

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

18 March 2013

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

Part 1- Public

Matters For Information

1 TONBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE TRANSPORT STRATEGY - UPDATE

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This report updates Members on progress with the revised Town Centre Transport Strategy for Tonbridge; the objectives for which were agreed by the Joint Transportation Board on 24 September last year following some helpful discussion amongst Members.

1.2 Progress to Date

1.2.1 Since the Board's last meeting in December, positive progress has been made on a number of elements of the revised Transport Strategy.

1.2.2 In January, Officers from Kent County Council (KCC) and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) conducted a comprehensive audit of the High Street. The purpose was to identify opportunities to improve air quality, reduce interruptions to the flow of vehicular traffic and enhance pedestrian movement between its junctions with Quarry Hill Road / Waterloo Road and Bordyke / Lansdowne Road.

1.2.3 A number of scheme options have been referred to KCC's Design Engineer for initial investigation. They include localised footway widening, formalised delivery bays and the relocation and enhancement of bus stops and pedestrian crossing facilities. Officers have also commissioned an outline design for the developer-funded realignment of the Medway Wharf Road / Sovereign Way junction. These designs will be presented to local Members for discussion shortly.

1.2.4 In tandem with this work, KCC's Intelligent Transport Systems Team are undertaking a 'health check' of key signalised junctions within Tonbridge Town Centre, including the Shipbourne Road / London Road (Five Ways), Bordyke and Cannon Lane / Hadlow Road junctions. This project will assess the potential to further optimise the traffic signals at these locations, particularly during periods of disruption on the wider highway network (e.g. the closure of the A21).

- 1.2.5 At the time of writing, KCC is in the process of replacing the paving at the Watergate to provide a safer and more attractive entrance to Tonbridge Castle. Unfortunately, there has been a delay in obtaining the correct clay pavers and the excavated area has been temporarily reinstated with tarmac. This work will be programmed to start at the beginning of the next financial year.
- 1.2.6 The County Council has also identified funding to replace the street lighting columns in the lower High Street with heavy duty units capable of supporting hanging baskets and Christmas lights, as requested by Borough Council colleagues. This work will also be programmed to start at the beginning of the next financial year.
- 1.2.7 TMBC Officers have commenced a review of directions signs at all relevant junctions, including A21, A26, Quarry Hill Road, Pembury Road and High Street to ensure that through traffic is appropriately directed avoiding the High Street. The results of the review together with recommendations will be shared with local Members over the next few months.
- 1.2.8 Later this year Officers will commence research and liaison with businesses on a Servicing Review between the Big Bridge and Vale Road to see how we can reduce interruptions to the flow of traffic passing along the High Street.
- 1.2.9 Members will be aware that major proposals for redevelopment of the 'Botany' area are likely to emerge over the coming months, together with a new leisure and community centre in Bradford Street. Planning applications will need to show how these proposals can integrate with and contribute to the overall Transport Strategy.

1.3 Next Steps

- 1.3.1 As noted above, the outline designs for the High Street improvements and Medway Wharf Road / Sovereign Way junction improvements will be presented to local Members for discussion within the coming weeks. Subject to their views, it is anticipated that they will be then be presented to the next meeting of this Board in June.
- 1.3.2 KCC and TMBC Officers will continue to work closely with Sainsbury's to ensure that the transport impacts of the proposed redevelopment are adequately assessed and that the development contributes positively to the Town Centre Transport Strategy.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 None at this stage.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 None at this stage.

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 Not required.

Background papers:

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Nil

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