

**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 Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)**

**1 DUTY TO COOPERATE – CONSULTATIONS WITH TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL AND SEVENOAKS DISTRICT COUNCIL AND UPDATE ON ANY OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS**

**This report seeks endorsement for officer level comments and contributions made in respect of recent consultations by neighbouring authorities and provides an update on any other relevant matters.**

**1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 Since the last meeting of the Board consultation deadlines for responses in respect of five documents produced by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Sevenoaks District Council have passed. Officer level responses have been made and this report updates Members and seeks endorsement, subject to any amendments.

1.1.2 An opportunity is also taken to update Members on progress towards a Master Planning Brief for Rochester Airport, which has recently been the subject of a public consultation exhibition held at the Innovation Centre adjacent to the airport.

**1.2 Tunbridge Wells Transport Strategy**

1.2.1 The Tunbridge Wells Transport Strategy covers the period 2012 to 2026 and sets out 8 priority projects. These include general initiatives such as delivery of cycling interventions and public realm improvements. Those which may have a more direct impact on residents of Tonbridge and the surrounding villages include the dualling of the A21 between Tonbridge and Pembury and corridor interventions at the A26/ A264 junctions between London Road and Pembury Road. A capacity improvement scheme for North Farm is also to be implemented, as well as a Park & Ride scheme at Tesco Pembury and projects associated with the Quality Bus Partnership. Lobbying of Network Rail to improve train services to London Cannon Street from Tunbridge Wells is also a priority.

- 1.2.2 The draft Transport Strategy was subject to a public consultation exercise that closed on 22 April. Officer level comments were submitted via the on-line consultation portal by the deadline.
- 1.2.3 In general, the strategy's vision for the future, key objectives, funding opportunities and prioritisation of improvements were supported.
- 1.2.4 It was suggested that the strategy looked again at the prioritisation of schemes to break down the red priorities into red, amber and green. As currently shown, cycling improvements are shown as an equal priority as dualling the A21.
- 1.2.5 The funding opportunities, such as developer contributions, while correct did not include an assessment of viability and deliverability and as such there remains some uncertainty as to whether some of the schemes will be implemented.
- 1.2.6 An opportunity was also taken to emphasise the local linkages between Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells and the positive collaboration in respect of schemes such as the A21 dualling, in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate

### **1.3 Tunbridge Wells Local Development Framework Site Allocations Development Plan Document**

- 1.3.1 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) has recently consulted on a Site Allocations Development Plan Document. The deadline for comments was 24 May. It sets out the specific locations for proposed sites to accommodate the housing, employment, community facilities and other development needs identified in their adopted Core Strategy (June 2010).
- 1.3.2 In summary, TWBC is promoting a dispersed pattern of development for their housing allocations, with Tunbridge Wells and Southborough being allocated approximately 4,500 units and the remainder spread across the smaller settlements (650 at Paddock Wood, 300 at Cranbrook and 240 at Hawkhurst).
- 1.3.3 Additional retail floorspace is proposed at Cranbrook and Paddock Wood to meet the needs of the local communities while 44,500 sq m net additional floorspace is identified for Tunbridge Wells town centre. For many of the areas with larger housing allocations, additional infrastructure is also proposed, such as schools and other community infrastructure as well as highways improvements. The key employment areas are to be retained to promote business growth but no additional employment land is identified.
- 1.3.4 There are no direct concerns for Tonbridge and Malling over the allocated sites and proposals set out in this consultation document. The adoption of a dispersal pattern of development avoids the need for major infrastructure investment and ensures a fair and proportionate spread of new development will meet the needs of each area.

## **1.4 Sevenoaks Site Allocations and Development Management Plan**

- 1.4.1 Comments were invited on this consultation up to 2 May. Officer comments were made via the District Council's on-line consultation portal.
- 1.4.2 As with the Tunbridge Wells site allocations document there were no major concerns arising from the document in respect of potential adverse implications on Tonbridge and Malling.
- 1.4.3 An opportunity was taken to suggest updating some references to take into account recent information that has come to light, for example, in respect of including an allowance for windfalls in the housing supply figures and also to reflect the Growth and Infrastructure Act's proposed extension of permitted development rights for single story extensions to residential properties in non-protected areas.

## **1.5 Sevenoaks Draft Green Belt Supplementary Plan Document**

- 1.5.1 This consultation also concluded on 2 May. No comments were made in respect of this document, which sets out in more detail the District Council's development management policies in respect of development in the Green Belt.

## **1.6 Sevenoaks Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule**

- 1.6.1 This consultation also concluded on 2 May. Comments were made via the District Council's on line consultation portal.
- 1.6.2 Comments were provided pointing to changes in the CIL Regulations that came into force in April and also in relation to viability testing derived from recent sharing of good practice. These comments were offered as a 'critical friend' in the spirit of the Duty to Cooperate.

## **1.7 Rochester Airport Master Plan Update**

- 1.7.1 On 13 and 14 May, Medway Council held a public exhibition of the development proposals at the Innovations Centre. As part of the publicity for the event leaflets were delivered to local residents and businesses, including properties in Tonbridge and Malling.
- 1.7.2 The exhibition was well attended and was visited by local ward Members and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation.
- 1.7.3 A link to the redevelopment proposals on the Medway Council website has been added to the TMBC website to further raise awareness.
- 1.7.4 The opportunity has been taken to highlight the importance of fully addressing the potential impact of increased noise from the proposals for the airfield on the occupants of nearby residential property.

## 1.8 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Medway Council absorbed the cost of mailing out the leaflets to TMBC residents and businesses in respect of the Rochester Airport exhibition.

## 1.9 Risk Assessment

- 1.9.1 Failing to respond to neighbouring authorities consultations carries the risk of not being able to demonstrate meeting the Duty to Cooperate when submitting our own planning documents.

## 1.10 Equality Impact Assessment

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

## 1.11 Recommendations

- 1.11.1 That the Board notes and endorses the officer comments in respect of the consultations set out at section 1.2 - 1.6 of this report for Cabinet approval.

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and policy Framework.

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Ian Bailey  
Planning Policy Manager  
Lindsay Pearson  
Chief Planning Officer

Steve Humphrey

Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

<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	This report seeks endorsement of officer comments in respect of neighbouring authority consultations.

<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?	No	See above.
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.*