

PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 6 September 2023
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Mrs Blackmore (Chairman), Cleator, Conyard, Mrs Grigg (Vice-Chairman), Jones, Kimmance, McKenna, Spooner and Trzebinski

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

AGENDA

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| 1. Apologies of Absence | |
| 2. Notification of Substitute Members | |
| 3. Urgent Items | |
| 4. Notification of Visiting Members | |
| 5. Disclosures by Members and Officers | |
| 6. Disclosures of Lobbying | |
| 7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information | |
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| 10. 1st Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring Report | 10 - 31 |
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| 13. Kent Minerals and Waste Plan Review - MBC Response | 139 - 149 |

Issued on 29 August 2023

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 4 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 4 p.m. on Monday 4 September). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899**.

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit the [Council's Website](#).

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 JULY 2023

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillors Mrs Grigg (Vice Chairman in the Chair) Cleator, Conyard, English, Hastie, Hinder, Jeffery, McKenna and Spooner
Cabinet Members:	Councillor Paul Cooper, Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development

19. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Blackmore, Jones, Kimmance and Trzebinski.

20. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:

- Councillor English for Councillor Kimmance
- Councillor Hastie for Councillor Blackmore
- Councillor Hinder for Councillor Trzebinski
- Councillor Jeffery for Councillor Jones

21. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

22. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

Note: Councillor Hastie arrived at 6.33 p.m.

23. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

24. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillors English and Jeffery disclosed they had been lobbied on Item 10 – MBC Response to the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan and Kent Minerals Site Plans Reviews.

25. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman stated that Item 10 – MBC Response to the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan and Kent Minerals Sites Plan Reviews would be taken before Item 9 – Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update and Estimated Costs for Achieving Net Zero 2030 to allow the Officer in attendance for the Item to address the Committee.

26. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be taken in public, as proposed.

27. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 JUNE 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to an amendment to the attendance list to read: 'Councillors Blackmore (Chairman), Cleator, Conyard, Jones, Kimmance, McKenna, Munford, Spooner and Trzebinski'.

28. FORWARD PLAN RELATING TO THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

In response to questions, the Principal Democratic Services Officer stated that the Forward Plan would be amended to reflect the updated Cabinet decision dates.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference be noted.

29. MBC RESPONSE TO THE KENT MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN AND KENT MINERALS SITES PLAN REVIEWS

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development introduced the report, and stated that the Council had recently received a response from the Planning Inspectorate arising from the ongoing Local Plan Review; as the Council was discussing a variety of matters with Kent County Council (KCC), the Cabinet Member felt that further time was needed to review the letter's contents before submitting a response to KCC. KCC had confirmed that a response could be submitted at a later date.

The Committee expressed support for deferring the matter until the next meeting. During the discussion comments were raised in relation to the use of Policy of CSW3 in relation to waste services, and the impacts on the natural environment, including woodland and biodiversity.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development noted the comments raised with the response to be reviewed.

RESOLVED: That consideration of the item be deferred to the next meeting.

30. BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN UPDATE AND ESTIMATED COSTS FOR ACHIEVING NET ZERO 2030

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development introduced the report, which provided an update on the progress and implementation of the Council's Biodiversity and Climate Change Action plan (the

plan), and the estimated costs for achieving net zero emissions for the Council's operations by 2030. The plan's actions that related to the Committee's terms of reference were outlined.

During the discussion, the Committee requested that the actions' procurement costs be broken down further to outline the cost differential in choosing green initiatives; as the Council would have to conduct some of the actions irrespective of them being within the plan, such as replacing the Council's fleet.

There were concerns raised that the Maidstone Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) had not met recently, as some other Kent Local Authorities had begun meeting with Kent County Council, with a request made for the forum to meet and consider including other service providers. The importance of a sustainable integrated transport strategy, alongside how adaptations would be made to mitigate the impacts of urban heat islands, were raised.

In response, the Cabinet Member stated that the financial information requested could be provided ahead of the next update on the plan and emphasised the importance of achieving best value in procurement. The Principal Planning Officer had been in correspondence with Kent County Council on the QBP; there had not been any progress yet, with the Cabinet Member stating that he would follow-up on this. The comments made by the Committee were noted.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET: That the action plan implementation updates and indicative costs of achieving net zero by 2030 for the Council's operations be noted, subject to the consideration of the Committee's comments on:

The Quality Bus Partnership, Urban Heat Islands, a sustainable Integrated Transport Strategy and providing the further financial information on cost breakdown for procurement.

31. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.01 p.m.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 SEPTEMBER 2023 TO 31 DECEMBER 2023

This Forward Plan sets out the details of the key and non-key decisions which the Cabinet or Cabinet Members expect to take during the next four-month period.

A Key Decision is defined as one which:

1. Results in the Council incurring expenditure, or making savings, of more than £250,000; or
2. Is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards in the Borough

The current Cabinet Members are:

 <p> Councillor David Burton Leader of the Council DavidBurton@maidstone.gov.uk 07590 229910 </p>	 <p> Councillor Paul Cooper Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PaulCooper@Maidstone.gov.uk 01622 244070 </p>	 <p> Councillor John Perry Cabinet Member for Corporate Services JohnPerry@Maidstone.gov.uk 07770 734741 </p>
 <p> Councillor Claudine Russell Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts ClaudineRussell@Maidstone.gov.uk </p>	 <p> Councillor Patrik Garten Cabinet Member for Environmental Services PatrikGarten@Maidstone.gov.uk 01622 807907 </p>	 <p> Councillor Lottie Parfitt-Reid Cabinet Member for Housing and Health LottieParfittReid@Maidstone.gov.uk 07919 360000 </p>

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the matters listed below may do so by contacting the relevant officer listed against each decision, within the time period indicated.

Under the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution, a Key Decision or a Part II decision may not be taken, unless it has been published on the forward plan for 28 days or it is classified as urgent:

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key and part II decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in the Forward Plan.

Copies of the Council's constitution, forward plan, reports and decisions may be inspected at Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ or accessed from the [Council's website](#).

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Cabinet which are normally held at the Town Hall, High St, Maidstone, ME14 1SY. The dates and times of the meetings are published on the [Council's Website](#), or you may contact the Democratic Services Team on telephone number **01622 602899** for further details.

or

David Burton
Leader of the Council

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Cabinet Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>Kent County Council Local Transport Plan Consultation</p> <p>Report on response to Kent County Council Local Transport Plan consultation.</p>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 6th Sep 2023	No	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 6 Sep 2023	Kent County Council Local Transport Plan Consultation	<p>Tom Gilbert, Thom Hoang, Mark Egerton</p> <p>tomgilbert@maidstone.gov.uk, ThomHoang@Maidstone.gov.uk, markegerton@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Maidstone Local Plan Review: Proposed Main Modifications and Minor Changes</p> <p>Report seeking authority from Cabinet via PIED PAC to consult on the Local Plan Review Inspector's 'Main Modifications' as part of the ongoing Independent Examination. Various other matters to be published at same time and report sets these out too.</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	20 Sep 2023	No	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 18 Sep 2023	Maidstone Local Plan Review: Proposed Main Modifications and Minor Changes	<p>Mark Egerton, Erik Nilsen</p> <p>markegerton@maidstone.gov.uk, ErikNilsen@Maidstone.gov.uk</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
MBC Response to the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan Review MBC response to the consultation on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan Review	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	7 Sep 2023	No	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 6 Sep 2023	MBC Response to the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan Review	Helen Garnett helengarnett@maidstone.gov.uk
1st Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	20 Sep 2023	No	No Open	Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Sep 2023 Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 6 Sep 2023 Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 7 Sep 2023 Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee	1st Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report	Paul Holland paulholland@maidstone.gov.uk

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
						11 Sep 2023		
<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Saving Proposals</p> <p>∞</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	20 Sep 2023	Yes	No Open	<p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Sep 2023</p> <p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 6 Sep 2023</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 7 Sep 2023</p> <p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 11 Sep 2023</p> <p>Overview & Scrutiny Committee 19 Sep 2023</p>	<p>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Saving Proposals</p>	<p>Mark Green, Adrian Lovegrove</p> <p>Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement, Head of Finance</p> <p>markgreen@maidstone.gov.uk, adrianlovegrove@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>Town Centre Strategy - Consultation Report</p> <p>A report on the next stage of the Town Centre Strategy</p>	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	20 Sep 2023	No	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 18 Sep 2023	Town Centre Strategy - Consultation Report	<p>Karen Britton, Alison Broom</p> <p>karenbritton@maidstone.gov.uk, alisonbroom@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill:</p> <p>Consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	25 Oct 2023	No	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 4 Oct 2023	Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms	<p>Jennie Cullern, Tom Gilbert</p> <p>JennieCullern@Maidstone.gov.uk, tomgilbert@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

Agenda Item 10

PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**6 September
2023**

1st Quarter Finance Update & Performance Monitoring Report 2023/24

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	6 September 2023
Cabinet Meeting	20 September 2023

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet
Lead Head of Service	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager Carly Benville, Senior Information Analyst
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the 2023/24 financial and performance position for the services reporting into the Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee (PIED PAC) as at 30th June 2023 (Quarter 1). The primary focus is on:

- The 2023/24 Revenue and Capital budgets; and
- The 2023/24 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that relate to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045.

The combined reporting of the financial and performance position enables the Committee to consider and comment on the issues raised and actions being taken to address both budget pressures and performance issues in their proper context, reflecting the fact that the financial and performance-related fortunes of the Council are inextricably linked.

Budget Monitoring

Overall net expenditure at the end of Quarter 1 for the services reporting to PIED PAC is £0.556m, compared to the approved profiled budget of £0.619m, representing an underspend of £62,000.

Capital expenditure at the end of Quarter 1 for PIED PAC was zero against a total budget of £0.450m.

Performance Monitoring

71.2% (5 of 7) the targetable quarterly KPIs reportable to this Committee achieved their Quarter 1 target.

Recovery & Renewal Update

A number of actions across the three areas of focus in the Recovery and Renewal Action have now been completed. This is shown in the update at Appendix 3.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update

An update on progress made against schemes using this funding is shown at Appendix 4.

Purpose of Report

The report enables the Committee to consider and comment on the issues raised and actions being taken to address both budget pressures and performance issues as at 30th June 2023.

This report makes the following recommendations to the Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee:

1. That the Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 1 for 2023/24, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted;
2. That the Capital position at the end of Quarter 1 for 2023/24 be noted;
3. That the Performance position as at Quarter 1 for 2023/24, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted.
4. That the Recovery & Renewal Update, attached at Appendix 3 be noted.
5. That the UK Shared Prosperity Fund update, attached at Appendix 4 be noted.

