

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

24 October 2005

Report of the Director of Planning & Transportation

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 WEST MALLING STATION – UPDATE

Summary

Following the adoption of the Planning Brief a planning application for the revised link road and additional parking has been approved. Work on the link road is progressing as part of the bypass scheme. The timing of the delivery of the car park is in the hands of the developers but it is accepted that there would be considerable advantage in its concurrent construction with the bypass. Work on improvements to the forecourt and opening up the northern access is progressing but is subject to the co-operation of Network Rail.

1.1 South Side

1.1.1 Following a period of public consultation, the revised Planning Brief for West Malling Station was approved by the Council in April 2005. This includes:

- The conversion of the previously proposed bus-only access from the bypass to an all-vehicle access but with a bus-gate through to Station Approach, to avoid the potential for rat-running.
- Significant improvements to the bus waiting and turning facilities in the forecourt to the station
- A proposal for a new commuter car park on land contained by the link road.

1.1.2 Since that time, work has commenced on the widening of the bypass which includes the construction of the station link road now to be built in accordance with the Planning Brief. In August the Council granted planning permission for the revised link road and a car park for 281 cars subject to the prior submission of details of the landscape bund and access to the soakaways and to a number of conditions including submission of details of the car park layout, traffic management measures, lighting and CCTV. Details of the bund were subsequently submitted and the planning permission was issued on 7 September. Work on the link road is now well under way. Indeed preliminary earthworks had

already commenced under the terms of the original permission for the road and bypass.

1.1.3 The permission for the car park and link road was accompanied by the following informatives:

- 1) The Council considers that there would be considerable benefits to the local transport system if the operation of this facility were to be brought on line simultaneously with the completion of the dualling works to the bypass.
- 2) The applicant is encouraged to ensure that the parking and related infrastructure provision is tailored to meet the established local need.
- 3) The applicant is encouraged to look at creating a “transport hub” at West Malling Station where a co-ordinated approach can be applied to public transport services.

1.1.4 To date no reply has been received from the applicant. However, it must be recognised that the applicant, who is the current land owner, is Liberty Property Trust UK Ltd (formerly Rouse Kent Ltd). The road link is not being implemented by the applicant, but by the Highway Authority. It is also unlikely that the applicant will be the actual developer of the car park. The details of the car park layout and its means of operation will be a matter for the operator of the car to finalise and submit for approval in due course. It follows that there can be no guarantee that the car park will come into operation simultaneously with the completion of the bypass. However, the objective is to see if it is possible for at least the earthworks for the car park to be carried out concurrently with the earthworks for the road link and negotiations between the various parties involved are currently underway to this effect, but again the result cannot be guaranteed at this stage.

1.1.5 The Planning Brief also included provision for improvements to the station forecourt and bus waiting and turning area. Network Rail has indicated that it has no funds to implement such a scheme, and indeed has indicated its reluctance to accept such a scheme unless the Borough or County Council bears the whole cost of the scheme as well as the cost of replacing the displaced parking places. This year’s Local Transport Plan draft bid from KCC includes provision for expenditure on the station forecourt improvements which hopefully, subject to Network Rail’s full co-operation, will be able to be implemented at the end of next year, perhaps as an extension to the bypass contract. Subject to confirmation of funding, the detailed design will be progressed by KCC with a view to replacing the displaced spaces on land at the Station within Network Rail’s control.

1.1.6 I do have a concern that due to the very nature of this project and the involvement of the various parties that overall project management has proven to be a challenge. I have raised this again with the County Council who probably have the greatest direct interest in the overall project by virtue of the bypass project and the LTP dimension and I am hopeful that a more focussed approach will result.

1.2 North Side

- 1.2.1 To the north of the station, the Borough Council is advancing a proposal to open up the northern access from Lucks Hill so that it is available for both 'kiss and ride' and pedestrians, in conformity with current standards for disabled access.
- 1.2.2 Liaison with Network Rail resulted in consent to enter onto their land holding to undertake a detailed land survey. That survey is currently being used to produce detailed design drawings for the scheme. The completed designs will be submitted to Network Rail as part of their 'Station Change' process prior to commencement of construction.

Background papers:

Nil

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