

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

27 July 2011

Report of the Director of Planning, Transport & Leisure

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 CAPITAL PLAN SCHEMES

This is a progress report on several capital projects in progress which are being managed with Transport Services. The projects reviewed are Town Lock, Tonbridge, Avebury Avenue Replacement Footbridge, Leigh Road, Hildenborough – Flood Alleviation Scheme and the Improvement Programme for Existing Car Parks.

1.1 Town Lock, Tonbridge – Environmental Enhancements

- 1.1.1 The Town Lock project proposes a hard landscape facelift for this run down lock side area, opening up the space for public access and helping to make the most of the town's River Medway asset. This will include levelling and resurfacing with block paving to produce a high quality and attractive surface, trees between the riverside and Medway Wharf Road and contemporary lighting and seating. It will also provide for the Environment Agency, a new flood wall, boater facilities and a new river level monitoring system linked to the Leigh Barrier.
- 1.1.2 I reported in detail on Town Lock to this board in January 2009. In parallel, a List C assessment was being submitted as part of the 2008/9 Capital Plan Review and this resulted in the scheme being placed on List B, effectively in a holding pool until it was financially appropriate to progress to detailed design and construction.
- 1.1.3 Originally the Environment Agency (EA) had committed only £25,000 to the project but it was felt that in view of the extent of work to be undertaken on its behalf, the contribution should be more realistic. My discussions with the EA's Area Manager have now resulted in a contribution of £200,000 which has given a fresh impetus to the scheme. The remainder of the scheme funding would come from developer contributions and the Capital Plan.
- 1.1.4 This EA funding must however be either spent or handed over to the Council within this financial year. Additionally, the funding is unable to be released by the EA without a formal agreement with the Council, whereby we undertake to complete the project, using best endeavours, within a given time.

- 1.1.5 In order for the Council to enter into such an agreement and promote the scheme to list A of the Capital Plan, it is necessary to undertake a limited amount of further design work and to confirm the estimate of overall project cost at current prices. Accordingly Halcrow Group Limited, who are an EA framework consultant and have already carried out design work at Town Lock, have been engaged to undertake this work over the next couple of months.
- 1.1.6 Assuming that Halcrow's estimate shows that the scheme is financially viable, then members will be invited to approve the agreement with the Environment Agency and place the scheme onto List A for implementation in the next financial year, accompanied by some further promotion of the scheme locally.

1.2 Avebury Avenue Replacement Footbridge

- 1.2.1 This is a project to replace the footbridge which connects Avebury Avenue to the Racecourse Sportsground. The existing bridge, built in 1923, has reached the end of its operational life and is now suffering from corrosion in the steelwork and decay in the timber decking.
- 1.2.2 The scheme for the new bridge was reported to and approved by the Finance & Property Advisory Board at the 21 July 2010 meeting. The replacement bridge will have laminated timber structural members with a shallow arch in profile in contrast to the existing bridge's flat deck. This will be an aesthetic improvement and will also offer a small increase in the navigational clearance.
- 1.2.3 In conjunction with the replacement of the bridge itself, repair work will be carried out on both abutments to put right damage caused by settlement and trees.
- 1.2.4 The existing bridge supports two sewage pumping mains serving facilities on the sports ground and also several mains electrical cables which distribute power from a sub-station on the sports ground to the Avebury Avenue area of Tonbridge.
- 1.2.5 The pumping mains will be re-laid within the deck of the new bridge but the cables, owned by UK Power Networks, will be diverted beneath the bed of the river.
- 1.2.6 Naturally, no work can take place on the bridge demolition until the cables have been disconnected and the new cables made live. It is fair to say that UK Power Networks have not progressed the diversions as diligently as I would have wished and the cable relocation timetable has therefore dominated the programme for the replacement of the bridge.
- 1.2.7 I am hopeful though that the bridge works will be able to start in late September/early October and be completed within this calendar year.

1.3 Leigh Road, Hildenborough – Flood Alleviation Scheme

- 1.3.1 The purpose of this scheme is to alleviate flooding suffered by houses in Leigh Road and Stocks Green Road, Hildenborough caused by surface water runoff from the open land behind the houses. This is a long standing problem with correspondence going back to 1978 and so it is pleasing to be able to intervene and assist the residents.
- 1.3.2 The key to solving this problem came with the discovery of a 1932 plan which showed that when the Rural District Council built houses in Leigh Road, it had prudently also built a cut off ditch at the rear of the properties and connected it with a pipeline to the surface water drainage in Leigh Road. Investigation on site revealed the pipeline blocked with soil and roots but the ditch had presumably long since silted up and was completely lost.
- 1.3.3 The main aim of the scheme then, is to replicate this original drainage system and thereby intercept the worst of the runoff from the field. Other works are also included to improve drainage of a separate ditch draining to surface water drainage in Stocks Green Road.
- 1.3.4 When checks were made as to the adequacy of the surface water drains in the roads however, they were found to be in poor condition requiring either extensive repair or replacement. Liaison with Kent Highway Services (KHS), responsible for the drains, resulted in an informal partnership to co-ordinate and complete all the necessary works together.
- 1.3.5 The design and construction has been procured by KHS, with their consultant Jacobs designing and contractor Ringway constructing. The Council will then reimburse KHS the appropriate costs at the completion of construction.
- 1.3.6 The TMBC part of the joint scheme is estimated to cost £45,000. This cost would normally be met from the Capital Plan Drainage Improvement Programme, however the Council made a bid for funds from Defra and was awarded a £28,000 grant towards the work which means that the net draw on the Capital Plan will be reduced to circa £17,000.
- 1.3.7 As all of the Borough Council's works are in private land, agreement has been sought and received from all land owners and tenants. Work on site should be underway by the date of the meeting and is expected to be complete within three weeks. The KHS work in the highway will follow on once the new Kent Highways contractor is operational.

1.4 Improvement Programme for Existing Car Parks

- 1.4.1 I am pleased to report that we have resources now committed to recommence work on our capital investment programme for our existing car parks.

1.4.2 This is vital work to ensure that all our car parks remain open for use, are safe and secure for the public to use. It is also critical that the Council continues to invest in important service assets.

1.4.3 The first task will be to review needs and priorities and as soon as that is complete I will advise on which car parks will be targeted for improvement within the next phase of works.

1.5 Legal Implications

1.5.1 None arising from this report

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.6.1 These are Capital Plan funded schemes assisted by partnership funding or grant aid as detailed in the report

1.7 Risk Assessment

1.7.1 Not applicable

Background papers:

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Nil

Steve Humphrey

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