1st Quarter Finance Update & Performance Monitoring Report 2023/24

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>This report monitors actual activity against the revenue budget and other financial matters set by Council for the financial year. The budget is set in accordance with the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy which is linked to the Strategic Plan and corporate priorities.</p> <p>The Key Performance Indicators and strategic actions are part of the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2019-45 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. They also cover a wide range of services and priority areas.</p>	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Cross Cutting Objectives	This report enables any links between performance and financial matters to be identified and addressed at an early stage, thereby reducing the risk of compromising the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045, including its cross-cutting objectives.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Risk Management	This is addressed in Section 5 of this report.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Financial	<p>Financial implications are the focus of this report through high level budget monitoring. Budget monitoring ensures that services can react quickly enough to potential resource problems. The process ensures that the Council is not faced by corporate financial problems that may prejudice the delivery of strategic priorities.</p> <p>Performance indicators and targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and determining good value for money.</p>	Senior Finance Manager (Client)

	The financial implications of any proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and associated annual budget setting process. Performance issues are highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.	
Staffing	<p>The budget for staffing represents a significant proportion of the direct spend of the Council and is carefully monitored. Any issues in relation to employee costs will be raised in this and future monitoring reports.</p> <p>Having a clear set of performance targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place.</p>	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Legal	<p>The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget and the monitoring process enables the Committee to remain aware of issues and the process to be taken to maintain a balanced budget.</p> <p>There is no statutory duty to report regularly on the Council's performance. However, under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) a best value authority has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. One of the purposes of the Key Performance Indicators is to facilitate the improvement of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of Council services. Regular reports on Council performance help to demonstrate best value and compliance with the statutory duty.</p>	Interim Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance) MKLS
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes.	Information Governance Team
Equalities	There is no impact on Equalities as a result of the recommendations in this report. An EqIA would be carried out as part of a	Equalities and Communities Officer

	policy or service change, should one be identified.	
Public Health	The performance recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no specific issues arising.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Procurement	Performance Indicators and Strategic Milestones monitor any procurement needed to achieve the outcomes of the Strategic Plan.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no direct implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2023/24 to 2027/28 - including the budget for 2023/24 - was approved by full Council on 22nd February 2023. This report updates the Committee on how its services have performed over the last quarter with regard to revenue and capital expenditure against approved budgets.
- 2.2 The financial position for PIED needs to be considered within context of the overall financial position for Maidstone. Currently there is a forecast overspend that will need to be managed over the rest of the year to come back within budget. We know this may fluctuate as demand as costs settle during the year. The PIED PAC will need to consider any actions it may need to take to ensure it manages within its controllable budgets.
- 2.3 Attached at Appendix 1 is a report setting out the revenue and capital spending position at the Quarter 2 stage. Overall net expenditure at the end of Quarter 1 for the services reporting to PIED PAC is £0.556m compared to the approved profiled budget of £0.619m, representing an underspend of

£62,000. Capital expenditure at the end of Quarter 1 for PIED PAC was zero against a total budget of £0.450m. There are two significant variances that are currently forecast by the end of the year, and these are detailed in Appendix 1.

- 2.4 One of the main variances relates to planning applications which indicate an under recovery of £0.123m at the end of the quarter. The applications are being delivered in a timely manner, but volumes are down from around 414 in Quarter 1 2022/23 to now around 328 in Quarter 1 2023/24 which is causing the loss of income.
- 2.5 Attached at Appendix 2 is a report setting out the position for the KPIs for the corresponding period. Attached at Appendix 3 is an update on progress against the Recovery & Renewal Plan and attached at Appendix 4 is an update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents but may choose to comment.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 In considering the current position on the Revenue budget, the Capital Programme, and the KPIs at the end of June 2023, the Committee can choose to note this information or could choose to comment.

5. RISK

- 5.1 This report is presented for information only and has no direct risk management implications.
- 5.2 The Council produced a balanced budget for both revenue and capital income and expenditure for 2023/24. The budget is set against a continuing backdrop of limited resources and the continuation of a difficult economic climate. Regular and comprehensive monitoring of the type included in this report ensures early warning of significant issues that may place the Council at financial risk. This gives the Cabinet the best opportunity to take actions to mitigate such risks.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The KPIs update ("Performance Monitoring") are reported to the Policy Advisory Committees (PAC) quarterly: Communities, Leisure & Arts PAC, Housing, Health & Environment PAC and Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development PAC. Each committee also receives a report on the relevant priority action areas. The report was also presented to the Corporate Services PAC reporting on the priority areas of "A Thriving Place",

“Safe, Clean and Green”, “Homes and Communities” and “Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure”.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 The Quarter 1 Budget & Performance Monitoring reports are being considered by the relevant Policy Advisory Committees during September 2023.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: First Quarter Budget Monitoring 2023/24
 - Appendix 2: First Quarter Performance Monitoring 2023/24
 - Appendix 3: Recovery & Renewal Update 2023/24
 - Appendix 4: UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update 2023/24
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

APPENDIX 1 – FIRST QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING

Contents

Part A: First Quarter Revenue Budget 2023/24

- A1) Revenue Budget
- A2) Significant Variances

Part B: First Quarter Capital Budget 2023/24

- B1) Capital Budget
- B2) Significant Variances

Part A - First Quarter Revenue Budget 2023/24

A1) Revenue Budget: Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development (PIED) PAC

- A2.1 The table below provides a detailed summary of the budgeted net expenditure position for the services reporting directly into PIED PAC at the end of Quarter 1. The financial figures are presented on an accruals basis (i.e. expenditure for goods and services received, but not yet paid for, is included).
- A2.2 This table now shows the variance split between expenditure and income to give more of an insight into the nature of the variance.

PIED Revenue Budget: NET EXPENDITURE (@ 1st Quarter 2023/24)

Cost Centre	Approved Budget for Year	Approved Budget to 30 June 2023	Actual as at 30 June 2023	Variance as at 30 June 2023			Forecast March 2024	
	Net £000	Net £000	Net £000	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net £000	Forecast Net £000	Forecast Variance £000
Planning & Economic Development								
Building Regulations Chargeable	-395	-99	-101	11	-9	2	-395	0
Building Control	-1	-0	-1	0	1	1	-1	0
Development Control Advice	-293	-71	-61	3	-13	-10	-293	0
Development Control Appeals	138	27	37	-9	0	-9	138	0
Development Control Majors	-557	-139	-49	1	-91	-90	-407	-150
Development Control - Other	-772	-192	-160	-25	-8	-33	-772	0
Development Control Enforcement	75	18	26	-9	1	-8	75	0
Planning Policy	644	155	160	-5	0	-5	644	0
Neighbourhood Planning	-20	0	0	0	0	0	-20	0
Conservation	-11	-4	0	0	-4	-4	-11	0
Innovation Centre	-36	52	28	0	24	24	-36	0
Business Terrace	83	55	45	9	1	10	83	0
Business Terrace Expansion (Phase 3)	-16	22	39	5	-22	-17	-16	0
Economic Dev - Promotion & Marketing	2	1	8	-7	0	-7	2	0
Land Charges	-263	-65	-56	4	-13	-9	-263	0
Environment Improvements	40	35	14	21	0	21	40	0
Name Plates & Notices	20	5	5	0	0	0	20	0
Spatial Policy Planning Section	394	126	129	-3	0	-3	394	0
Head of Planning and Development	117	29	35	-6	0	-6	117	0
Building Surveying Section	525	131	102	29	0	29	525	0
Economic Development Section	84	25	44	-18	0	-18	84	0
Mid Kent Planning Support Service	358	89	64	25	0	25	358	0
Heritage Landscape and Design Section	356	89	68	21	0	21	356	0
Innovation Centre Section	217	69	56	13	0	13	217	0
CIL Management Section	13	3	7	4	-8	-3	13	0
Mid Kent Local Land Charges Section	89	22	5	24	-7	17	89	0
Development Management Section – Majors	244	61	46	15	0	15	244	0
Development Management Section – Others	1,166	291	297	-6	0	-6	1,166	0
Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Develop	125	31	26	5	0	5	125	0
Parking Services Section	413	133	127	6	0	6	413	0
Salary Slippage	-175	-44	0	-44	0	-44	-175	0
Sub-Total: Planning & Economic Development	2,564	858	940	65	-147	-82	2,714	-150

Cost Centre	Approved Budget for Year	Approved Budget to 30 June 2023	Actual as at 30 June 2023	Variance as at 30 June 2023			Forecast March 2024	
	Net £000	Net £000	Net £000	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net £000	Forecast Net £000	Forecast Variance £000
Parking Services								
On Street Parking	-308	-80	-93	4	9	13	-308	0
Residents Parking	-197	-45	-63	4	14	18	-197	0
Pay & Display Car Parks	-1,329	-131	-134	-14	18	4	-1,329	0
Non Paying Car Parks	15	10	9	1	0	1	15	0
Off Street Parking - Enforcement	-93	-21	-18	8	-10	-3	-93	0
Mote Park Pay & Display	-194	-53	-62	-0	9	9	-194	0
Sandling Road Car Park	-1	-0	-16	10	5	15	-1	0
Former Park & Ride Sites	109	81	1	80	0	80	9	100
Other Transport Services	-3	-1	-8	7	0	7	-3	0
Sub-Total: Parking Services	-2,000	-239	-383	99	45	144	-2,100	100
Totals	565	619	556	164	-102	62	615	-50

By Cabinet Member

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Cost Centre	Approved Budget for Year	Approved Budget to 30 June 2023	Actual as at 30 June 2023	Variance as at 30 June 2023			Forecast March 2024	
	Net £000	Net £000	Net £000	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net £000	Forecast Net £000	Forecast Variance £000
Leader of the Council								
Planning Policy	644	155	160	-5	0	-5	644	0
Economic Dev - Promotion & Marketing	2	1	8	-7	0	-7	2	0
Spatial Policy Planning Section	394	126	129	-3	0	-3	394	0
Economic Development Section	84	25	44	-18	0	-18	84	0
Sub-Total: Leader of the Council	1,124	306	340	-34	0	-33	1,124	0

Cost Centre	Approved Budget for Year	Approved Budget to 30 June 2023	Actual as at 30 June 2023	Variance as at 30 June 2023			Forecast March 2024	
	Net £000	Net £000	Net £000	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net £000	Forecast Net £000	Forecast Variance £000
Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development								
Building Regulations Chargeable	-395	-99	-101	11	-9	2	-395	0
Building Control	-1	-0	-1	0	1	1	-1	0
Development Control Advice	-293	-71	-61	3	-13	-10	-293	0
Development Control Appeals	138	27	37	-9	0	-9	138	0
Development Control Majors	-557	-139	-49	1	-91	-90	-407	-150
Development Control - Other	-772	-192	-160	-25	-8	-33	-772	0
Development Control Enforcement	75	18	26	-9	1	-8	75	0
Neighbourhood Planning	-20	0	0	0	0	0	-20	0
Conservation	-11	-4	0	0	-4	-4	-11	0
Innovation Centre	-36	52	28	0	24	24	-36	0
Business Terrace	83	55	45	9	1	10	83	0
Business Terrace Expansion (Phase 3)	-16	22	39	5	-22	-17	-16	0
Land Charges	-263	-65	-56	4	-13	-9	-263	0
Environment Improvements	40	35	14	21	0	21	40	0
Name Plates & Notices	20	5	5	0	0	0	20	0
On Street Parking	-308	-80	-93	4	9	13	-308	0
Residents Parking	-197	-45	-63	4	14	18	-197	0
Pay & Display Car Parks	-1,329	-131	-134	-14	18	4	-1,329	0
Non Paying Car Parks	15	10	9	1	0	1	15	0
Off Street Parking - Enforcement	-93	-21	-18	8	-10	-3	-93	0
Mote Park Pay & Display	-194	-53	-62	-0	9	9	-194	0
Sandling Road Car Park	-1	-0	-16	10	5	15	-1	0
Former Park & Ride Sites	109	81	1	80	0	80	9	100
Other Transport Services	-3	-1	-8	7	0	7	-3	0
Head of Planning and Development	117	29	35	-6	0	-6	117	0
Building Surveying Section	525	131	102	29	0	29	525	0
Mid Kent Planning Support Service	358	89	64	25	0	25	358	0
Heritage Landscape and Design Section	356	89	68	21	0	21	356	0
Innovation Centre Section	217	69	56	13	0	13	217	0
CIL Management Section	13	3	7	4	-8	-3	13	0
Mid Kent Local Land Charges Section	89	22	5	24	-7	17	89	0
Development Management Section – Majors	244	61	46	15	0	15	244	0
Development Management Section – Others	1,166	291	297	-6	0	-6	1,166	0
Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Develop	125	31	26	5	0	5	125	0
Parking Services Section	413	133	127	6	0	6	413	0
Salary Slippage	-175	-44	0	-44	0	-44	-175	0
Sub-Total: Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development	-559	312	217	198	-102	96	-509	-50
Totals	565	619	556	164	-102	62	615	-50

A2) PIED Revenue Budget: Significant Variances

A2.1 Within the headline figures, there are a number of both adverse and favourable net expenditure variances for individual cost centres. It is important that the implications of variances are considered at an early stage, so that contingency plans can be put in place and, if necessary, be used to inform future financial planning. Variances will be reported to each of the Policy Advisory Committees on a quarterly basis throughout 2023/24.

