

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

22 May 2006

Report of the Director of Planning & Transportation

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 RESPONSES TO CONSULTATIONS

1.1 Consultations Received

1.1.1 Since the last meeting, the Council has been invited to comment on two consultations. From the Department for Transport there is a document entitled "Consultation on Proposals for the Mayor of London's Powers beyond the London Boundary".

1.1.2 The second relates to options for the important traffic management proposals in the vicinity of Castle Way, Leybourne after the new bypass is completed.

1.2 DfT Consultation on the Mayor of London's Powers

1.2.1 The closing date for reply to this consultation is 31 May so I have held back from responding pending this meeting so that I can add any additional comments that members might wish to include.

1.2.2 I have placed a copy of the document for reference in the members' library. It is also available on the DfT website at the following address:
http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_railways/documents/divisionhomepage/611309.hcsp.

1.2.3 From the following commentary Members will see that I am proposing to provide a simple and straightforward reply that emphasises that the Council would be deeply concerned and dissatisfied with proposals in the consultation document that would risk prejudicing the rail service and ticket prices for rail passengers who live in this Borough.

1.2.4 Suitably "topped and tailed" I propose that the reply will include the following comments. This Council views with some considerable concern any move to confer powers on the Mayor of London over train services and fares on the network outside the boundaries of London. It acknowledges the wish for integrated and efficient rail services that is driving such a proposal but believes extending the Mayors powers in this way would have an opposite effect on the service received by residents of this Borough who rely on the train for access to

employment in the capital. It is self-evident that changes designed to enhance services for passengers within London risk making the service worse for those from destinations outside the boundary. Take, for example, the proposal to increase the stopping pattern of services. This would automatically create a worse service for Kent commuters, with substantial added journey time, particularly so when peak-hour trains are already over-capacity when they reach the London boundary. To make matters worse, there is the additional proposal to give power to influence the cost of fares. The consultation recognises the democratic deficit that such a proposal embodies but it does not really address this. Governance arrangements and talk of “checks and balances” do nothing to resolve the fact that the proposal flies in the face of natural justice. Under these proposals, as I understand them, the Mayor would be able to set fares in a way that yielded surplus revenues to fund transportation improvements within London. In effect this would be a surtax on the fares paid by Kent commuters who would enjoy no direct transport benefit nor have any recourse to register their approval or otherwise of the level of fares set. The consultation is light on detail but there is sufficient substance in the broad principles of the proposals to permit a clear view by this Council that they are flawed and risk creating a worse and more expensive train service for residents of this Borough. For that reason, you can consider that this Council objects to the proposal to extend the Mayor of London’s powers to train services outside the London boundary.

1.3 Traffic Management in Castle Way, Leybourne

1.3.1 Kent County Council is assessing the results of its recent consultation on options for traffic management in Castle Way and Park Road, Leybourne, after the new bypass has been completed. I have sent an officer level reply addressing broad principles and this is attached as **Annex 1**. My comments are at a general level at this stage because as yet there has been no feedback on the results of the public consultation exercise, which is an essential element in informing a view on what is the best way forward.

1.3.2 I have also indicated to the County Council that this matter is one of intense local interest and, under the terms of the agreement underpinning the Joint Transportation Board, it should be reported to the Board for endorsement. At the time of writing I do not have any confirmation of when that might be but members of this Board might wish to take this opportunity of providing the Borough members of the Joint Transportation Board with some guidance to help them when they consider this matter.

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 Not applicable.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 Not applicable.

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 Not applicable.

Background papers:

Nil

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ref: T1 and T6

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