

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

10 June 2013

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters For Information

1 BOROUGH TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

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

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This paper provides an update on some of matters previously discussed and introduces some new ones relating to the M25 Junction 5 slips, the emerging Cycling Strategy and the consultation process for the Lower Thames Crossing.

1.2 A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling Scheme - Public Inquiry

1.2.1 The long awaited A21 Public Inquiry opened on 14 May. The Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and KCC all support the proposal. Ian Bailey, Planning Policy Manager, will represent the Borough Council at the Inquiry giving evidence in support of the proposal. Cllr Nicolas Heslop and the four local MP's will also address the inquiry giving support for the proposal.

1.2.2 This is a welcome step forward in delivering this key project but it is important to note that advancing this scheme through a public inquiry does not guarantee its construction; this decision will be taken at the next spending review and we will need to ensure that appropriate representations are made at the right time.

1.3 Rail Issues

1.3.1 KCC's annual Rail Summit was held on 20 May. Presentations were received from James Conway (DfT), Charles Horton (Southeastern) and Mike Smith (Network Rail). The key messages from this meeting are summarised below:

- In 2015 work will commence at London Bridge station to demolish and replace all platforms sequentially.
- During the construction phase of these station improvements there will be significant disruption to commuters wishing to get off or on at London Bridge. From Jan 2015 through to Aug 2016 any trains going to Charing

Cross will NOT stop at London Bridge. This will affect the majority of the London bound trains running from Tonbridge Station. Cannon Street trains will continue to stop at London Bridge during this period.

- From Aug 2016 through to 2017 any trains bound for Cannon Street will NOT stop at London Bridge but the Charing Cross service will stop during that time.
- Network Rail is liaising with Transport for London (TfL) to improve localised links during these works.

1.4 'Pinch Point' Bids

1.4.1 At the last meeting of this board I alerted Members to the Department for Transport (DfT)'s Local Pinch Point Fund which is designed to promote economic growth through the rapid deployment of ready-to-go schemes that remove transport barriers or prevent the emergence of new transport barriers.

1.4.2 KCC submitted three bids for this funding, two of which were in West Kent. One on the M20 at Junction 4 and the other at North Farm, adjacent to the A21 on the outskirts of Tunbridge Wells. The North Farm bid has been fast-tracked and has been successful. It includes dualling of Longfield Road and roundabouts at either end. It is programmed to be completed by March 2015 and importantly coordinates timings with the pending A21 improvements to maximise benefits, subject to the A21 funding being confirmed.

1.4.3 We are still waiting to hear whether the bid for M20 at Junction 4 is successful.

1.5 Junction 5 Slips

1.5.1 The M26, the M25 and the A21 converge at Junction 5 of the M25. This junction does not have full connectivity in all directions and would significantly benefit from the construction of east facing slip roads which would reduce traffic volume and allow for some relief for those who live and travel along the A25 corridor through Borough Green, Ightham and Seal.

1.5.2 There are also likely to be significant commercial and Air Quality benefits following any re-routing of local and long distance HGV and other traffic away from the rural A and B network if full access is provided from and to the A21 and the M26.

1.5.3 This issue is of significant importance to several communities of the borough and further afield. A fully working junction 5 would also be a considerable benefit, locally and strategically, to economic development prospects.

1.6 Cycling Strategy

1.6.1 KCC have just commenced the public consultation on the draft Cycling Strategy for Tonbridge and Malling.

1.6.2 Details can be found at this link
www.kent.gov.uk/tonbridge&mallingscyclingstrategy

1.6.3 The consultation closes on 30 June. All comments already made by Members have been captured by the County officers and will be fully considered along with any new comments received.

1.7 Lower Thames Crossing

1.7.1 The Lower Thames Crossing is a planned new crossing designed to relieve the Dartford Crossing.

1.7.2 There are three options under consideration.

- Option A: At the site of the existing A282 Dartford – Thurrock crossing
- Option B: connecting the A2 with the A1089
- Option C: connecting the M2 with the A13 and the M25 between junctions 29 and 30

1.7.3 In addition the DfT has considered a variant to Option C which would additionally widen the A229 linking the M2 with the M20.

1.7.4 Clearly there will be many strategic issues raised for the Borough Council in respect of this major infrastructure proposal. We will need to understand how the scheme in the various options might affect transport and development pressures as well as economic prospects. Importantly, we will need to assess any impact on the borough and the communities on the A228 corridor and generally in the north part of the borough which may be particularly affected by Option C.

1.7.5 Subject to DfT officials obtaining the necessary internal consents for the consultation documents and arrangements, the consultation they are now working towards in respect of the above is:

- launch - 20 May
- briefing sessions - 20/21 May;
- public exhibitions - weeks commencing 10th June and 17th June; and
- end of consultation - 15 July.

1.8 Legal Implications

1.8.1 None

1.9 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.9.1 None directly for the Borough Council.

1.10 Risk Assessment

1.10.1 Not required.

1.11 Legal Implications

1.11.1 Nil

1.12 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.12.1 No direct considerations

1.13 Risk Assessment

1.13.1 Not applicable

Background papers:

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Nil

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