A2.2 The table below highlights and provides further detail on the most significant variances at the end of Quarter 1.

PIED PAC Variances (@ 1st Quarter 2023/24)

	Positive Variance Q4	Adverse Variance Q4	Year End Forecast Variance
Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development	£000		
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
Former Park & Ride Sites – These are budgets that were used to fund the Business Rates and running costs for the site. They are no longer required and will be removed for 2024/25.	80		100

	Positive Variance Q4	Adverse Variance Q4	Year End Forecast Variance
Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development	£000		
PLANNING SERVICES			
Development Control (Majors) – Numbers of applications are down as developers are waiting for the Local Plan to be approved before they submit new ones.		-90	-150

Part B - First Quarter Capital Budget 2023/24

B1) Capital Budget 2023/24 (@ 1st Quarter 2023/24)

Capital Programme Heading	Adjusted Estimate 2023/24 £000	Actual to June 2023 £000	Budget Remaining £000	Q2 Profile £000	Q3 Profile £000	Q4 Profile £000	Projected Total Expenditure £000	Projected Slippage to 2024/25 £000
Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development								
Bridges Gyratory Scheme	206		206			206	206	
Town Centre Strategy	450		450			100	100	350
Total	450		450			100	100	350

B2) Capital Budget Variances (@ 1st Quarter 2023/24)

Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development

Town Centre Strategy – The current strategy is being reviewed and updated and is unlikely to be adopted until early 2024, so it is anticipated that there will be some spend in the final quarter of the year.

APPENDIX 2 – FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Key to performance ratings

RAG Rating	
	Target not achieved
	Target slightly missed (within 10%)
	Target met
	Data Only

Direction	
	Performance has improved
	Previous data not captured
	Performance has declined
N/A	No previous data to compare

Performance Summary

RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A ¹	Total
KPIs	5	0	2	11	18
Direction	Up	No Change	Down	N/A	Total
Last Quarter	5	1	5	7	18
Last Year	4	2	5	7	18

- 71.2% (5 of 7) the targetable quarterly key performance indicators (KPIs) reportable to this Committee achieved their Quarter 1 (Q1) target¹.
- Compared to last quarter (Q4 2022/23), performance for 45.5% (5 of 11) KPIs has improved, and for 45.5% (5 of 11) KPIs have declined¹.
- Compared to last year (Q1 2022/23), performance for 36.4% (4 of 11) KPIs has improved, and for 45.5% (5 of 11) KPIs have declined¹.

Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development Q1 Performance

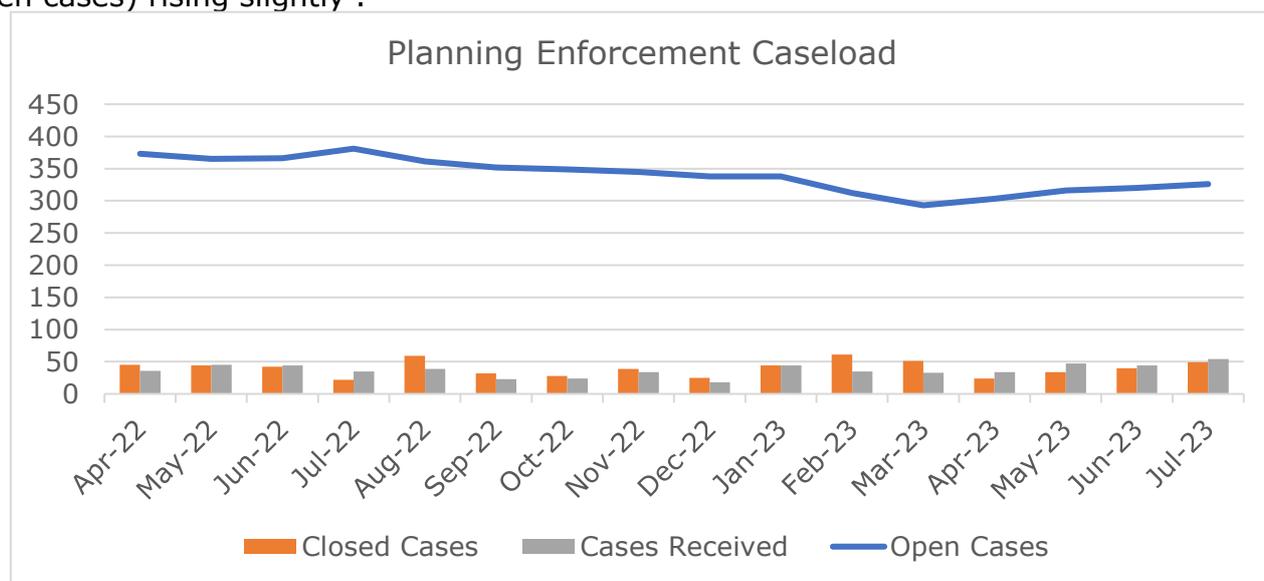
Performance Indicator	Q1 2023/24				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend (Last Quarter)	Long Trend (Last Year)
Planning					
Processing of planning applications: Major applications (NI 157a)	90.91%	90.00%			
Processing of planning applications: Minor applications (NI 157b)	95.24%	95.00%			
Processing of planning applications: Other applications (NI 157c)	98.71%	98.00%			
MBC Success rate at planning appeals within a rolling 12-month period	61.54%	70%		N/A	N/A

¹ PIs rated N/A are not included in the summary calculations.

Performance Indicator	Q1 2023/24				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend (Last Quarter)	Long Trend (Last Year)
Percentage of planning applications meeting Biodiversity Net Gain 20% adopted standard	Data not available until 2024				

Planning Enforcement					
Percentage of priority 1 enforcement cases dealt with in time	100%	98%	🟢	⬆️	➡️
Percentage of Priority 2 enforcement cases dealt with in time	93.44%	92%	🟢	⬇️	⬆️
Number of enforcement cases closed	98	📈	📈	⬇️	⬇️
Number of enforcement complaints received	124	📈	📈	⬆️	⬆️
Open planning enforcement cases (as of start of each month) <i>June 2023</i>	316	📈	📈	⬇️	⬇️

This graph tracks the caseload of the Planning Enforcement team each month, from April 2022 to date. The Q1 data for this can also be found in the table above. In Q1, the graph shows that more cases were received than were closed, which has resulted in the caseload (open cases) rising slightly .



Spatial Planning

New additional homes provided (NI 154)	Annual Indicator
Percentage of onsite renewable energy generation in new developments 10% adopted standard	Annual Indicator
Number of completed housing assistances	Annual Indicator

Economic Development

Footfall in the Town Centre	4,955,613	6,187,514	🔴	⬇️	⬆️
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Performance Indicator	Q1 2023/24				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend (Last Quarter)	Long Trend (Last Year)
Number of youths unemployed (18-24) <i>June 2023</i>	575				
Percentage of unemployed people in Maidstone (out-of-work benefits) [NOMIS]	2.9%				
Percentage of vacant retail units in the town centre	Annual Indicator				
Biodiversity & Climate Change					
Number of Electric Vehicle Charging Points Installed	Annual Indicator				

Planning

The key performance indicator (KPI) monitoring the “**MBC Success rate at planning appeals within a rolling 12-month period**” missed its target by less than 10%, achieving an outcome of 61.54% against a target of 70%. The team will be reviewing themes from the appeals. Where there was no policy which would have supported a successful defence of the appeal, they will consider whether it is appropriate to develop a policy to address the issue.

Economic Development

The KPI tracking the “**Footfall in the town centre**” missed the target by over 10% and remains below pre-covid quarterly average levels. The decline may be attributed to shifting national shopping patterns, with increased popularity of online shopping, and people's reactions to the ongoing living crisis and rise in interest rates.

A VIBRANT ECONOMY					
Action	Agreed funding	Target Start	Target End	Expected Success	Q1
Invest in industrial and warehouse premises to help de risk new employment sites coming forward	Capital Programme funding	Sep-21	N/A	Projects are identified to invest in and Maidstone is seen and delivers its promise of being open for business, businesses can expand and locate to the Borough.	No Update since Q4 as below. A package of Town Centre Capital Bids to the value of £5m in support of the new Town Centre strategy have been submitted. A further bid for £250k has been submitted for Maidstone Innovation Centre to facilitate more flexible workspace (wet labs) and associated shared high-tech equipment.

Appendix 3 Recovery and Renewal Action Plan

<p>Transform the Town Centre through the development and delivery of a town centre strategy.</p>	<p>£175,680 Recovery Fund</p>	<p>Sep-21</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Town Centre Strategy in place by 1 March 2023, projects may begin prior to this. Maidstone town centre becomes a centre of excellence for urban sustainability with a strong focus around arts, culture, leisure and visitor economy creating a place where people want to live, feel safe and which prides itself upon being a town centre which is relevant to all of the Borough’s residents and to which all of the borough’s residents can relate.</p>	<p>Work is continuing for the Town Centre Strategy. All member briefing planned for 4 September. Public consultation on the draft strategy is planned for autumn.</p>
<p>Capacity to develop projects and bids to take advantage of new funding opportunities</p>	<p>£45,000 Recovery Fund</p>	<p>Sep-21</p>	<p>Sep-25</p>	<p>Successful bids and projects completed that meet our priorities.</p>	<p>Project Closed</p>

Appendix 3 Recovery and Renewal Action Plan

<p>Mid Kent College Skills Hub</p>	<p>£60,000 Recovery Fund</p>	<p>Sep-21</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Provision of a town centre venue to provide accessible training, careers advice, and employability support for all residents. Courses delivered to a range of participants including book-keeping and computerised accounting, skills development online courses, essential digital skills, certified work skills programmes, food hygiene and employability workshops and support. Courses delivered to a range of participants including bookkeeping and computerised accounting, skills development online courses, essential digital skills, certified work skills programmes, food hygiene and employability workshop and support. With space for ten participants to be physically present in the hub it is envisaged that 208 people would be able to take advantage of the hub for courses and support over 26 weeks.</p>	<p>Project closed</p>
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UKSPF 2023/4 Quarter 1 Update:

In July 2023 the Department for Levelling up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) confirmed that the End of Year Report submitted in May 2023 for the year 2022/23 was approved, this also confirmed our approach to the underspend from Year 1 is accepted. We have also returned the Memorandum of Understanding and should receive the grant for Year 2 shortly.

Rural Fund: The authority has been allocated £134,932 for this financial year, the first round for submissions was opened in April and closed in June. The submissions were reviewed by a panel in July, further information is required on those that have made it through the initial filtering stage, this includes detailed costings and project delivery timeline. The panel will then come back together in September to review and finalise Year 1 projects.

Year 2 projects and an update:

Intervention	Project	Detail	2023/24 budget	Amount spent:	£ Committed	Q1 Update:
E6: Local arts, cultural, heritage & creative activities	Project A - Building Pride in Place through promotion of the Town Centre and Events.	Creative communities fund for local organisations and groups to support events	£35,830	£30,000	£0	19 applications were received for the last round of which 11 will be awarded grants.
		Literature Festival	£15,000	£0	£0	The event will be held in October, organising and advertising for the event has begun. A company has been commissioned to support the delivery of the event.
		Iggy Sculpture Trail	£60,000	£510	£0	Locations for the sculptures has been agreed, and an artist to produce the sculptures has been commissioned. The trail will be supported by a digital trail app, that has been procured and is currently being designed.
		Equipment purchases to support events	£2,751	£62	£2,510	£2,510 has been committed to purchase a set of temporary exhibition walls, and 2 microphones have been purchased as well.
		Arts Carnival	£20,000	£20,000	£0	Due to adverse weather the original date for the Arts Carnival was cancelled, it has been rescheduled for Saturday 9 th September.

