

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

22 May 2006

**Joint Report of the Director of Planning & Transportation
and the Cabinet Member for Planning & Transportation**

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 WEST MALLING STATION – PROGRESS ON MASTER-PLAN

Summary

In recent days there has been some progress by the County Council in securing agreement to connecting the new link road into Station Approach. In parallel, the focus continues in achieving station forecourt improvements and additional parking accessed off the new link road.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Last year the Council adopted a master-plan to provide a context for potential development at West Malling station and to help coordinate proposals as they come forward. There are three distinct but associated initiatives that make up the package:

- a new all vehicle link road between the West Malling bypass and Station Approach Road,
- a remodelled station forecourt area to provide a better interchange for the increased numbers and perhaps size of buses that will be dropping off and picking up passengers at the station,
- additional commuter car park accessed from the new link road.

1.1.2 The Borough Council is not in direct control of the implementation of any elements of the plan but is using its influence to lobby and bring together a number of other parties, the County Council, Network Rail, Liberty Property (formerly Rouse Kent), and the land owner, to coordinate their programmes and efforts with the aim of each of them carrying out their own element of the plan.

1.2 The Link Road

1.2.1 From a recent briefing we have been informed that the contractor will be starting work on the link road earthworks by the middle of May and carrying the work through to completing the surfacing by late July.

- 1.2.2 A crucial part of this work is how it will connect to Station Approach Road, which is owned by Network Rail. At the time of writing, we are aware that an 'in principle' agreement has been struck between the County Council and Network Rail to make this connection, subject to detailed work on the legal licence. This now clears the way for a link road connection, which will enable full bus access and a car drop-off and pick-up area with pedestrian access to the forecourt, in line with that drafted in the adopted master-plan.

1.3 Station Forecourt

- 1.3.1 In an ideal world, work on the station forecourt would have proceeded in tandem with the link road construction. However, remodelling the forecourt to create a proper bus interchange will require additional land. Resolving this and securing the essential agreement of Network Rail is likely to take some time so it is not practical to carry out forecourt work at the same time as the link road.
- 1.3.2 At its last meeting, the Board minuted its concerns that all the parts of the master-plan should be achieved as soon as possible including this work on improving the forecourt. With that in mind and as soon as the immediate task of securing the connection for the link road onto Station Approach Road is resolved we will press once again for a focus on the priority of the forecourt improvements. This will be in line with the likely funding arrangements that include developer contributions and funding from the Local Transport Plan for Kent in 2007/08.

1.4 Additional Car Parking at the Link Road

- 1.4.1 The final element in the master-plan is the construction of a new car park accessed directly off the new link road. This will be a private developer initiative and discussions have been taking place between the current and previous land owner aimed at achieving this. We understand that the legal encumbrances on the land make the agreements needed to bring this forward complex but the situation is helped by the fact that both parties are willing and keen to see this succeed. We are therefore optimistic that the current discussions will yield an agreement that will result in the new car park being built in a reasonable timescale. We will provide an oral update at the meeting.

1.5 Northern Access to the Station

- 1.5.1 In the meantime, the proposal to create a new access to the northern side of the station is proceeding with the design work being carried out directly by the Borough Council. Funding for this will come from an existing allocation in the Capital Plan together with contributions from the Local Transport Plan for Kent and neighbouring Parishes. Confirmation of Technical Approval for the junction connection to Lucks Hill is expected shortly from the highway authority. The necessary details and proposals for the civil engineering works on railway land were submitted many weeks ago for Network Rail's approval. There is no way of knowing when that might be received but we are preparing to proceed with the scheme just as soon as it arrives.

1.6 Legal Implications

1.6.1 Not applicable

1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.7.1 No direct financial consequences for the Borough Council.

1.8 Risk Assessment

1.8.1 Not applicable.

Background papers:

contact: Mike McCulloch

Nil

ref: T2/33

Steve Humphrey
Director of Planning & Transportation

Matthew Balfour
Cabinet Member for Planning & Transportation