

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

11 March 2014

Report of the Director of Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 TRANSPORT ISSUES AND PROJECTS

Summary

This report provides an update on a range of current transportation issues affecting the Borough.

1.1 A21 Public Inquiry

1.1.1 We are still waiting to hear the outcome of the Public Inquiry which closed on the 9 July 2013.

1.2 Rail Issues

1.2.1 **West Malling** - the £800,000 re-modelling project to improve the station frontage at West Malling railway station has now commenced.

1.2.2 The work includes a re-design and landscaping the station forecourt, improving passenger access and transport connections into West Malling. Additional cycle parking, improved lighting, better CCTV coverage, and more signage are all part of the programme of work for the project as shown in **[Annex 1]**.

1.2.3 A significant funding source for the forecourt remodelling scheme is the agreed Section 106 contribution of £387,000 (following indexation) from the Leybourne Chase development. Other funding streams include the County Council and the Department for Transport.

1.2.4 Access to the station entrance and car parks will be restricted while the improvements take place and passengers can information about this in the station booking hall. However the station car park will remain available for the duration of the project, which is due to complete in the summer.

1.2.5 **Snodland** – Southeastern anticipate that passenger demand for their services at Snodland will grow significantly due to housing developments in the area. To meet this growth they are a proposing to stop high speed services at Snodland in the peak which would create a journey time improvement of two to three minutes on

the Maidstone West services. However this is subject to the delivery of a scheme to enhance the station facilities and provide car parking and bus interchange. We will work with KCC, Network Rail and the Rail Operator to examine how these improved facilities might be provided.

1.3 Lower Thames Crossing

1.3.1 In December the Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin announced that the government will drop one of the options for a new Lower Thames crossing and will carry out further work on the remaining two options.

1.3.2 The original proposals for a new crossing in the Lower Thames included:

- Option A at the site of the existing A282 Dartford-Thurrock crossing;
- Option B which would connect the A2 Swanscombe peninsula with the A1089;
- Option C connecting the M2 with the A13 and the M25 between junctions 29 and 30; and a variant to Option C that would additionally widen the A229 between the M2 and M20.

1.3.3 Feedback on the consultation showed that Option B received limited support and would frustrate plans for development in the area.

1.3.4 As a result it has been decided that 'Option B', connecting the A2 Swanscombe Peninsula with the A1089, will be discarded and that further work will be done to choose between options A and C.

1.3.5 In the meantime, I understand that the government remains committed to introducing 'free flow' charging at the Dartford-Thurrock crossing from October 2014 to alleviate congestion in the short term. The system will remove the existing toll booths and allow users to pay remotely, similar to the London congestion charge.

1.4 Transport Funding Bids

1.4.1 Members will recall from earlier reports to this Board that the County Council's initial bid to the DfT's Pinch Point Fund for widening the eastern overbridge at Junction 4 of the M20 was not successful.

1.4.2 KCC still considered that this scheme fitted the criteria and resubmitted the scheme to a further tranche of funding.

1.4.3 Unfortunately this has also been unsuccessful despite the fact that similar schemes in other parts of the country were funded.

1.4.4 Nevertheless KCC are submitting the scheme to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for Local Growth Funding and given its strong business case, are hoping

that this will secure the necessary contribution. We will find out either way this summer and understand that construction could then take place during 2015/16 if successful.

- 1.4.5 More generally, Members may be aware from the report to the recent Economic Regeneration Advisory Board, that work is underway to prepare a “Community Plan” to set out detail on specific infrastructure projects across Kent and Medway that will require further funding. This is in the context of a Growth Plan for Kent and Medway. Further work will be needed to prioritise west Kent’s transport priorities in liaison with other authorities and partners. This will feature in the future work of this Board.

1.5 Airport Capacity

- 1.5.1 The interim report of the Davis Commission’s consideration of runway capacity in the south east was published on 17 December 2013. This included a short-list of three plausible options for increasing long term capacity, two options at Heathrow and one at Gatwick, which will now be the subject of further analysis and assessment.
- 1.5.2 At Gatwick, the Commission’s further work will be based on a potential new runway sufficiently to the south of the existing runway to enable independent operation. At Heathrow, the first option is for a new runway to the north west of the airport at a distance to enable independent operation. The second option at Heathrow is an extension of the existing northern runway to the west to enable it to accommodate two runways; one for departures and one for arrivals.
- 1.5.3 The Thames Estuary options were not short-listed at this stage. Although seen as offering potential advantage in noise impact, they also provided the Commission with many challenges and uncertainties, particularly on financing and environmental impact. However, the Commission intends to carry out additional analysis on the Isle of Grain option in the first half of 2014.
- 1.5.4 The Commission’s final report is to be no later than summer 2015 and will need to examine the detailed business case and environmental assessment for each option as well as their operational, commercial and technical viability. The results of this analysis are to be put to national consultation in the autumn of this year and will be published alongside the Commission’s recommendation to Government.
- 1.5.5 The Commission has now published an Appraisal Framework which sets out in detail how it expects scheme designs to be developed and how they will be appraised. The Appraisal Framework includes the Commission’s original objectives against which options will be assessed; updated scheme designs for each short-listed option to be used as the appraisal starting points; business case and sustainability information; and a set of appraisal modules explaining the methodology to be used by the Commission in assessing the options.

1.5.6 Clearly the Commission's work is now entering an interesting and critical stage. The Appraisal Framework will enable a consistent and detailed analysis of the short-listed options to be presented. This will enable the Borough Council and others to form a clearer and well informed view of the balance to be made on environmental impact and the economic case for expansion. For Tonbridge and Malling, the way these factors are balanced in respect of Gatwick will be particularly crucial, but comparison with the Heathrow option will also be important. Officers will keep a close watch on the work that will now emerge from the Commission and report back to the Board to formulate the Council's views at the consultation stage.

1.6 Legal Implications

1.6.1 None

1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.7.1 None directly for the Borough Council

1.8 Risk Assessment

1.8.1 Not required.

Background papers:

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Nil

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