

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

17 November 2010

Report of the Director of Planning Transport and Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 PLANNING AND TRANSPORT UPDATE

Summary

To very briefly draw Members attention to publication of a recent White Paper and the current position on the A21 following the Spending Review.

1.1 White Paper – Local Growth: Realising Every Place’s Potential

1.1.1 This White Paper was published at the end of October. It covers a wide range of proposed legislative and policy changes with a primary objective of fostering economic growth and increasing the confidence for investment. In doing so it proposes a new structure of Local Enterprise Partnerships. The White Paper also puts forward some local authority based financial incentives to support local growth. This includes a Local Government Resource Review and more about the proposed new Homes Bonus.

1.1.2 Most Members will have heard the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive provide a brief summary of the key aspects of the White Paper at the meeting of the Council on the 2 November. A full report on all the matters covered by the White Paper will be presented to a Special Cabinet meeting on the 30 November.

1.1.3 As far as local planning is concerned, the White Paper proposes a reform to the planning system including a streamlining and simplifying of procedures and timetables for local authorities to produce Local Development Plans. It also trails the creation of Neighbourhood Plans. There is little information as to the status of such plans or how they will be produced, but it is said that these will give local communities greater flexibility and the freedom to bring forward more development than set out in the Local Authority Plan. This seems to reflect proposals still in the making and no doubt further clarity will be brought to these changes in due course. A full report on the planning aspects of the White Paper will be included in the report to the Special Cabinet meeting on the 30 November.

1.2 A21 – Tonbridge to Pembury

1.2.1 As the Board will recall, the A21 dualling scheme at Castle Hill between Tonbridge and Pembury was caught by the major review of transport infrastructure spending

as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the Public Inquiry that was programmed for this year was deferred.

- 1.2.2 Recent announcements in the context of the spending review have placed this critical road improvement amongst a group of schemes where it is now envisaged that a start on site will not be made until post 2015. This is obviously disappointing news particularly bearing in mind the programmed opening of the new regional hospital at Pembury. Nevertheless, the scheme remains programmed which is not the case, for example, for the Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst part of the A21.
- 1.2.3 The A21 Reference Group which is a forum for local MPs, Council Leaders and Members concerned with the A21 corridor as a whole, has been instrumental in campaigning for priority to be given to the A21 improvements. It is not yet known when the intended Public Inquiry will now be held but that remains the key procedural issue to be addressed in ensuring the scheme can be implemented as soon as possible.

1.3 Legal Implications

- 1.3.1 None.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.4.1 None.

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 None.

1.6 Policy Considerations

- 1.6.1 Local Development Framework.

Background papers:

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Local growth: realising every place's potential
HM Government

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