		Partner for Elmer 2	£40,000	£0	£0	Contract is in the process of being signed.
	Project C- A Community Arts Hub & Maker Space	Feasibility Study	£5,000	£0	£3,200	The final feasibility report was received at the end of July.
E8: Campaigns to encourage visits and exploring of local area	Project A - Building Pride in Place through promotion of the Town Centre and Events.	Advertising budget to promote events across all channels	£15,000	£3,924	£0	The majority has been allocated to promote events later in the year.
		Borough Insight Events and Town centre focussed	£30,000	£0	£0	This will be spent on the Autumn 2023 edition of the magazine.
		Promotional video for business and events in TC	£5,000	£0	£0	This will be used later in the year to capture footage of events.
E9: Impactful Volunteering and/or Social action Projects	Project B- A Safe and Attractive Town Centre achieved through Greening and Lighting	An externally commissioned green Volunteering Project to Improve Town Centre Green Spaces, Increase Volunteering and Improve Wellbeing.	£60,000	£0	£0	Five sites have been worked with 18 volunteers involved. The sites are Maidstone Community Support Centre, Trinity House, Brenchley Gardens, Fairmeadow and planters in the Town Centre.
Management Overheads			£9,897	£2,474	£7,423	
Total:			£298,478	£57,480	£75,302	
				£132,782		

Agenda Item 11

PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

6 September 2023

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	6 September 2023
Cabinet	20 September 2023
Will this be a Key Decision?	Yes
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Adrian Lovegrove, Head of Finance
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report forms part of the process of agreeing a budget for 2024/25 and setting next year's Council Tax. The report sets out a draft Medium Term Finance Strategy for 2024/25 – 2028/29 and budget proposals for services within the remit of the Committee. These proposals will then be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 20 September 2023.

The Cabinet will subsequently consider any remaining budget issues at its meeting on 7 February 2024, with a view to determining a final set of proposals for submission to Council on 21 February 2024.

Purpose of Report

Recommendation to Cabinet

This report makes the following recommendation to the Committee: That

That the Cabinet be recommended to:

1. That the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25 to 2028/29 set out in Appendix A be approved.
2. That the budget proposals set out in Appendix B be approved.

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Medium Term Financial Strategy and the budget are a re-statement in financial terms of the priorities set out in the strategic plan. They reflect the Council's decisions on the allocation of resources to all objectives of the strategic plan.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Cross Cutting Objectives	The MTFS supports the cross-cutting objectives in the same way that it supports the Council's other strategic priorities.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Risk Management	This has been addressed in section 5 of the report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Financial	The budget strategy and the MTFS impact upon all activities of the Council. The future availability of resources to address specific issues is planned through this process. It is important that the committee gives consideration to the strategic financial consequences of the recommendations in this report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	The process of developing the budget strategy will identify the level of resources available for staffing over the medium term.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Legal	<p>Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) the Section 151 Officer has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the authority, including securing effective arrangements for treasury management. The legal implications are detailed within the body of the report which is compliant with statutory and legal regulations such as the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in Local Authorities.</p> <p>The Council is required to set a council tax by the 11 March in any year and has a statutory obligation to set a balanced budget. The budget requirements and basic amount of Council Tax must be calculated in accordance</p>	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	<p>with the requirements of sections 31A and 31B to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by sections 73-79 of the Localism Act 2011).</p> <p>The Council is required to determine whether the basic amount of council tax is excessive as prescribed in regulations – section 52ZB of the 1992 Act as inserted under Schedule 5 to the Localism Act 2011. The Council is required to hold a referendum of all registered electors in the borough if the prescribed requirements regarding whether the increase is excessive are met.</p> <p>Approval of the budget is a matter reserved for full Council upon recommendation by Policy and Resources Committee on budget and policy matters.</p>	
Privacy and Data Protection	<p>Privacy and Data Protection is considered as part of the development of new budget proposals. There are no specific implications arising from this report.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer & Finance Team</p>
Equalities	<p>The MFTS report scopes the possible impact of the Council’s future financial position on service delivery. When a policy, service or function is developed, changed or reviewed, an evidence-based equalities impact assessment will be undertaken. Should an impact be identified appropriate mitigations will be identified.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer & Finance Team</p>
Public Health	<p>The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer & Finance Team</p>
Crime and Disorder	<p>The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer & Finance Team</p>
Procurement	<p>The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer & Finance Team</p>
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<p>The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	<p>Section 151 Officer & Finance Team</p>

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 2.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out in financial terms how the Council will deliver its Strategic Plan over the next five years. The Council adopted a Strategic Plan for the period 2021 – 2045 in December 2018, and the existing MTFS for the period 2023/24 to 2027/28 reflects the Strategic Plan. The new MTFS will continue to reflect the Strategic Plan priorities.
- 2.2 A draft MTFS is attached to this report as Appendix A. As background, it comprises an assessment of the economic environment and the Council's own financial position. It will be seen that the Council faces a budget gap, given the expected impact of inflation on costs, compared with the lower projected rate of growth in Council resources.

Budget Savings

- 2.3 A key outcome of the process of updating the MTFS is to set a balanced budget and agree a level of council tax for 2024/25 at the Council meeting on 21 February 2024. The draft MTFS describes how, in bridging the budget gap, the Council needs to balance the requirement to make savings or generate increased income against the key priorities set out in the Council's Strategic Plan.
- 2.4 The draft MTFS explains that all budgets are reviewed in detail to identify opportunities for savings, or increased income, which can be delivered with the minimum impact on the strategic priorities. To the extent that further growth is planned, above and beyond existing budgets, this would need to be offset by further savings.
- 2.5 The following growth and savings have been identified in the services falling within the remit of this committee and are shown in Appendix B.

Existing Savings approved February 2023

Land Charges - Migration of register to HM Land Registry - £33,000 growth offset by £13,000 saving

The government has legislated to enable HM Land Registry (HMLR) to provide a single, standardised point of contact for provision of the Local Land Charges register. This means that the Council will no longer receive income from searches of the Local Land Charges Register, although we will continue to have responsibility for updating the register. The Council will receive one-off funding to facilitate the transition, but by the end of the transition period the Council will have suffered a cumulative ongoing loss of income. However, this loss of income will mean that the team will no longer have to carry out the LLC1 search, allowing a saving of £13,000 in 2024/25.

Mid Kent Planning Support – Process Improvement and Automation - £15,000 saving

There are a number of future opportunities for process improvement and automation, e.g. Microsoft 365, the national pilot on reducing invalid planning applications (RIPA), etc that will allow the service to operate more efficiently.

New Savings

Spatial Planning and Economic Development - Additional contribution from Business Rates pool - £150,000 saving

The Council has a policy of using the proceeds of its membership of the Kent Business Rates Pool to support economic development. Over time, the pool has generated funds in excess of the amounts drawn down, and pool proceeds continue to grow. Accordingly, it is appropriate to increase the amount allocated from the pool to support the base budget.

The Business Rates Pool is a feature of the current local government funding regime. It is not expected that the current regime will change before the next General Election, but it is possible that there may be changes subsequently which would either reduce proceeds from the Pool or eliminate it altogether.

Parking - Delete residual Park and Ride site costs - £100,000 saving

There continue to be residual costs in the budget for running the former Park and Ride site at Willington Street, principally repairs and maintenance and business rates. These budgets can now be deleted.

Development Management - Additional CIL recharge for administration - £50,000 saving

The Council is able to recover the costs of administering the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) up to a limit of 5% of total receipts. Having assessed the Council's costs, and projecting likely annual CIL receipts, it is considered that an additional £50,000 of costs may be recovered.

Parking - Short-term additional parking at Sandling Road - £50,000 saving

The Sandling Road car park will close in due course when work commences on the new Maidstone East housing development. For the time being, running costs are lower than budget. The projected saving for 2024/25 is estimated as approximately £50,000. This savings item is likely to be for one year only, assuming the site is handed over for development at the end of 2024/25.

- 2.6 Savings have been identified within the remit of the other Policy Advisory Committees which, all other factors remaining equal, and assuming fees

and charges are increased in line with the MTFS inflation assumption, would allow the Council to set a balanced budget for 2025/26.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Agree the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the budget proposals relating to this Committee as set out in Appendix A and B respectively for onward submission to the Cabinet.
 - 3.2 Propose changes to the budget proposals.
 - 3.3 Make no comment on the budget proposals.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Cabinet must recommend to Council at its meeting on 7 February 2024 a balanced budget and a proposed level of Council Tax for the coming year. The overall strategy and the budget proposals included in this report will assist the Cabinet in doing this. Accordingly, the preferred option is that this Committee agrees the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the budget proposals at Appendices A and B respectively.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The Council's finances are subject to a high degree of risk and uncertainty. The draft MTFS includes an evaluation of the Council's financial resilience, from which it can be seen that it has adequate, but not excessive, reserves and is positioned well to manage the financial challenges that it faces.
 - 5.2 In order to address risk on an ongoing basis in a structured way and to ensure that appropriate mitigations are developed, the Council has developed a budget risk register. This seeks to capture all known budget risks and to present them in a readily comprehensible way. The budget risk register is updated regularly and is reviewed by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee at each of its meetings.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The Cabinet received an initial report on the MTFS at its meeting on 26 July 2023 and it agreed the approach set out in that report to development of an MTFS for 2024/25 - 2028/29 and a budget for 2024/25.
- 6.2 Public consultation on the budget has been carried out, with a survey which is due to close on 28 August 2023. Details will be circulated to members once they are available and they are encouraged to review the findings and

assess whether the budget proposals are consistent with public expectations and aspirations.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 The timetable for developing the budget for 2024/25 is set out below.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Action</i>
September 2023	All Policy Advisory Committees	Consider 24/25 budget proposals and draft MTFS
20 September 2023	Cabinet	Agree 24/25 budget proposals and draft MTFS
5 February 2024	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee	Consider final budget proposals and MTFS
7 February 2024	Cabinet	Agree final budget proposals and MTFS for recommendation to Council
21 February 2023	Council	Approve 24/25 budget

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 – 2028/29
 - Appendix B: Revenue Budget Proposals 2024/25 – 2028/29
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/25 – 2028/29



CONTENTS

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1. OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

- 1.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out in financial terms how the Council will deliver its Strategic Plan over the next five years. The Council's Strategic Plan, agreed in December 2018, covers the period 2019 to 2045. The Strategic Plan incorporates four key objectives: embracing growth and enabling infrastructure; homes and communities; a thriving place; and safe, clean and green. Further details are set out in **Section 2**.
- 1.2 Delivering the Strategic Plan depends on the Council's financial capacity and capability. Accordingly, the MTFS considers the economic environment and the Council's own current financial position. The external environment (**Section 3**) is challenging because of high inflation and the state of the UK's public finances. In assessing the Council's current financial position (**Section 4**), attention is paid to its track record of budget management, current financial performance and the level of reserves that it holds.
- 1.3 It is imperative that the MTFS both ensures Maidstone Council's continuing financial resilience and is sufficiently flexible to accommodate a range of potential scenarios. The Council has prepared financial projections under different scenarios, continuing a practice that has been followed for several years. Details of the different scenarios are set out in **Section 5**.
- 1.4 Planning assumptions for the different scenarios are set out in **Section 6**. A key assumption is the level of Council Tax, as this is the council's principal source of income. Increases in Council Tax are subject to a referendum limit, which at the time of writing (August 2023) is expected to be 3% for 2024/25. This is significantly less than the current rate of inflation, which means that there will be a budget gap, all other factors being equal. The position for future years is even more challenging, given that the expected reset of local government funding is unlikely to be favourable for Maidstone.
- 1.5 Fees and charges in aggregate make an equally important contribution to the Council's resources. Given the rise in the Council's input costs, it is important that these rise in line with inflation. For the purpose of the 2024/25 budget this has been assumed to be 5%.
- 1.6 The MTFS sets out financial projections based on these assumptions in **Section 7**. These are based on scenario 4, which assumes that inflation will remain elevated and central government continues to give the council limited funding flexibility. The table below shows projections for scenario 4, before taking account of the budget changes that are due to be considered by members at meetings of the PACs, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in September 2023.

