important scheme which is key to the successful realisation of the current and planned strategic housing and employment developments in the area and to the safe and efficient operation of Junction 4.

1.3 Consultation on the Speed Limit for HGV's over 7.5 Tonnes

- 1.3.1 Shortly before the end of the year the Department for Transport (DfT) launched a consultation, with a deadline of 1 February 2013, examining the speed limit for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) over 7.5 tonnes on single carriageway roads. This was an opportunity for the Borough Council to comment on current speed limits for HGVs, particularly in our area.
- 1.3.2 Whilst it is important to improve the conditions for economic growth which seems to be the main reason underpinning the consultation proposals, lower speed limits are in place for HGVs for good reason. Their size and weight means these vehicles take longer to stop and if they do crash it's more likely to be on a catastrophic scale. The submitted response (**Annex 2**) has given due consideration to these and other issues.

1.4 Hybrid Double Decker Buses on A20

- 1.4.1 Later this month Arriva are launching their fleet of eleven brand-new diesel-electric hybrid double-deck buses that will be running on Service 71 between Maidstone, Larkfield, Leybourne and Snodland.
- 1.4.2 The buses cost nearly £300,000 each and part of the cost has been met by the DfT's Green Bus Fund and a substantial contribution from Kent County Council, in addition to Arriva's £2.5 million investment.
- 1.4.3 This timely announcement should be helpful as KCC is about to commence consultation on the proposed Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme (SQPS) for bus services along the A20 corridor from the Coldharbour roundabout in a westerly direction, to the junction with Aston Way (A228) and Castle Way. This would be a Partnership between the County Council, the local bus operators and the Borough Council.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 Nil.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.6.1 No direct considerations.

1.7 Risk Assessment

1.7.1 Not applicable.

Background papers:

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Nil

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