

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

22 May 2006

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

Part 1- Public

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken
by the Cabinet Member)**

1 MEDWAY VALLEY LINE – COMMUNITY RAIL PARTNERSHIP

Summary

The Board is invited to endorse the recommendation from the Public Transport Panel that the Borough Council should take part in the recently formed Medway Valley Line Community Rail Partnership

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 At the last meeting of the Public Transport Panel a representative of Action with Communities in Rural Kent gave a presentation on rural transport issues. One of the topics in this presentation related to the recently formed Medway Valley Line Community Rail Partnership, which at that stage did not include this Borough Council on the list of participating authorities.

1.1.2 The Panel minute indicates that the Members supported further involvement with Community Rail Partnerships, while observing that the rail operator and Network Rail would have to cooperate if improvements were to be made. The Panel expected that the Borough Council and Parish Councils would make arrangements to be represented on Partnership steering groups in their areas.

1.2 Participation in the Partnership

1.2.1 After the meeting we wrote to the coordinator of the partnership indicating the wish of the Public Transport Panel to play a role in the Medway Valley Line Community Rail Partnership but, in order to provide an overall endorsement, we said we would take before the next meeting of the Council's Planning and Transportation Advisory Board. This report therefore provides the opportunity for this Board to lend its support to the minuted position of the Public Transport Panel.

1.2.2 It is not clear yet the level and nature of this involvement but we have requested appropriate Member or officer level invitations to take part in any working groups or events that are planned.

- 1.2.3 In parallel with the presentation to the Public Transport Panel, Action with Communities in Rural Kent has written to the Borough Council requesting help towards the revenue costs of its work over the next three years. It is seeking significant financial support from the new train operating company, South Eastern Trains and is seeking to supplement this with contributions from SEEDA, Kent County Council, Medway Council and district councils. The funding would go in part to support the work of partnership officers to provide expertise and liaison with funders and local communities.
- 1.2.4 The scale of the funding sought is £2,000 a year towards the Community Rail Partnership and a similar sum for the Rural Transport Partnership. Both contributions are sought for the next three years. The Public Transport Panel was impressed by the range of initiatives being tackled by Action for Communities in Rural Kent and the Panel certainly considered that much of the work was directly relevant to transport issues in this Borough. The Community Rail Partnership for the Medway Valley Line, as already mentioned, was one that particularly interested the Panel. Agreeing to contribute to both the Community Rail Partnership and to the Rural Transport Partnership would be a good way of demonstrating concrete support for their work and provide a cost effective way of obtaining progress on transport and accessibility issues in the Borough. It would also justify regular reports back to the Public Transport Panel from the partnership officers that the Borough would be funding, in that way keeping these important matters to the forefront of the Panel's business. Consequently, we are happy to recommend that the Borough confirms its funding support to Action for Communities in Rural Kent.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 The partnership is an informal association of bodies with a common interest in achieving improvements to the Medway Valley Line and not a legal entity in its own right. Therefore there are no direct legal implications arising from participating in the partnership.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 The contributions requested could be funded from the existing Community Partnerships Initiatives allocation in the Capital Plan, subject to the budget being confirmed in future years.
- 1.4.2 There may be other financial implications arising in due course once programmes of improvement and enhancement work have been identified by the partnership officers. The content of that work and associated financial contributions will be reported once the information is available.

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 Not applicable.

1.6 Recommendations

- 1.6.1 That the Public Transport Panel's recommendation to participate in the Medway Valley Line Community Rail Partnership **BE SUPPORTED**.
- 1.6.2 That fund of £4,000 a year for each of the next three years **BE CONFIRMED** from the allocation for Community Partnerships Initiatives as the Borough's contribution towards the Community Rail Partnership and the Rural Transport Partnership.

The Director of Planning and Transportation confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

contact: Mike McCulloch
ref: T8/1

Nil

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