

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

10 June 2013

Joint Report of the Director of Highways and Transportation and the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters For Information

1 TONBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE TRANSPORT STRATEGY – UPDATE

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.
- 1.1.2 At the last meeting of the Board, Members requested an update on each of the objectives and this is provided below.

1.2 Progress to Date

- 1.2.1 Since the Board's last meeting in March, further positive progress has been made on the revised Transport Strategy. This culminated in a useful meeting with local Members last month, at which Kent County Council (KCC)'s initial concept designs for the proposed improvements to the High Street area were presented and discussed. These are replicated at **[Annex 1]**.
- 1.2.2 The concept designs were prepared following a comprehensive audit of the High Street by KCC and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) officers earlier this year. The measures proposed seek to contribute to the Transport Strategy's overarching objectives by improving air quality, reducing interruptions to the flow of vehicular traffic and enhancing pedestrian movement.
- 1.2.3 The scheme options include:-
- Footway widening, to provide a safer and more pleasant pedestrian environment, create spaces for street furniture and public art and opportunities for activities and events.
 - The provision of appropriately located, part-time loading bays at footway level, to reduce disruption to through traffic without hindering pedestrian movement.

- The rationalisation of bus stops and controlled pedestrian crossing facilities, to smooth the flow of vehicular traffic in areas of poor air quality and better cater for pedestrian desire lines, with a view to the forthcoming redevelopment of the Botany area.
- The installation of footway surfacing across the side road bellmouth junctions, to further ease pedestrian movement on the High Street and raise driver awareness of their presence.

1.2.4 Table 1 (below) provides an update on each of the objectives for the revised Town Centre Transport Strategy, as requested by Members at the last meeting of the Board:

Table 1: Update on Objectives for Revised Transport Strategy

OBJECTIVE	UPDATE
Improve air quality in the High Street and Quarry Hill Road.	Proposed rationalisation of bus stops and controlled pedestrian crossing facilities would smooth the flow of vehicular traffic in areas of poor air quality (e.g. the lower High Street)
Ensure that longer distance/through traffic is directed to the most appropriate routes, avoiding the High Street.	TMBC officers have commenced a review of all directional signing along the approaches into and around Tonbridge. Any deficiencies identified or potential improvements will be captured and brought forward to the Board for approval.
Reduce interruptions to the flow of vehicular traffic passing through the town centre.	<p>KCC's Intelligent Transport Systems Team is shortly to undertake 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).</p> <p>Proposed rationalisation of bus stops and controlled pedestrian crossing facilities would smooth the flow of vehicular traffic in areas of poor air quality (e.g. the lower High Street)</p> <p>Proposed footway widening and carriageway narrowing would reduce opportunities to perform right-turning movements from the High Street into</p>

	<p>Medway Wharf Road.</p> <p>Later this year TMBC officers will consult traders and other relevant bodies in preparation for producing a Servicing Strategy for the High Street – specifically between the Big Bridge and Vale Road, over which length opportunities for rear access appear to exist.</p>
Improve the flow of pedestrian movement and general ease for people at various locations in the town centre	Proposed footway widening, relocation of pedestrian crossing facilities to principal desire lines and installation of footway surfacing across side road bellmouth junctions would ease pedestrian movement throughout the High Street.
Improve the performance of the High Street/Vale Road/Avebury Avenue/Barden Road junction.	Proposed alterations to roundabout geometry and rationalisation of bus stops would assist in smoothing the flow of vehicular traffic at this junction.
Reduce peak period queuing at the Hadlow Road, Bordyke and Cannon Lane junction.	KCC 'health check' of key signalised junctions within Tonbridge Town Centre (see above).
Improve the performance of the Vale Road/Vale Rise junction.	Currently related to the potential redevelopment of adjoining land, for which KCC and TMBC officers will identify appropriate mitigation as necessary.
Relieve the High Street north of the river.	<p>KCC 'health check' of key signalised junctions within Tonbridge Town Centre (see above).</p> <p>KCC and TMBC will continue to negotiate for the development-related delivery of the Lansdowne Road Link.</p>
Improve the efficiency of vehicle, cycle, pedestrian and public transport interaction in the vicinity of Tonbridge Station and Quarry Hill Parade.	<p>Proposed narrowing of Waterloo Road junction bellmouth to aid heavy pedestrian movements between Tonbridge Station, schools and college.</p> <p>Longer-term aspiration to remodel station frontage, in partnership with Network Rail, when appropriate funding streams become available.</p>
Achieve the optimum layout of the Five Ways	KCC 'health check' of key signalised junctions within Tonbridge Town Centre (see above).

<p>junction (Shipbourne Road/London Road) to reduce queuing at peak times and ensure that school-related pedestrian and cycle traffic is not compromised in terms of safety and flow.</p>	
<p>Consider the impact on town centre traffic of A227, B245, A26 and A2014 junctions beyond the main town centre strategy area.</p>	<p>The review of signing will assist in informing the impact at these junctions.</p>

- 1.2.5 In addition to these initiatives, Members are also advised that the public consultation on the draft Tonbridge and Malling Borough Cycling Strategy commenced on 20th May and will continue until 30th June. The proposals contained within the Cycling Strategy will complement the Tonbridge High Street improvements and it is anticipated that the final strategy will be presented to this Board in September.

1.3 Next Steps

- 1.3.1 Subject to the views of Board Members, it is proposed that an outline design and costing exercise be undertaken for each element of the High Street improvements. This will enable Members to take a view on which schemes to prioritise with the funds currently available. It is anticipated that a public consultation exercise on those schemes which are ready could then take place later this year.
- 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 of the Botany area are adequately assessed, that the development contributes positively to the Town Centre Transport Strategy and that pedestrian movement between the elements of the proposed new development, the new Bradford Street Community and Leisure Centre and the High Street, are carefully planned.

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:

Nil

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