Table 1: MTFS Revenue Projections 2024/25 – 2028/29

	24/25	24/25	25/26	26/27	28/29
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Total Resources	53.7	54.7	56.4	58.5	60.2
Predicted Expenditure	55.3	59.2	61.0	61.9	62.7
Budget Gap	1.6	4.5	4.6	3.4	2.5
Existing Planned Savings	0.7	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1
Savings Required	0.9	4.5	4.4	3.3	2.4

In accordance with legislative requirements the Council must set a balanced budget. Section 7 concludes by setting out a proposed approach which will specifically address the budget gap in 2024/25. The position in future years is much more challenging and will require a more radical approach.

- 1.7 The Council's strategic priorities are met not only through day-to-day revenue spending but also through capital investment. The Council's programme of building 1,000 Affordable Homes is the centre-piece of the Capital Strategy. Capital investment therefore serves to deliver the Council's strategic priorities, but must remain affordable and sustainable. As set out in **Section 8** below, funds have been set aside for capital investment, using prudential borrowing, and further funding may be available by taking advantage of opportunities to bid for external funding.
- 1.8 The MTFS concludes by describing the process of agreeing a budget for 2024/25, including consultation with all relevant stakeholders, in **Section 9**.

2. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES AND KEY PRIORITIES

2.1 The Council has a Strategic Plan which was originally adopted by Council in December 2018. The Strategic Plan has been refreshed in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Each year the Strategic Plan is refreshed as appropriate. For 2023/24, the Strategic Plan was updated to reflect the Council's ambition in regard to Biodiversity and Climate Change, the emerging Town Centre Strategy, community resilience, and delivering 1,000 Affordable Homes.

2.2 Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 26 July 2023 that no further review of the Strategic Plan would be required for 2024/25. The four key objectives remain as follows:

- Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure
- Homes and Communities
- A Thriving Place
- Safe, Clean and Green.

'Embracing growth and enabling infrastructure' recognises that we want Maidstone Borough to work for the people who live, visit and work; now and in the future. We want a Borough where there is a variety of jobs, housing need is met and infrastructure is in place to meet the growing needs of our residents and economy. We also want to ensure we lead and shape our place as it grows, including leading master planning and investing to bring about high quality housing and jobs in the Borough.

'Homes and communities' expresses that we want to have a place that people love and where they can afford to live. This means ensuring that there is a good balance of different types of homes, including affordable housing. We will have safe and desirable homes that enable good health and wellbeing for our communities. We will address homelessness and rough sleeping to move people into settled accommodation. We will work with our partners to improve the quality of community services and facilities including for health care and community activities. Residents will be encouraged and supported to volunteer and play a full part in their communities.

'A thriving place' is a Borough that is open for business, attractive for visitors and is an enjoyable and prosperous place to live for our residents. Maidstone is the Business Capital of Kent; we will continue to grow our local economy with high employment, good local jobs and thriving local businesses. We want our town and village centres to thrive and be fit for the future. We will lead investment in the County town and rural service centres through our regeneration projects and working with partners. We are proud of our heritage and will continue to grow our leisure and cultural offer

A 'safe, clean and green' place is one where we will keep Maidstone an attractive and clean place for all. Maidstone is a safe place to live and we want our residents to feel safe. We want to protect and where possible enhance our environment and make sure our parks, green spaces, streets and public areas are high quality by ensuring they are looked after, well managed and respected.

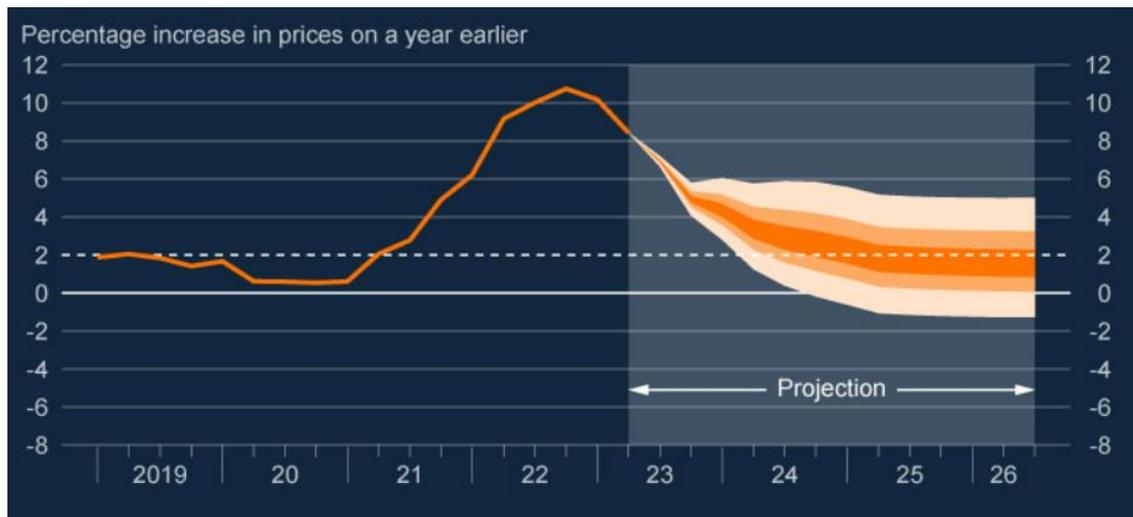
- 2.3 Since the adoption of the Strategic Plan in December 2018, the objective of 'Embracing growth and enabling infrastructure' has started to be realised, for example the completion of the Innovation Centre and development a new Garden Community.
- 2.4 Amongst initiatives to help make Maidstone a 'Thriving Place' have been MBC investment at Lockmeadow and on the Parkwood Industrial Estate, along with the emerging plans for developing a Town Centre Strategy. We will continue to leverage the Council's borrowing power, if appropriate in conjunction with partners, to realise our ambitions for the borough.
- 2.5 Our 'Homes and Communities' aspirations are being achieved by investment in temporary accommodation and the Trinity Centre and the Leader's commitment to build 1,000 new affordable homes.
- 2.6 The objective of a 'Safe, Clean and Green' place has been emphasised by the Council's commitment to a carbon reduction target and the capital investment to help enable this to be delivered and timely preparation for new waste management arrangements.
- 2.7 Within the framework of the existing Strategic Plan, the Council is therefore prioritising:
- development of the Local Plan and related strategies and policies, in particular the Town Centre Strategy
 - continued investment to make Maidstone a thriving place
 - investment in 1,000 new affordable homes
 - measures to enable the Council's carbon reduction target to be met.
- 2.8 The funding envelope within which these priorities must be delivered depends heavily on the Council's own revenue-generating capacity. The Council is largely self-sufficient financially, drawing most of its income from Council Tax and a range of other locally generated sources of income, including Parking, Planning Fees and the Council's property portfolio. However, it operates within the local authority funding framework set by central government, which is likely to impose tight constraints, and is affected by macro-economic conditions, in particular the rate of inflation. The two key variables in financial planning are therefore the restriction set by central government on the amount by which Council Tax can be increased and the rate of inflation. The financial implications are set out in section 6 below.

3. ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Macro outlook

- 3.1 The UK economy has been battered by a series of shocks over the past three years. The Covid pandemic was followed by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which led to big increases in energy and food prices. The number of people available to work has not recovered from the Covid pandemic and productivity growth is low. This has led to high inflation, which is only just beginning to fall.

Figure 1: CPI inflation projection based on market interest rate expectations



Source: Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee report, August 2023

- 3.2 Whilst inflation is projected to fall to 2% by early 2025, Bank of England forecasts have proved consistently over-optimistic and there is a high risk that inflation levels will remain elevated.

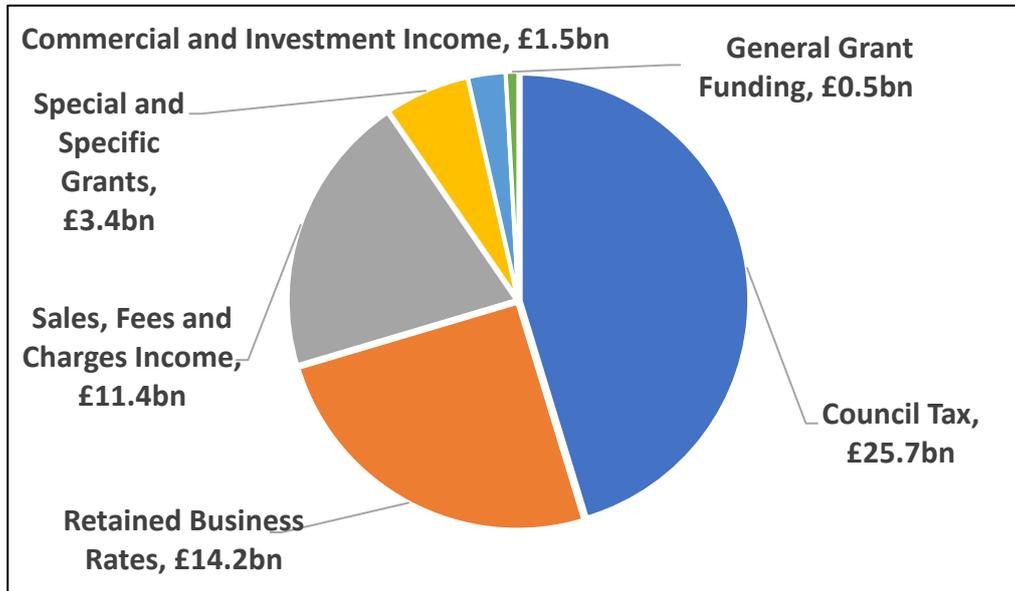
Public Finances

- 3.3 Slow growth and higher interest rates have negatively impacted the public finances. To address this, HM Treasury envisages a programme of fiscal consolidation over the next few years, with taxes set to rise to nearly 38% of GDP and increases in public service spending limited to 1% a year in real terms. This means that whoever is in government after the forthcoming general election will face very tough choices on tax and spending.
- 3.4 The overall public expenditure context is relevant for the council, because the local authority funding framework set by government is a crucial determinant of the Council’s financial position. This is primarily because central government restricts the amount by which Council Tax can be increased through the referendum limit and it determines the share of business rates that can be retained locally.

Local Government Funding

3.5 The main sources of local government funding nationally are set out below.

Figure 2: How Council Services are funded



Source: IFS, 'Does Funding Follow Need?', October 2022

- 3.6 In recent years, the reduction in direct central government funding for local government has been mitigated by increases in locally generated sources of income, with Council Tax rising by more than the overall rate of inflation. Upper tier authorities in particular have been able to raise additional tax through a social care precept. This has led the government's preferred measure of council spending, 'Council spending power', to increase, even though it may not reflect the actual resources available. However, funding has failed to keep up with the increased demands on council services, particularly for social care and housing.
- 3.7 The other main element of local government funding, beside Council Tax, is Business Rates. The 2010-15 Coalition Government transferred a notional 50% of locally-collected Business Rates income back to local government, but the requirement to adjust the amount of business rates retained between authorities, based on respective service needs, means that authorities with an active commercial sector and low perceived levels of need, like Maidstone, retain a low proportion of business rates (just 10% in Maidstone's case). It was originally intended to increase the 50% share of business rates retained locally to 75%, but this is no longer government policy.

- 3.8 The gradual squeeze on council funding means that an increasing number of councils are unable to set balanced budgets. This is formally signalled by the issue of a section 114 report. The councils that are most vulnerable tend to be those facing social care cost pressures, ie upper tier or single tier authorities, so it is likely that any additional support for local government in 2024/25 will be focused on them.

