

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

23 October 2006

Report of the Director of Planning & Transportation

Part 1- Public

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

1 CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS TO ENHANCE FACILITIES FOR DISABLED PASSENGERS AT STATIONS

Summary

Southeastern Railways has recently written to a number of bodies including Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council seeking views on proposed improvements to enhance facilities for disabled passengers.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Southeastern Railways has recently written to a number of bodies, including the Borough Council, seeking views on proposed enhancements to facilities for disabled passengers. A copy of the letter and attachments is contained in **Annex 1 and 2** and it requests a response by 10 November.
- 1.1.2 The consultation prompts an answer on four questions most of which really require holding responses because of the nature of the information sought. The first question asks for views on whether 80 metre long ramps are appropriate. The answer to this must be, if that is what the railway industry must do to achieve a disability discrimination free environment, then that is what it will have to do.
- 1.1.3 The other three questions seek detailed comments on locations of Help Points and other minor works. Such detailed operational matters are really best fielded by those who will be using these proposed facilities and I suggest that the Council's response should recommend that Southeastern Railways briefs local disability groups on what is proposed at each station and seeks their comments, as potential users of the facilities on how these should be best installed.
- 1.1.4 Additionally, further ideas and suggestions for other minor works would best come from disability groups who will have an intimate knowledge and experience of what current deficiencies are and how best these might be addressed and resolved.
- 1.1.5 With that in mind, I recommend that I draft a response in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation by the due date indicating the

Council's support for the enhancements for disabled passengers but suggesting that further detail on how best the proposals should be implemented should come from consultation on the detail with disability groups. The matter can then be discussed with the Disability Working Party when it next meets and also with other local disability access groups. In the meantime, if Members have specific suggestions that they wish to see included, they should pass these to me before 10 November.

- 1.1.6 The response should refer in specific terms to the northern access to West Malling Station. The annex demonstrates that this has already been factored into Southeastern Railways plans. However, this is not yet a done deal with Network Rail notwithstanding a recent helpful officer-level meeting when a degree of consensus was achieved on the way forward. The response to this consultation presents an opportunity to reiterate the benefits of the proposed scheme and to mobilise the train operating company's help in trying to achieve a successful outcome.

1.2 Legal Implications

- 1.2.1 None directly for the Borough Council but it is welcome to see that the railway industry is addressing its legal obligations to deal with all of its passengers on equal terms.

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.3.1 None directly on the Borough Council save for the improvements mentioned at the northern access to West Malling Station where the Borough will be contributing to the scheme costs.

1.4 Risk Assessment

- 1.4.1 Not applicable.

1.5 Recommendations

- 1.5.1 That, subject to any additional comments from the Board, a consultation response as outlined **BE SUBMITTED** to the train operating company

The Director of Planning & 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

Nil

Steve Humphrey
Director of Planning & Transportation