

Transport Working Group - Report to the Town Forum 22nd March 2018

Members: Jane Fenwick (chair), Katharina Mahler Bech, Peter Perry, Sally Balcon, Adrian Berendt, , Pat Wilson, Peter Lidstone, Jennifer Hemming/Ian Rennardson , Lorna Blackmore, David Scott.

The TWG met on Tuesday 20th March 2018

1 Parking:

- TWG has responded to proposed changes to residents parking restrictions in Zone A prior to public consultation. TWG expressed concern that the adjustments to 'free on-street' parking periods would not materially improve the current situation where demand outstrips the supply of on street parking places. However, extending the Zone to the Banner Farm area and Roedean and Rodmell Roads was welcomed.
- Concern was expressed that both Rosemarie Bennett and Nick Baldwin had left TWBC parking department and had not yet been replaced.
- Crescent Road car park repairs have started and the extension construction awaits planning permission being granted.
- The conversion of the Linden Road Coach park into a season ticket only car park for local businesses and residents was not welcomed. TWG considered that the proposed price of £1.50 a day was a significant discount on the all day rate of about £10.20 in other car parks. Also it will not be available for much needed parking for the Pantiles retail and events customers.
- News of the park and ride study being undertaken by WSP consultants for TWBC was noted. The consultants had undertaken a similar study in Maidstone. However, a recent news report said that this P&R scheme was not well used, the subsidy was £242,000 and some Maidstone councillors called for it to be abolished. It was noted that commuters now park in Rusthall and use the 281 bus to the station and town as it is cheaper than parking in the RTW MSCPs – effectively a park and ride scheme.
- It was noted that because of the limited taxi rank space, numbers of taxis now wait in Carlton Road for rides and for patients at the doctor's surgery.

2. Consultations: Several consultations have been responded to and some are pending.

1. Major roads network:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/670527/major-road-network-consultation.pdf. We argued that these proposals stressed making faster journeys between towns rather than reducing traffic in towns which is the main problem in Tunbridge Wells.

2. The relocation and enlargement of St Peter's school to Hawkenbury

<https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/stpeterscofeprimaryschool/consultation/Home>. We argued that this new facility should stress walking, cycling and scooting to and from school to improve the health of the children. Acute traffic congestion would arise in the narrow residential streets by a car based school run.

3. The Government's walking, cycling and walking investment strategy.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy-cwis-safety-review> . TWG will respond by 1 June.

4. High speed rail link between HS1 to HS2 and Gatwick and Heathrow: TWG noted this speculative project with interest and discussed its implications on rail travel too and from Tunbridge Wells. David Scott undertook to find out more.

<https://londonist.com/london/transport/seen-this-proposal-for-an-m25-for-high-speed-trains-spanning-both-heathrow-and-gatwick>.

5. National Planning Policy Framework. Consultation closes 10 May.

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-revised-national-planning-policy-framework

4. JTB 16 April: JF and JH to request updates on progress for the Calverley Park Gardens/Carrs Corner, and road improvement projects, from Cllrs Rankin and Oakford with the aim to ensure these issues are kept on the JTB Agenda.

5. Public Transport Forum: JF went to the well attended PTF on 1st February. Outcomes in brief are - Rail: line closures for works to Sevenoaks Tunnel over Easter and other weekends too. South Eastern has carried 40% more passengers since the start of its franchise. Buses: Complaints that congestion on A26 is hindering service punctuality. Bus operators complained of insufficient information about new housing developments and the location and number of school children provided with school travel passes for them to plan services adequately.

6. Public Realm scheme Phase 2. TWG submitted some final comments to Gary Stevenson about the scheme including whether the market would continue to be located there and that the materials used would perform better than in Phase 1. It was noted that the roadway had been widened at the request of bus operators to enable buses to pass each other more easily at the bus stands.

7. AOB. a. Cycling: A26 cycle route works start in April on the section from Grosvenor Road to Yew Tree Road with some improvement in terms of protection for cyclists. Also a shared footpath will be used by cyclists from Southbrough Hill to Tonbridge.

The new A21 NMU – non motorised user - route and bridge over the A21 is to open on 12th May by Greg Clark and Tom Tugendhardt MP for Tonbridge and Malling. On the 11th May TWBUG is organising a summit meeting entitled *Healthy Travel- it's worth doing*.

Councillors, officers and member of the Town Forum will be invited. It will be held in the Council Chamber and feature outside expert speakers giving talks on the latest ideas on traffic engineering and new guidance for designing cycling infrastructure. More details will follow.

b. Driverless buses to arrive at Gatwick. DS reported that a pilot project at Gatwick will transport staff around the airport in driverless vehicles. This could be expanded to baggage and other vehicles servicing the planes. He subsequently circulated more links to show progress driverless bus projects across Europe.