

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**20 November 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 RAIL ISSUES**

**Summary**

**This report provides an update on a range of rail issues affecting the Borough.**

**1.1 Feedback from Southeastern Stakeholder Group**

1.1.1 The Southeastern Stakeholder Group met in October and was attended by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation and the Chief Engineer. Presentations were made by Charles Horton (Southeastern's Managing Director) and Vince Lucas (their Service Delivery Director).

1.1.2 The key issues are as follows:

- The Government will be capping next year's regulated fare increase at RPI + 1%. As the RPI for July (the month when fare increases are set) was 3.2%, this means that the average increase on Southeastern services from January 2013 will be 4.2%.
- Southeastern have developed a new "app" for mobile users to use to access their website information and up to date information can also be found by following them on Twitter.
- There will be improved on-train information systems, better electronic display boards and new and upgraded CCTV at many stations.
- Smart ticketing, where the entitlement to travel is stored electronically on a microchip, is being explored by the train operator and could lead to a wider range of pricing options for those travelling in and around the peak times.
- From December work begins to re-build London Bridge station as part of the Thameslink programme. This will be an enormous civil engineering project as the station will be totally re-built. When fully complete in 2018, London Bridge will have the biggest concourse in the UK.

- As the building work progresses there will be an impact on services to and from London Bridge, Cannon Street and Charing Cross.
- For the first time a high speed service will operate between Ashford International and St. Pancras on Boxing Day. This is trial conducted by Southeastern, HS1 and the Department for Transport and this service is outside the usual revenue support system to make it possible. Other lines will see the usual restricted service over the Christmas period.

## **1.2 Feedback from Kent Community Rail Partnership**

- 1.2.1 The Medway Valley Line is one of two Community Rail partnerships in Kent. It runs from Strood down to Paddock Wood, connecting at each end with the main rail network, each junction offering onward journeys to London and the Kent Coast. Good connections are provided at Strood to and from High Speed services to Ebbsfleet, Stratford and St Pancras. 'Our' stations at Snodland, New Hythe, Aylesford and Watlington are served by this line and Maidstone West sits almost centrally along the line.
- 1.2.2 In addition to the recent station enhancement work to Paddock Wood Station Southeastern is looking to see if bus access can be improved too. Although not in our Borough, Paddock Wood station provides a service for residents in the East Peckham and surrounding area.
- 1.2.3 Snodland Station is going to have raised beds for growing fruit and vegetables, a sort of mini allotment scheme. Southeastern in general seem to be keen that their railway stations are "adopted" and are keen to engage with local communities to achieve this.
- 1.2.4 Southeastern is to increase the size of the car park at Strood Station by knocking down a derelict building. Funding has still to be agreed but they hope to extend the booking Hall to double its present size.
- 1.2.5 Enforcement along the Medway Valley Line by British Transport Police will hopefully increase with the possibility of 20 British Transport Police Officers being based at Maidstone Barracks.

## **1.3 West Malling Station Forecourt Remodelling Scheme**

- 1.3.1 This important bus/rail interchange project is on track for commencement on site in the spring of next year. KCC is leading with this and will provide a full update to the Joint Transportation Board next month.

## **1.4 South Eastern Franchise Consultation**

The current rail franchise with Southeastern ends in March 2014. The deadline for the Department for Transport public consultation seeking stakeholder views on the new franchise was 12 September and the attached officer response (**Annex 1**) was submitted. Subject to any further comments that members may wish to make endorsement of this response is now sought.

## 1.5 Legal Implications

1.5.1 None directly for the Borough Council.

## 1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.6.1 None.

## 1.7 Risk Assessment

1.7.1 Not required.

## 1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

1.8.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report.

## 1.9 Policy Considerations

1.9.1 Community.

## 1.10 Recommendation

1.10.1 That, subject to incorporating any further comments by Members of the Advisory Board, Cabinet is recommended **TO ENDORSE** the response to the Southeastern Franchise Consultation at Annex 1.

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

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
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?	N/A	

<b>Screening for equality impacts:</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Explanation of impacts</b>
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.*