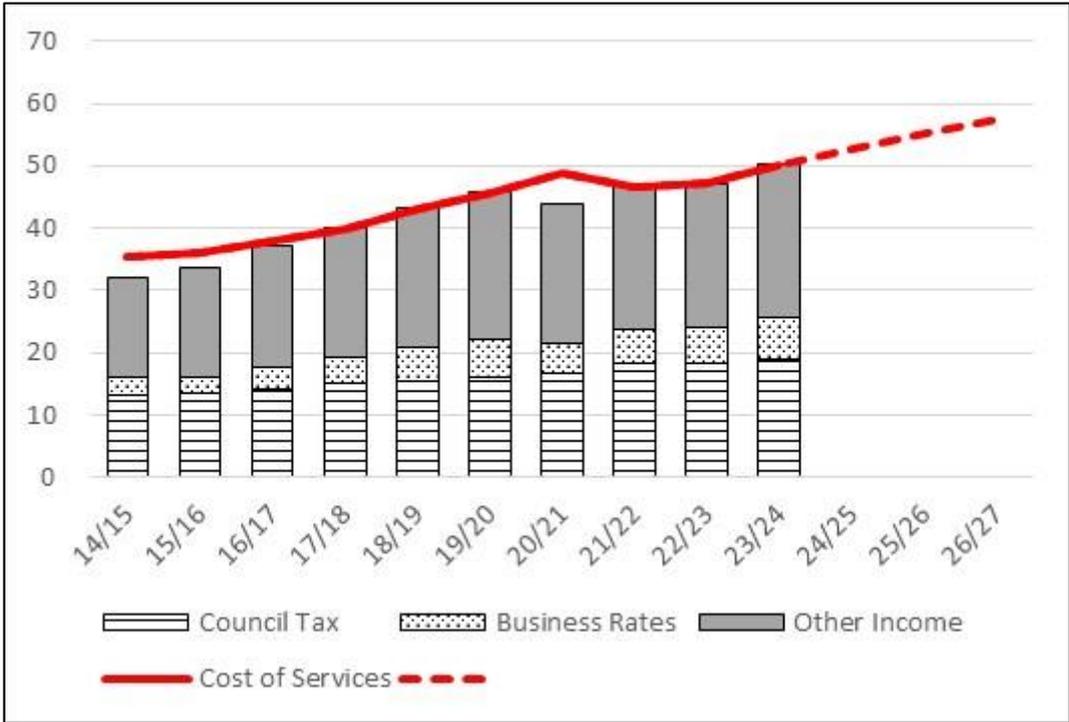
Conclusion

- 3.9 The UK economy faces low growth prospects and continued high inflation. This limits the scope for any increase in public expenditure. To the extent that the funding framework for local government will be flexed to alleviate financial pressures caused by expenditure growth, this is likely to benefit upper tier or single tier authorities, not lower tier authorities like Maidstone.

4. CURRENT FINANCIAL POSITION

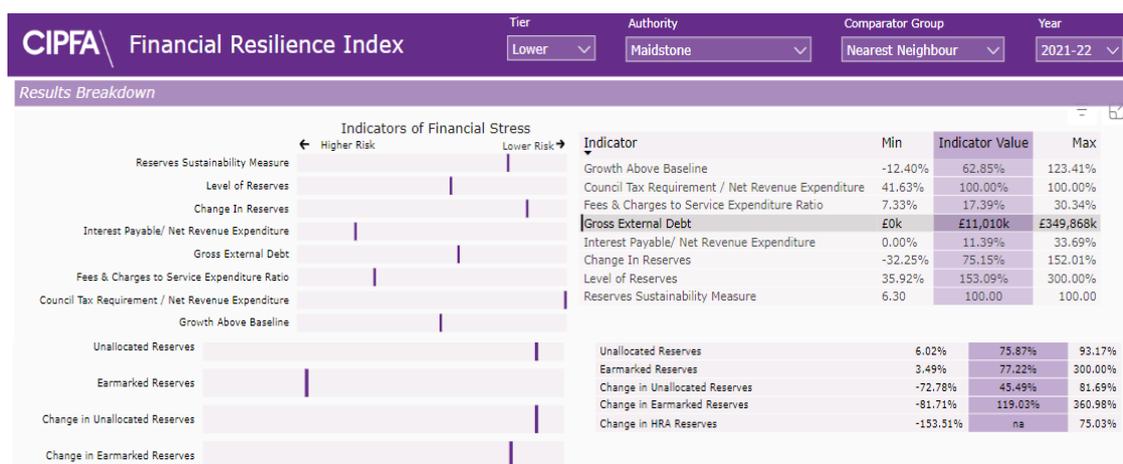
- 4.1 As a lower tier authority, Maidstone Borough Council is not subject to the extreme pressures currently faced by upper tier authorities arising in particular with respect to adults’ and children’s social care.
- 4.2 The Council is broadly self-sufficient financially. It ceased receiving direct government support in the form of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) in 2016/17 and relies mainly on Council Tax and a range of other locally generated sources of income, including parking, planning fees and the property portfolio, to fund ongoing revenue expenditure. During the pandemic, income fell and expenditure increased, but the consequent budget gap, being the difference between cost of services and aggregate income, was covered with direct government funding. This is illustrated in the graph below.

Figure 3: Sources of Council funding



- 4.3 The Council’s financial resilience can be assessed using CIPFA’s Resilience Index. The screen shot below shows Maidstone’s scores for 2021/22 (the most up to date data).

Figure 4 – CIPFA Resilience Index for the Council in 2021/22



Source: <https://www.cipfa.org/services/financial-resilience-index/resilience-index>

4.4 There are a number of measures captured by the Resilience Index that contribute to financial resilience, according to CIPFA, based on the Revenue Outturn data submitted to central government for 2021/22.

Reserves:

- sustainability of reserves
- level of reserves
- change in reserves
- level of unallocated reserves
- level of earmarked reserves
- change in unallocated reserves
- change in earmarked reserves.

Indebtedness:

- interest payable / net revenue expenditure
- gross external debt.

Financial profile:

- fees and charges as a % of service expenditure
- council tax requirement as % of net revenue expenditure
- growth above the government's business rates baseline.

4.5 CIPFA also considers that financial resilience depends on the quality of management, as evidenced by:

- quality of financial management, including use of performance information
- effective planning and implementation of capital investment
- ability to deliver budget savings if necessary
- risk management.

An assessment is set out below of how the Council performs on these measures.

Reserves

- 4.6 Indicators of financial stress relating to reserves for Maidstone are generally towards the 'lower risk' end of the spectrum, as compared with our peers. As at 31 March 2023 the Council had unallocated General Fund reserves of £13 million. This corresponds to three months of service expenditure, thus providing an adequate but not excessive level of 'cushion' against unforeseen events.
- 4.7 It should be noted that 'earmarked reserves' are shown as being towards the higher end of the risk spectrum, meaning that the Council holds lower earmarked reserves than many of its peers. Given that such reserves are, by definition, 'earmarked', it is not necessarily the case that high levels of earmarked reserves should be regarded as reducing risk. Drawing on such reserves could mean diverting them from the projects for which they were intended. A high level of earmarked reserves could also indicate a failure in project delivery.
- 4.8 It is nevertheless the case that the council needs to build up its Housing Investment Fund, which comes within the category of earmarked reserves. This is because the affordable housing programme requires a revenue subsidy, which needs to be in place before properties are transferred to a Housing Revenue Account (see paragraph 8.7 below).
- 4.9 Reserves are shown below within the context of the council's overall financial position, as represented by its most recent balance sheet (previous year shown for comparative purposes).

Table 2: Maidstone Borough Council balance sheet (unaudited)

31st March 2022 £000		31st March 2023 £000
185,324	Long Term Assets	194,687
53,195	Current Assets	25,338
77,649	Current Liabilities	52,577
97,854	Long Term Liabilities	23,643
63,016	Net Assets	143,805
12,516	Unallocated General Fund Balance	12,983
21,375	Earmarked General Fund Balance	21,376
288	Capital Reserves	369
28,837	Unusable Reserves	109,077
63,016	Total Reserves	143,805

4.10 The main changes between the two balance sheet dates and the principal reasons are as follows:

- *Increase in long term assets:* A number of additional properties were purchased during 2022/23.
- *Decrease in current assets:* These have reduced as the short-term liquid investments held at the start of the year have been used to fund the capital programme and make Support for Energy payments to eligible households along with some other Covid-19 related payments.
- *Decrease in current liabilities:* The decrease in liabilities is mainly owing to the deployment of government grants, previously held as liquid investments pending use for the purposes described above.
- *Decrease in long term liabilities:* There has been a significant reduction in the pensions liability. This has come about due to a change in the discount rate used, which is linked to short-term interest rates, which rose between March 2022 and March 2023.
- *Increase in unusable reserves:* This arises because the pension asset / liability in the balance sheet is treated as unusable. As the liability has fallen (see above) so the level of reserves increases.

4.11 The unallocated general fund balance, part of usable reserves, represents the Council's core reserves. It is an essential part of the Council's strategic financial planning, as this amount represents the funds available to address unforeseen financial pressures.

4.12 For local authorities there is no statutory minimum level of unallocated reserves. It is for each Council to take a view on the required level having regard to matters relevant to its local circumstances. CIPFA guidance issued in 2014 states that to assess the adequacy of unallocated general reserves the Chief Financial Officer should take account of the strategic, operational and financial risks facing their authority. The assessment of risks should include external risks, such as natural disasters, as well as internal risks such as the achievement of savings.

4.13 Maidstone Council historically set £2 million as a minimum level for unallocated reserves. In the light of the heightened risk environment facing the Council, it was agreed from 2021/22 that this minimum should be increased to £4 million. In practice, the level of unallocated reserves held is higher, at £13 million, thus providing a reasonable, but not excessive, level of additional assurance.

Indebtedness

4.14 The Council has a relatively low level of external debt. As at 31 March 2023 this amounted to £10 million. Although the Council has expanded its property portfolio in recent years, this has largely been funded from internal sources.

4.15 The CIPFA Resilience Index shows interest payable compared with net revenue expenditure as being towards the higher risk end of the spectrum.

However, this is somewhat misleading, because the figure used for interest payable comprises just £100,000 payable on external debt and £1.8 million representing a notional interest charge on pension liabilities.

Financial profile

- 4.16 Three of the metrics used by CIPFA indicate the authority’s underlying financial strength. These reflect the profile of the local economy and are usually of very long historical standing.

Fees and charges as a % of service expenditure measures the extent to which an authority can cover service expenditure through fees and charges. It is beneficial, for example, if an authority can generate substantial parking income. Maidstone tends towards ‘higher risk’ on this measure, possibly indicating that it is not exploiting such sources of income as effectively as it could do.

Council tax requirement as % of net revenue expenditure measures the extent to which Council Tax income covers revenue expenditure. Maidstone is very low risk on this basis, as it can cover revenue expenditure fully through council tax income, without being dependent on external income or government funding.

Growth above baseline measures the rate of business rates growth as compared to the government’s baseline. An area with a strong local economy would perform well on this metric. Maidstone is in the middle of the risk spectrum.

Financial management

- 4.17 The Council has a strong track record of managing finances within the agreed budgets. The revenue out-turn for 2022/23 is set out below, showing that the Council ended the year spending just £212,000 (1%) less than the agreed budget for the year.

