

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

14 June 2007

Report of the Director of Planning, Transport & Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision

1 TONBRIDGE CENTRAL AREA – DRAFT BOTANY AREA PLANNING BRIEF

Summary

This report introduces a draft of the Planning Brief for the Botany Area of Tonbridge Town Centre. It seeks to bring forward in more detail the planning considerations to be taken into account in respect of this major development opportunity that has been identified through the emerging Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan as part of the Council's work on the Local Development Framework.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Members will recall that following extensive local public consultation and various stages of consideration, the Council approved and submitted to the Secretary of State the Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan. This document forms part of our suite of documents that form the Local Development Framework (LDF) and is due to be considered at a Public Examination in the autumn.

1.2 The Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan

1.2.1 The Action Area Plan allocates various development sites within the town centre and perhaps the most significant of these is covered by the Draft Planning Brief which accompanies these papers. In respect of this site the Area Action Plan sets out the general opportunity for a mixed use development scheme including retail, business/commercial, community, cultural, leisure, hotel and residential use. The extent and scale of uses that practically come forward for the site will depend to a large degree on market considerations. However, it is important for the Council as planning authority to set out the planning parameters for the area within which development proposals can be considered.

1.3 The Purpose of the Draft Planning Brief

1.3.1 The draft Planning Brief clearly sets out the important matters that development on this site must address through the detailed preparation and submission of a planning application. It also sets out the various requirements that the Council as planning authority will expect to see in order that the Council can be well placed to

make an assessment of proposals in terms of the physical impact of the development but also how the site will function in relation to other key focuses of the town centre such as the High Street and in particular the transport network.

- 1.3.2 The Planning Brief also recognises some very challenging phasing considerations linked to the development of the site. For example, there will be a requirement to re-provide and enhance community and leisure facilities currently on the site and take the same approach to food retail provision. It is also clear that the management and subsequent re-provision of car parking will be a particularly important aspect to get right in the detail. The Planning Brief makes it clear what the overall expectation is on these and other important matters.
- 1.3.3 It is important that as planning authority the Council takes the initiative to promote imaginative development for the overall benefit of the town centre on important sites such as this. Equally, it is also important to point out the constraints such as making provision for flood risk alleviation. It is important however at this stage not to be too prescriptive about the mix of the development to enable some flexibility in approach and market assessment.
- 1.3.4 Consultation via the LDF process has been very helpful in establishing a positive approach to planning and development in the town centre in recent times. It is now intended that the Botany Area Planning Brief will be the subject of a further round of targeted consultation particularly involving those parties who have taken part in previous consultation exercises on the LDF. It is envisaged that this will take place in order to enable the Board to reconsider the draft brief in the light of consultation responses at its meeting in October when it can be recommended for adoption for development control purposes.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 The draft development brief is in general accordance with the current Local Plan and the emerging LDF.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 There are none directly arising from the preparation of the Planning Brief. Work towards the brief has been funded in part by the Planning Delivery Grant and the costs of consultation will be met from existing budgets.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 The purpose of the planning brief is to set a clear framework to guide and influence the development of this site.

1.7 Recommendation

- 1.7.1 Cabinet **BE REQUESTED** to approve the draft Botany Area Planning Brief for the purposes of targeted consultation with a view to its ultimate adoption for development control purposes.

Background papers:

Nil

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