

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

04 June 2013

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 TOWN LOCK CAPITAL PROJECT

Summary

This report updates members on progress at a critical stage of this environmental improvement project prior to inviting tenders to build the scheme.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The purpose of the Town Lock project is to regenerate the partly derelict land beside Town Lock on Medway Wharf Road, Tonbridge. The scheme will provide a high quality public open space with new flood wall, seating, lighting, planting and a new building for telemetry instrumentation and facilities for boaters. The scheme is funded from the Capital Plan supplemented by developer funding and a contribution from the Environment Agency.

1.2 Working with the Environment Agency

- 1.2.1 When I last reported to members in May 2012, an agreement had been signed with the Environment Agency (EA) detailing how we would work in partnership to complete the project. The agreement sets up a joint Project Board to oversee the management of the project and that board is chaired by myself.
- 1.2.2 Members may recall that the scheme involves parcels of land owned by both the Borough Council and the Environment Agency and that the scheme will apply a consistent design and finish to the whole area. Once complete, the Borough Council will undertake routine maintenance of the open areas, whilst the Environment Agency will maintain the lock, river walls and telemetry/boater building. This is being formalised by leases of the building footprint from the Council to the EA, and of the open space from the EA to the Council. Although the negotiation of these leases has been surprisingly protracted, I am content that they are close to being finalised and signed.

1.3 Scheme Design and Procurement

- 1.3.1 The Council's appointed consulting engineers, Halcrow, are currently finalising the detailed design of the open spaces, flood walls and accesses. In parallel, the EAs appointed architect is finalising construction drawings of the new telemetry & boater facilities building.
- 1.3.2 A two part scheme plan is produced at **ANNEX 1 & ANNEX 2**.
- 1.3.3 Halcrow are also producing the contract documents in electronic format which will be passed to Dartford Borough Council to handle the procurement with their electronic 'ProContract' system which is made available to us and has been successfully used on other key projects.
- 1.3.4 I must just reiterate that the funding for the scheme is finite and fixed at £791,600 and that the works must be accommodated within this figure. Prior to inviting tenders, I must therefore be confident of the value of the contract works and accordingly, the contractor Birse Civils has been commissioned to cost the final design. If the estimated cost appears to be too high then the Project Board will need to review elements of the design such that the aims and quality are not compromised unduly.

1.4 Planning Consent

- 1.4.1 The EAs new telemetry & boater facilities building has been submitted for planning consent and may well be reported to Area 1 Planning Committee in June. The building is a key element of the scheme design in that the existing unsightly building is removed and the instrumentation housed in a more appropriate location, freeing up the open space. In addition, the existing boater facilities are grouped together and much improved to encourage an increased and responsible use of our river asset.
- 1.4.2 A drawing of the new building is produced at **ANNEX 3**.

1.5 Programme

- 1.5.1 Tenders for the works will be sought in June/July and I am therefore optimistic that a start on site may be made in September. The duration of the works will not be fixed until the successful tender is accepted but my estimate is in the region of three to four months.

1.6 Legal Implications

- 1.6.1 As detailed above, the implementation of this project is governed by the collaborative agreement with the Environment Agency. The future use, access and maintenance of the scheme areas are subject to separate leases.

1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.7.1 The scheme budget is fixed at £791,600 and the works must be accommodated within this figure.

1.8 Risk Assessment

- 1.8.1 The scheme is subject to the Environment Agency's planning application being approved.
- 1.8.2 There is also a risk that the scheme estimate 'as designed' could exceed available finance, but I would expect that this either be managed by 'value engineering' or referred back to the Project Board.

Background papers:

contact: Steve Medlock

Nil

Steve Humphrey

Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health