Table 3: 2022/23 Revenue Out-turn

Service	Budget £000	Actual £000	Variance £000
Economic Development	620	720	-100
Planning	2,112	2,444	-332
Parking	-1,410	-1,865	455
Corporate Services	10,894	10,270	624
Housing & Health	2,726	3,711	-985
Environmental Services	6,874	6,364	510
Communities, Leisure & Arts	1,414	1,375	39
Total	23,231	23,019	212

- 4.18 Financial management at Maidstone Borough Council contains a number of elements. Officers and members are fully engaged in the annual budget

setting process, which means that there is a clear understanding of financial plans and the resulting detailed budgets

- 4.19 Detailed financial reports are prepared and used on a monthly basis by managers, and on a quarterly basis by elected members, to monitor performance against the budget. Reports to members are clear, reliable and timely, enabling a clear focus on any areas of variance from the plan.
- 4.20 Financial reports are complemented by performance indicators, which are reported both at the service level to the wider leadership team, and at a corporate level to members. Member reports on performance indicators are aligned with the financial reports, so that members see a comprehensive picture of how services are performing.
- 4.21 Financial management and reporting is constantly reviewed to ensure that it is fit for purpose and meets the organisation's requirements. Quarterly financial reports to members have been redesigned over the last two years to make them more user-friendly.
- 4.22 Where variances arise, prompt action is taken to address them. Action plans are put in place at an early stage if it appears that there is likely to be a budget overspend.
- 4.23 The authority consistently receives clean external and internal audit opinions.

Capital investment

- 4.24 The Council has a capital programme amounting to around £200 million over the next five years. The main element within the programme is the housing programme. Site acquisitions to date provide the capacity to deliver around 500 units. These will comprise a mix of tenures but a significant element will contribute to the overall target of delivering 1,000 affordable homes over the next ten years.
- 4.25 All schemes within the capital programme are subject to appropriate option appraisal. Any appraisal must comply with the requirements of the Prudential Code, which requires that capital investment should be funded in a way that is prudent, affordable and sustainable. Accordingly, an investment appraisal is undertaken prior to any site acquisitions for the housing programme.
- 4.26 The capital programme is largely funded through external sources, so it depends on the availability of funding, whether through Public Works Loan Board borrowing or other sources of finance. The Council has locked in £80 million of future borrowing, to be drawn down between 2024 to 2026, in order to mitigate the funding risk.
- 4.27 Member oversight is ensured, first by inclusion of schemes in the capital programme that is approved as part of the annual budget setting process. Subsequently, prior to any capital commitment being entered into, a report setting out details of the capital scheme is considered by the relevant service committee.

- 4.28 The Council has a corporate project management framework that applies to projects included within the capital programme. This provides for designation of a project manager and sponsor and includes a mechanism for progress on major projects to be reported to a Strategic Capital Investment Board.
- 4.29 So far as the housing programme is concerned, effective delivery of the programme is assured through an experienced in-house client team, which sources appropriate external skills (architects, employers' agents, contractors) to implement individual schemes. Each scheme is monitored from a financial and operational viewpoint and financial monitoring of capital projects is incorporated within the quarterly reports to Service Committees.

Ability to deliver budget savings

- 4.30 The Council has a good track record of delivering budget savings, whilst sustaining and investing in services. Savings initiatives are planned so far as possible across the five-year period of the MTFS, rather than the focus being simply on achieving whatever savings are necessary in order to balance the budget for the coming year.
- 4.31 A common criticism of local authority financial planning is that proposed savings are often over-optimistic and are not based on realistic evidence of what is achievable. The Council aims to mitigate this risk with a robust process for developing budget savings proposals:
- New and updated savings proposals are sought on a regular annual cycle, with Service Managers typically briefed on the savings remit in August/September
 - Savings proposals are then developed over a period of around two months
 - Savings proposals have to be formally documented and signed off by the Service Head who will be responsible for delivering them.
- 4.32 Once savings have been built into the budget, their achievement is monitored as part of the regular financial management process described above.

Risk management

- 4.33 The Council's MTFS is subject to a high degree of risk and uncertainty. In order to address this in a structured way and to ensure that appropriate mitigations are developed, the Council has developed a budget risk register. This seeks to capture all known budget risks and to present them in a readily comprehensible way. The budget risk register is updated regularly and is reviewed by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee at each meeting.
- 4.34 The major risk areas that have been identified as potentially threatening the Medium Term Financial Strategy are as follows, in ranking order.

- Inflation rate is higher than 2% government target
- Capital programme cannot be funded
- Constraints on council tax increases
- Failure to contain expenditure within agreed budgets
- Financial impact from major emergencies such as Covid-19
- Planned savings are not delivered
- Business Rates pool fails to generate sufficient growth
- Collection targets for Council Tax and Business Rates missed
- Adverse impact from changes in local government funding
- Financial impact from IT security failure
- Pension liability cannot be funded
- Other income fails to achieve budget
- Fees and Charges fail to deliver sufficient income
- Litigation costs exceed budgeted provisions
- Increased complexity of government regulation
- Shared services fail to meet budget
- Council holds insufficient balances

4.35 The Council has implemented JCAD risk management software, which allows individual service areas to log and monitor risks. By reviewing risks on a regular basis in this way, it is expected that any major new risks will be identified and appropriate mitigations developed.

Conclusion

4.36 When assessed against the CIPFA criteria for financial resilience, the Council can be seen to have adequate reserves in the short term and to be positioned well to manage the financial challenges it will face. The following section considers whether this position is sustainable.

5. SCENARIO PLANNING

5.1 As Maidstone’s financial position is dependent on government policy and on broader economic factors such as inflation, neither of which can be predicted with any certainty, it is appropriate to model the impact of different scenarios on the Council. Following a similar approach to that adopted when developing the current 2023/24 – 2027/28 Medium Term Financial Strategy, the following four scenarios can be sketched out.

<p>Scenario 1: Inflation falls, limited funding flexibility</p> <p>The rate of price inflation falls in line with BoE forecasts, but government maintains existing constraints on local government finances in order to reduce debt and create capacity for tax cuts.</p>
<p>Scenario 2: Inflation falls, some funding flexibility</p> <p>Inflation falls in line with BoE forecasts, and government adopts more accommodative local government finance settlements to help councils address demand pressures.</p>
<p>Scenario 3: Inflation remains elevated, some funding flexibility</p> <p>Inflation only reaches the target level of 2% at the end of the MTFS planning period. Owing to the continued high level of inflation, government relaxes constraints on local government finances to allow council services to be protected.</p>
<p>Scenario 4: Inflation remains elevated, limited funding flexibility</p> <p>Inflation only reaches the target level of 2% at the end of the MTFS planning period, but government maintains the existing level of constraints on local government finances.</p>

Scenario 4 is the most challenging of those sketched out above, as it represents a combination of continued high inflation and tight constraints on the Council’s revenue raising capacity. For planning purposes, we consider it prudent at this stage to adopt Scenario 4. However, the other scenarios will be modelled and the implications considered when developing the detailed Medium Term Financial Strategy.

5.2 The next section sets out planning assumptions under each of the above scenarios.

6. PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 In drawing up financial projections, assumptions need to be made about what future scenarios might mean. The key dimensions are:

- (a) the Council Tax base;
- (b) the level of Council Tax;
- (c) retained Business Rates, which in turn depends on overall business rates and government policy on distributing Business Rates income;
- (d) other local income, eg fees and charges;
- (e) the cost of service delivery, which is subject to the effect of inflation on input prices.

Each of these is considered in more detail below.

Council Tax base

6.2 Council Tax is a product of the tax base and the level of tax set by Council. The tax base is a value derived from the number of chargeable residential properties within the borough and their band, which is based on valuation ranges, adjusted by all discounts and exemptions.

6.3 The tax base has increased steadily in recent years, reflecting the number of new housing developments in the borough. See table below:

Table 4: Number of Dwellings in Maidstone

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of dwellings	70,843	71,917	73,125	75,034	76,351
% increase compared with previous year	1.74%	1.52%	1.68%	2.61%	1.76%

Note: Number of dwellings is reported each year based on the position shown on the valuation list in September.

6.4 The Council tax base is also affected by collection rates and the number of households benefitting from the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. Typically these factors do not vary significantly between years but in the event of a major downturn in the economy, collection rates could be expected to fall and more households would be eligible for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

6.5 Future growth assumptions for each scenario are set out below.

Council Tax base growth assumptions					
	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Scenario 1 – Inflation falls, limited funding flexibility	1.5%	1.5%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Scenario 2 – Inflation falls, some funding flexibility	1.5%	1.5%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Scenario 3 – Inflation remains elevated, some funding flexibility	1.5%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Scenario 4 – Inflation remains elevated, limited funding flexibility	1.5%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%

Level of Council Tax

6.6 The level of council tax increase for 2024/25 is a decision that will be made by Council based on a recommendation made by the Cabinet. In practice, the Council’s ability to increase the level of council tax is limited by the need to hold a referendum for increases over a government set limit. In 2023/24, the limit was 3%. The Council approved the maximum possible increase. The rationale for this approach was that:

- pressures on the Council’s budget mean that even a marginal difference in Council Tax income is of value;
- the referendum limit might revert to a lower level in later years;
- because the starting point for calculating the referendum limit in any given year is the previous year’s Council Tax, agreeing a lower increase reduces the Council’s room for manoeuvre in later years.

6.7 Given that CPI inflation was 8.7% for the year to May 2023, it is hard to see the referendum limit being reduced from the current level of 3%. A prudent assumption (Scenario 4) would therefore be that the referendum limit will be 3% in 2024/25, but after the General Election that is due to take place by January 2025, the government will seek to bear down on inflation by restricting the limit to 2%, being the target level of inflation¹.

6.8 Future growth assumptions for each scenario are set out below.

¹ The Leader of the Labour Party announced in March 2023 that a Labour government would freeze Council Tax in 2024/25, using the proceeds of a windfall tax on oil and gas companies. Presumably this means that central government would reimburse local authorities with an amount equivalent to that by which they would have increased tax locally.

Council Tax increase assumptions					
	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Scenario 1 – Inflation falls, limited funding flexibility	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Scenario 2 – Inflation falls, some funding flexibility	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Scenario 3 – Inflation remains elevated, some funding flexibility	5.0%	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Scenario 4 – Inflation remains elevated, limited funding flexibility	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%

- 6.9 A key MTFS assumption is that Council Tax increases are maximised within the constraints of the referendum limit.

Retained business rates

- 6.10 Under the current business rates regime, local government in aggregate retains 50% of business rates income. However, most of the 50% share collected locally is lost to Maidstone, because it is redistributed to other authorities through a system of tariffs and top-ups.

Table 5: Baseline Business Rates Income 2023/24

	£000	%
Baseline Business Rates income	62,333	100
Government share	-31,166	-50
Kent County Council / Kent Fire & Rescue Authority	-6,233	-10
Government tariff	-21,551	-35
Baseline Business Rates income retained by MBC	3,382	-5

To the extent that business rates income exceeds the baseline, this growth element is retained locally, subject to a levy payable to central government by tariff authorities like Maidstone.

- 6.11 The Council has been able to minimise the levy payable on business rates growth through its membership of the Kent Business Rates Pool. This is because the levy payable by some pool members (district councils) is offset against the top-up received by the major preceptors (Kent County Council and Kent Fire and Rescue).
- 6.12 Business rates pool income is allocated, in accordance with the Pool Memorandum of Understanding between Kent authorities, as follows.

Maidstone Borough Council – used for specific projects that form part of the Economic Development strategy. £250,000 of this amount is top-sliced in the budget for ED salaries and spatial planning.	30%
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Growth Fund – In Maidstone this is split 50:50 between MBC and Kent County Council for the regeneration of the Town Centre and is deployed at Maidstone East and Sessions House / Invicta House respectively.	30%
Kent County Council	30%
Contingency - To compensate Kent local authorities who do not benefit directly from pool membership (eg because their business rates growth is lower than the baseline)	10%

6.13 There are a number of factors affecting the future pattern of business rates income:

- Government uses the share of business rates that local authorities are allowed to retain as a mechanism for directing resources towards the areas of perceived need (hence Maidstone, as a relatively prosperous area, only retaining 5% of baseline business rates). This resource allocation has remained broadly unchanged since 2014, when the current local government funding system was introduced, but a 'fair funding review', which will update the resource allocation, has been mooted for several years. In practice it is now unlikely to be implemented before 2026/27.
- The government share of business rates and the tariff (see Table 4 above) are fixed £ amounts, based on a predetermined business rates baseline. This has benefited the Council over the past ten years, as the rate of business rates growth has been greater locally than general price inflation, and the Council has benefited from this excess growth. However, the reverse could be the case if there is a downturn in total business rates income.
- As part of any change to the funding system, the business rates baseline is expected to be adjusted. This will give a higher baseline for the Council, with the result that the accumulated business rates growth of the past ten years, which (subject to the levy) is currently retained locally, would be lost.

