

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

23 September 2013

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 AND MALLING CYCLING STRATEGY CONSULTATION

Summary: This report updates Members on the results of the recent public consultation exercise concerning the draft Tonbridge and Malling Cycling Strategy.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Tonbridge and Malling Cycling Strategy has been prepared by officers from Kent County Council (KCC), working in partnership with colleagues from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC), the sustainable transport charity Sustrans and local cyclists. At the last meeting of the Joint Transportation Board, Members endorsed the draft Cycling Strategy for consultation purposes and the public consultation exercise was subsequently held between 20th May and 30th June 2013. The consultation draft of the strategy is replicated in full at **Annex 1**.
- 1.1.2 The consultation was coordinated by KCC's Corporate Communications Team and informed by an Equality Impact Assessment (attached at **Annex 2**). Email notification of the consultation was issued to local cycling groups, disability forums, tourist attractions and older people's groups. Posters were also sent to local cycling shops, KCC libraries and Sure Start centres. KCC's Community Engagement Officer promoted the consultation at meetings of the Tonbridge Forum, Parish Partnership Panel, Seniors Forum and Youth Forum, and messages were posted on the KCC and Explore Kent Twitter accounts. KCC's Cycling Officer also attended TMBC's Community Bike Event at Kings Hill on 18th June to promote the strategy.

1.2 Consultation responses

- 1.2.1 A total of 66 consultation responses were received from throughout the borough and neighbouring areas, including five on behalf of organisations including the Tonbridge Civic Society, The Judd School and Snodland Town Council. The largest number of responses (18%) was received from individuals in the 40-49

age group, followed by those in the 30-39 (17%), 50-59 and 60+ (10% each), and 16-19 and 20-29 (1% each) categories.

- 1.2.2 Some 87% of respondents indicated that the existing cycling network within the borough was inadequate and, when asked to elaborate, reported that a lack of safe and continuous routes was their key concern. Existing cycle parking provision was also considered to be insufficient by 62% of consultees; the greatest proportions of whom indicated a preference for increased provision in Tonbridge Town Centre and/or the railway station.
- 1.2.3 Overall, 86% of respondents felt that the aims of the strategy were clearly laid out and 89% indicated that they were broadly in favour of the proposed action plan. However, a small number of individuals suggested that the maps contained within the strategy were insufficiently detailed and that the aims of the document were vague.
- 1.2.4 Consultees were also asked to rank the proposals included in the action plan in priority order. Of the 33 schemes put forward, the creation of a link between South Tonbridge and the town centre was the most popular amongst respondents, followed by routes between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells, through the Portman Park area of Tonbridge to link the town centre with the Cage Green and Higham Wood residential areas, and between Tonbridge and Sevenoaks.
- 1.2.5 Many respondents suggested additional schemes for inclusion in the final strategy. It has been possible to group these into four main themes:-
- Links to Schools – including K College, The Hayesbrook School and The Judd School in Tonbridge;
 - Tonbridge to Pembury – by way of the proposed non-motorised user route included as part of the Highways Agency's A21 Tonbridge to Pembury dualling scheme;
 - Tonbridge High Street – providing a safe route through the heart of the town and to the railway station;
 - Hildenborough – including a new route and related road safety improvements between the village centre and the railway station and improvements to the existing route on the B245 London Road.
- 1.2.6 In addition to the above themes, individual route suggestions included new links between Kings Hill and Watlingbury, East Malling and West Malling, and Tonbridge and Hadlow. Respondents also noted that there were a lack of proposals for the Borough Green, Wrotham and Ightham areas and requested that the suggested routes in Snodland be reviewed.

1.3 Next Steps

- 1.3.1 The responses received to the consultation provide a valuable basis on which to review the draft Cycling Strategy and to prepare a revised and final version of the document for consideration by Members at the December meeting of this Board. Whilst it is heartening that the majority of respondents support the aims and objectives of the strategy, officers will nevertheless seek to address as many of the comments and concerns raised by consultees as possible and will ensure that the final strategy compliments related projects, including the emerging Tonbridge Town Centre Transport Strategy and the A21 Tonbridge to Pembury dualling scheme.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 None.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 None at this stage.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 Not required.

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 Attached at **Annex 2**.

Background papers:

Nil

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