

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**28 July 2010**

**Joint Report of Director of Health and Housing and Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure**

**Part 1- Public**

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

**1 WEST KENT LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN**

**Summary**

**This report is an item of urgent late business seeking Member endorsement of projects to be submitted to the Homes and Communities Agency to be viewed as priority schemes for funding during the period 2011 to 2014 and possibly beyond. The Homes and Communities Agency has only just recently announced that it requires updated details of such schemes now to inform the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 Over recent months the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has been preparing to work with district councils on identifying "housing and place making" funding priorities in West Kent. The original timetable was to have an agreed set of shared objectives and funding priorities in place by the end of March 2011. For that purpose the HCA included Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and Maidstone as a West Kent grouping within a process known as the "Single Conversation". Over recent weeks it has become apparent that the HCA is now working to a much shorter timetable and has asked local authorities to submit their proposals by August 2010 to inform the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review. We have taken the opportunity to report to Members of this Board outlining how we propose responding to this timetable.

**1.2 The Local Investment Plan**

1.2.1 Initial work has focused on identifying shared objectives which are broadly intended to mirror the new consolidated funding streams overseen by the HCA. The draft shared objectives are summarised in **[Annex 1]**. The four funding streams, against which our priority bids for funding are to be aligned, cover affordable housing schemes, regeneration/tackling deprivation, infrastructure and estates renewal. Your officers have been asked to engage with local (housing associations and other) partners to identify schemes likely to come forward for

funding during the three years of the Plan and to identify which of these have planning permission and are deliverable and will meet local housing need. A list of such schemes has been identified and is summarised in **[Annex 2]**. I hope Members will be familiar with the schemes so listed. The HCA is at pains to stress that it is possible for other schemes to be considered for funding over the three years of the Plan. At this stage it is not certain that these schemes will be funded. Market conditions will play a major part in when they do actually come forward to be developed. At this stage it is about ensuring they are identified to be prioritised for future funding.

1.2.2 Other housing related schemes and projects which have been identified as priorities for future funding are:

- private sector renewal programmes (financial assistance to home owners to help improve their properties);
- disabled facilities grants; and
- funding for the replacement Coldharbour Gypsy and Traveller site.

1.2.3 The above are clearly priority programmes and projects for this borough, especially since funding for private sector renewal (under the terms of the North and West Kent Private Sector Renewal Partnership) comes to an end this financial year. Without new funding becoming available to the Council, our programme funding will fall from £781k in 2010/11 to £100k in 2011/12 onwards.

1.2.4 Under the shared objective of improving the West Kent Economy and addressing skills and employment we propose:

- delivery of the economic regeneration actions set out in the West Kent Investment Strategy 2010-15 costed action plan (£543k)

1.2.5 In addition to the above, we believe Members would wish to see other aspirations supported through the Local Improvement Plan, albeit probably beyond the initial three year period:

- regeneration of Tonbridge Town Centre and associated infrastructure as reflected in the Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan;
- estates renewal investment funding to aid regeneration projects within the existing social housing stock

1.2.6 Although not strictly within the remit of the Local Investment Plan it is also our intention to take every opportunity to press the case for important transportation improvement investment schemes as part of a rounded package of much needed investment in the borough. Such schemes include:

- Vale Road/Vale Rise junction improvement;

- Medway Valley Public Transport Strategy initiatives, including West Malling Station Forecourt Remodelling and A20 Public Transport Enhancements/bus priority;
- M20 Junction 4 Eastern Over-bridge widening scheme; and
- Medway Bridge between Holborough and Wouldham associated with the Peters Pit development;

Railway service improvements:

- Maidstone East line to access City stations – London Bridge, Cannon Street, Charing Cross;
- HS1 Services on the Medway Valley Line;
- additional through the day Thameslink Services from Maidstone East;
- reinstatement of the direct Gatwick services from Tunbridge Wells through Tonbridge;
- preservation of Cannon Street services on the West Kent line; and
- actions to deal with train overcrowding;

Improvements to the Strategic and Primary Highway Network:

- A21 Tonbridge to Pembury Dualling scheme;
- A228 Colts Hill Bypass;
- A25 Borough Green and Platt Bypass; and
- A228 Snodland Dualling scheme.

1.2.7 Members are asked to consider whether the above suggested priority programmes and schemes accord with Members' own priorities and to identify if other known priorities should be added to the list.

1.2.8 At this stage, it is not clear what will emerge as the final priorities for funding to be included in the Local Investment Plan. Neither will it be known until after the Comprehensive Spending Review which programmes and schemes will ultimately be funded. The key requirement at this stage is to ensure we are identifying the priorities for this borough as viewed by Members.

### **1.3 Legal Implications**

1.3.1 None arising in this report.

## **1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.4.1 The Council needs to respond swiftly to ensure known priorities for investment in Tonbridge and Malling are identified and fed into the local Investment Plan to safeguard the future funding and delivery of future housing and regeneration schemes and programmes.

## **1.5 Risk Assessment**

- 1.5.1 As explained in this report.

## **1.6 Policy Considerations**

- 1.6.1 Community; Biodiversity and Sustainability.

## **1.7 Recommendations**

- 1.7.1 Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED to ENDORSE:**
- 1.7.2 the shared objectives outlined in the West Kent Local Investment Plan – Draft Working Paper 3 in **Annex 1**;
- 1.7.3 the suggested priority affordable housing schemes identified for funding through the West Kent Local Investment Plan summarised in **Annex 2**;
- 1.7.4 the other priorities for investment within the West Kent Local Investment Plan outlined in paragraphs 1.2.2 to 1.2.6; and
- 1.7.5 other priorities for investment identified by Members at the Meeting of the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board.

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

Background papers:

contact: John Batty

Nil

John Batty  
Director of Health and Housing

Steve Humphrey  
Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure