

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD**

**17 March 2014**

**Joint Report of the Director of Highways and Transportation and the Director of  
Planning, Housing and Environmental Health**

**Part 1- Public**

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

**1 TONBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE TRANSPORT STRATEGY – UPDATE**

**Summary**

**This report provides an update on progress with the revised Town Centre Transport Strategy for Tonbridge, including the proposed streetscape and traffic management improvements for the lower High Street; the outline designs for which were endorsed by the Joint Transportation Board on 2 December last year following some helpful discussion amongst Members.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 It was agreed by the Joint Transportation Board (JTB) in December that Kent County Council (KCC) would progress the agreed streetscape and traffic management improvements for the lower High Street to their detailed design and costing stage in the New Year. The JTB also requested an update on the 'health check' of key signalised junctions within Tonbridge Town Centre, which is being carried out by KCC's Traffic Systems Team. Each of these work streams has since been commissioned and a detailed progress update will be provided in the main body of this report.

**1.2 Progress to Date**

**Signal Health Check**

1.2.1 The Traffic Systems Team commissioned baseline traffic counts at each of the signalised junctions shortly after the last JTB meeting. These were subsequently undertaken during early February, which represents the first 'traffic neutral' month of the year for data collection purposes following the Christmas and New Year holidays. The counts took the form of a video survey, which will enable the Traffic Systems Team to identify the key factors influencing junction performance.

- 1.2.2 The data will be used to model possible improvements to signal timings and synchronisation and will establish whether or not physical layout changes are required at any or all of the junctions. This work will be undertaken over the coming weeks and it is anticipated that KCC officers will be in a position to inform Members of its conclusions by the end of March.

High Street improvements

- 1.2.3 KCC commissioned its design consultant, Amey, to progress the necessary detailed design and costing work for the lower High Street improvement scheme in January. To date, Amey has undertaken baseline traffic counts and pedestrian crossing surveys, which will inform the type and location of future crossing facilities and speed limits. An Environmental Scoping Assessment has also been produced; the outcomes of which will be fed in to the design process as appropriate.
- 1.2.4 Members will recall that KCC's Structures Team is to undertake waterproofing work to the Little Bridge during March. Having investigated the potential to deliver the agreed improvements to this section of the High Street in tandem with this project, it was established that it would be impractical to do so, due to the long lead-in time for the delivery of the required paving materials and the limited opportunities available to consult with local Members and other stakeholders.
- 1.2.5 Initial meetings have been held between KCC's project manager and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC)'s Chief Engineer, Chief Planning Officer and Conservation Architect regarding the specification of paving materials for the lower High Street. One of the options discussed was to install clay pavers matching those recently used at the Watergate, although this matter will be discussed in greater detail with local Members in due course.
- 1.2.6 Further work has been undertaken by KCC to identify potential funding options for the scheme. This has included the preparation of a bid to the Government's Single Local Growth Fund, which will be formally submitted by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership later this year. Discussions have also been held with the County Council's Roadworks Team with a view to securing contributions arising from Lane Rental income. KCC and TMBC officers will continue to work with Sainsbury's to ensure that the forthcoming redevelopment of the Botany area and Bradford Street car park also contribute positively to the regeneration of the High Street.

**1.3 Next Steps**

- 1.3.1 Amey's detailed design commission will continue until the end of March and will include a drainage survey, liaison with Statutory Undertakers and discussion with KCC's highway contractor, Enterprise, to determine the optimum construction programme. The outcome of this work will be presented at the next JTB meeting.

1.3.2 The County Council's Roadworks Coordination Team has confirmed that major gas main replacement works are scheduled to take place in north Tonbridge during this year's school summer holidays and these considerations, together with the likelihood that external funding will not become available before the end of the year, suggest that delivery of the High Street improvements should be programmed for the 2015/16 financial year.

#### **1.4 Legal Implications**

1.4.1 None at this stage.

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

1.5.1 None at this stage.

#### **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 Recommendations**

1.8.1 The Board **NOTES** the work to date and the next steps as set out in the report.

The Director of (Kent) Highways and Transportation and 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

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<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	The measures outlined in this report will be designed to take account of the needs of different groups in the community in accordance with current guidance.

<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.*