

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**16 May 2012**

**Report of the 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 FREIGHT ACTION PLAN FOR KENT**

**The Borough Council is being consulted on the recently developed Freight Action for Kent, which was reported to the Joint Transportation Board in March.**

**1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 Kent County Council's (KCC) Freight Action Plan (FAP) can be found in **Annex 1** and outlines the work that they are currently undertaking or plan to in the near future in order to mitigate the impact of freight on the county's residents, workers and visitors. The focus of the document is on road haulage as this has the greatest impact on Kent's residents as well as being the area KCC, as the highway authority, has the greatest influence over.

**1.2 Background**

1.2.1 The County Council is developing a plan to keep heavy lorries off the county's rural roads. For several years now residents in rural locations have been confronted with lorries taking inappropriate routes and occasionally blocking roads.

1.2.2 Clearly heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) cannot be completely eradicated on rural roads. People still need deliveries for white goods, furniture and other products and pubs and shops need their stock, but appropriate efforts have to be made to ensure that heavy vehicles that do not need to be on rural roads avoid them.

1.2.3 This FAP seeks to work with businesses to reduce the pressure on rural communities without damaging the county's economy.

1.2.4 In advance of a full public consultation KCC is consulting with business and strategic partners on proposals that include developing route maps electronically for business to use when planning their deliveries. They will also be working with the Freight Transport Association to ensure the impact of freight is minimised and

reviewing the roads signing strategy to ensure the most suitable routes are correctly identified.

- 1.2.5 KCC also works with district council's planning departments to seek conditions on developers that would minimise the impact on the local road network and nearby homes and businesses
- 1.2.6 The FAP has been specifically written to consider actions which KCC consider achievable, albeit some of it working with partner organisations.
- 1.2.7 The document focuses on 6 objectives under which a number of action points sit as detailed in the FAP. Some of these actions are already being undertaken, others are beginning to take shape and the rest are future development. The objectives are as follows:
- Objective 1: to find a long term solution to operation stack.
  - Objective 2: To take appropriate steps to tackle the problem of overnight lorry parking in Kent.
  - Objective 3: To effectively manage the routing of HGV traffic to ensure that such movements remain on the strategic road network for as much of their journey as possible.
  - Objective 4: To take steps to address problems caused by freight traffic to communities.
  - Objective 5: To ensure that KCC continues to make effective use of planning and development control powers to reduce the impact of freight traffic.
  - Objective 6: To encourage sustainable freight distribution.

### **1.3 Commentary**

- 1.3.1 The document outlines the work that KCC is currently undertaking or plans to in the near future in order to mitigate the impact of freight on the county's residents, workers and visitors, with some good actions to meet these objectives.
- 1.3.2 Clearly there is a need to transport freight across and within Kent and the road haulage sector plays a vital role in maintaining our current quality of life and supporting the economy. Many of the actions help support lorry drivers including positive signing, the development of a freight journey planner and lobbying of satellite navigation (sat nav) manufacturers to develop 'lorry friendly' sat nav maps is welcomed.
- 1.3.3 The document acknowledges the recently published Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) Policy and helpfully makes it clear that a road to rail freight interchange within the County would not be supported. Clearly Kent is a potential

target for such development, evidenced by the Kent International Gateway (KIG) inquiry and any such proposals would raise significant HGV issues locally. However it does support an interchange closer to London and the M25 (therefore taking lorries off Kent's roads), including the Howbury Park facility in the Slade Green area of the London Borough of Bexley.

- 1.3.4 A particular issue in Kent generally, but in parts of the Borough in particular is overnight parking. The lack of planned capacity can lead to the inappropriate use of roads, lay-bys and residential areas giving rise to a range of problems. Regrettably previous attempts to address such parking on an ad-hoc basis have simply transferred the problem elsewhere with detrimental impacts. A more strategic approach is required to properly plan for proper controlled parking facilities accompanied by an enforcement regime. I recognise that is a most challenging task but unless the problem is tackled in an overall sense the situation is unlikely to be improved.
- 1.3.5 Other initiatives such as improved signage together with the new 'no HGV' pictorial sign should assist drivers in making appropriate decisions relating to their journeys.

#### **1.4 Legal Implications**

- 1.4.1 None for the Borough Council.

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

- 1.5.1 None directly for the Borough Council.

#### **1.6 Risk Assessment**

- 1.6.1 Not required.

#### **1.7 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 1.7.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

#### **1.8 Policy Considerations**

- 1.8.1 Community.

#### **1.9 Recommendations**

- 1.9.1 I recommend that KCC's Draft Freight Action Plan generally **BE ENDORSED** by the Borough Council.

The Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure 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 O'Brien

Nil

Steve Humphrey  
Director of Planning, Transportation and Leisure

<b>Screening for equality impacts:</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Explanation of impacts</b>
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	N/A	
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

*In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.*