6.14 These factors are generally likely to have an adverse impact on business rates income. However, the government has indicated that changes such as implementation of the fair funding review and a revision of the baseline would be implemented over a period of time, dampening any immediate adverse impact.

6.15 Future growth assumptions for each scenario are set out below.

Business rates growth assumptions					
	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Scenario 1 – Inflation falls, limited funding flexibility	3.0%	2.0%	-2.0%	-2.0%	-2.0%
Scenario 2 – Inflation falls, some funding flexibility	3.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Scenario 3 – Inflation remains elevated, some funding flexibility	5.0%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Scenario 4 – Inflation remains elevated, limited funding flexibility	5.0%	2.0%	-2.0%	-2.0%	-2.0%

Other income

- 6.16 Other income, in aggregate, is now a major contributor to the Council’s total revenue budget. The main components of other income are set out below:

Table 6: Projected Other Income 2023/24

	£ million
Fees and charges	10.5
Property rental income	7.1
Shared services trading income	3.7
Other income	2.8
TOTAL	24.1

The Council has a policy that guides officers and councillors to set the appropriate level of fees and charges based on demand, affordability and external factors. Given the current inflationary environment, it is important to target an appropriate overall increase in the amount of fees and charges to mitigate the expected increase in the Council’s input costs. The alternative would be for the Council to have to make further savings, potentially reducing the level of services that it provides to residents.

- 6.17 Note that some fees and charges are set by central government and are not necessarily increased annually. Rents may only change at the point of periodic rent reviews.
- 6.18 Future growth assumptions for each scenario are set out below. These correspond to the inflation level projected for the respective scenarios, on the basis that it is reasonable to expect income to increase in line with expenditure. A key MTFS assumption is that overall income from fees and charges increases in line with expected increases in the Council’s input costs.

Other income growth assumptions					
	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
Scenario 1 – Inflation falls, limited funding flexibility	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Scenario 2 – Inflation falls, some funding flexibility	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Scenario 3 – Inflation remains elevated, some funding flexibility	5.0%	5.0%	4.0%	3.0%	2.0%
Scenario 4 – Inflation remains elevated, limited funding flexibility	5.0%	5.0%	4.0%	3.0%	2.0%

Cost of services

- 6.19 The cost of services is subject to inflation. Service cost increases tend to lag behind published inflation indices, but they are likely to follow the same pattern. Salaries account for around 50% of total input costs, and market pressures are likely to mean that inflation will impact salaries in the medium term. Many other costs, in particular contract costs, are directly linked to inflation indices.
- 6.20 As described above, there is considerable doubt about whether inflation will fall as quickly as official forecasts suggest. Accordingly, the preferred scenario 4 adopts a more prudent approach than simply following the Bank of England forecast.

Cost of services growth assumptions					
	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28
Scenario 1 – Inflation falls, limited funding flexibility	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Scenario 2 – Inflation falls, some funding flexibility	3.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
Scenario 3 – Inflation remains elevated, some funding flexibility	5.0%	5.0%	4.0%	3.0%	2.0%
Scenario 4 – Inflation remains elevated, limited funding flexibility	5.0%	5.0%	4.0%	3.0%	2.0%

For the purposes of detailed budget planning, a more granular approach is taken to forecasting budget growth, and specific percentages are applied to the different categories within cost of services.

7. REVENUE PROJECTIONS

- 7.1 Strategic revenue projections for scenario 4 are summarised in table 7 below. In light of the many uncertainties around future funding, it is important to note that projections like these can only represent a 'best estimate' of what will happen. These projections will be updated as more information becomes available, prior to a final version of the projections being included in the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Table 7: MTFS Revenue Projections 2024/25-2028/29

	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Scenario 4					
Total Resources	53.7	54.7	56.4	58.5	60.2
Predicted Expenditure	55.3	59.2	61.0	61.9	62.7
Budget Gap	1.6	4.5	4.6	3.4	2.5
Existing Planned Savings	0.7	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.1
Savings Required	0.9	4.5	4.4	3.3	2.4

- 7.2 Issues contributing to the budget gap in 2024/25 are inflation and £700,000 of additional growth in 2023/24 which was funded from one-off resources and is now built into base budgets. In 2025/26 and future years, the potential loss of funding from a local government funding reset and the cost of borrowing for the capital programme lead to much larger budget gap figures.
- 7.3 Note that all these assumptions assume that Council Tax income is increased by the maximum possible given the referendum limit, and fees and charges are increased in line with inflation. In all cases, the budget gap would be greater if these measures were not taken. See below for illustrative figures for 2024/25.

	£000
'Do nothing' budget gap	2,023
Increase Council Tax by 3%	-573
Increase Other Income by 5%	-525
Budget gap per Strategic Revenue Projection	925

- 7.4 In summary, it is assumed here that Council Tax is increased by the maximum possible, which in Scenario 4 is 3%; and that in order to deliver a 5% increase in other income, fees and charges are increased appropriately. To the extent that individual categories of fees and charges are not increased by this amount, compensating additional increases would need to be found elsewhere.

Approach to balancing the budget

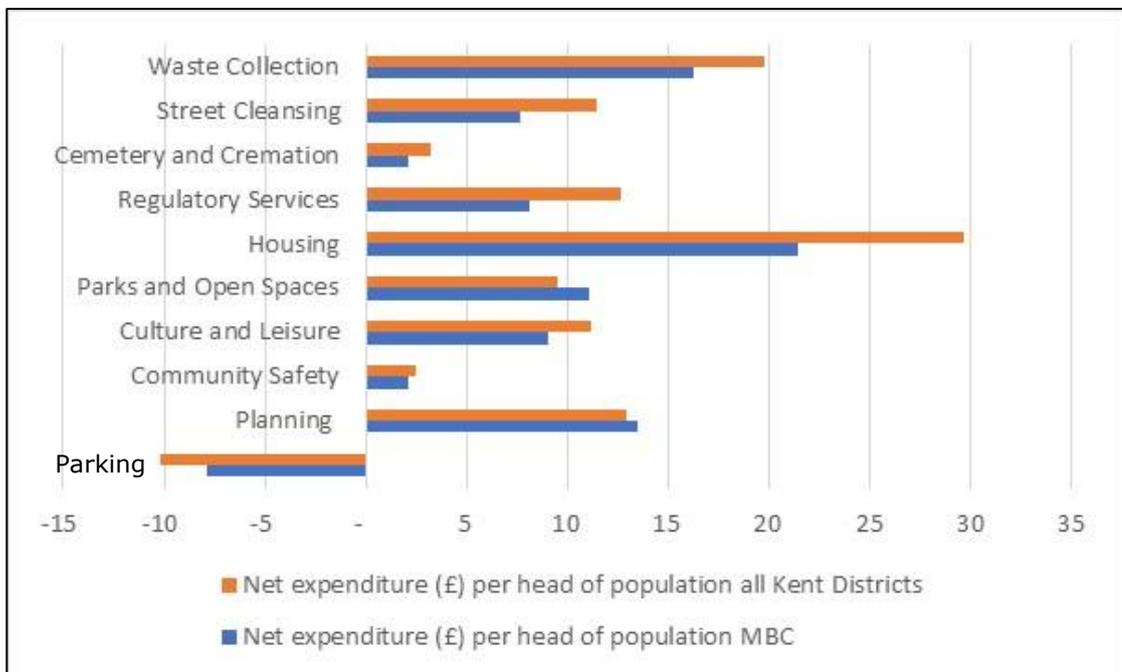
- 7.5 The immediate priority in setting a balanced budget for 2024/25 is to close the budget gap of £925,000 for next year. In line with the Council's usual

practice, savings proposals have been sought from service managers. Whilst individual proposals may not amount to significant sums, in aggregate they may contribute substantially to meeting the deficit.

7.6 It can be seen from the table above that savings on a much greater scale will be required in subsequent years. Assuming that the projections remain broadly unchanged, this will demand a much more thoroughgoing review of Council budgets, and potentially service reductions. In seeking areas where there may be potential for making savings, it is worth comparing the Council's most recent spending data with those of its peers – the other district Councils of Kent. This is not to imply that this Council is over-spending or under-spending in particular areas. Rather, it is intended to put our allocation of expenditure against the different priorities in context.

Figure 5: Expenditure per head of population

Source: Local Authority 2021/22 Revenue Outturn returns



7.7 From this it can be seen that MBC spends more than its peers on:

- Parks and Open Spaces
- Planning and Development
- Parking (ie income is lower than average).

6.7 Work will need to take place over the coming year so that savings proposals are ready for the start of the 2025/26 budget process.

8. CAPITAL STRATEGY

8.1 The capital programme plays a vital part in delivering the Council’s strategic plan, since it is only through long term investment that our ambitions for the borough, in particular the 1,000 Affordable Homes programme, can be realised. The capital programme has an impact on revenue, because of the cost of borrowing and the annual charge (Minimum Revenue Provision – MRP) that the Council is required to make to set aside sufficient money to fund the repayment of borrowing.

8.2 The profile of the current five year capital programme is as follows.

Table 8: Capital Programme 2023/24 – 2027/28

	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Affordable Housing	6,123	20,080	22,825	25,487	22,442	96,958
Social Housing Grant	-5,790	-3,120	-1,290	-8,250	-6,060	-24,510
Private Rented Sector	3,090	6,765	6,832	9,578	6,861	33,125
Temporary Accommodation	12,000	12,000	8,000	0	0	32,000
Disabled Facilities	800	800	800	800	800	4,000
Housing – Other	675	1,325	974	543	100	3,616
Environment	6,970	880	730	580	590	9,750
Communities, Leisure & Arts	4,329	3,700	3,350	1,000	1,000	13,379
Planning & Infrastructure	206	0	0	0	0	206
Corporate Services	10,514	7,280	5,423	5,249	4,903	33,369
Total	38,917	49,710	47,644	34,986	30,636	201,893

8.3 As the level of investment increases, the revenue cost of borrowing increases. Ultimately this is offset by income, to the extent that capital schemes generate income, eg in the form of housing rents. However, there is a period during which capital schemes need to be funded before they start to generate income.

8.4 There are a number of risks associated with the capital programme which potentially will impact the revenue account, to the extent that capital expenditure is abortive or leads to the write-down of capital investments:

- Construction price
- Contractor failure / liquidation
- Availability / cost of finance (currently the Council has arranged £80 million of funding, but the availability and cost of finance when this is exhausted is not known).

- 8.5 Finally, there is a specific requirement in relation to the Affordable Housing programme to provide the necessary subsidy for tenants. The requirement for a subsidy arises because affordable housing (ie housing to be let at a rent of no more than 80% of the Local Housing Allowance) does not achieve the normal rate of return that is required on Council investments in order to satisfy the prudential borrowing rules.
- 8.6 In order to avoid the Council facing an ongoing revenue burden from subsidising affordable housing tenants, and to avoid setting deficit budgets in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) when it is established, it is assumed that a capital sum of around £50,000 per unit must be set aside for each unit of affordable housing. Note that there are strict rules about the HRA ringfence, above all the fact that the HRA cannot set a deficit budget. The capital sum must be set aside **before** housing units are transferred into the HRA. Otherwise, the HRA would run a deficit for every unit of housing transferred in, because of the excessive cost of funding housing stock that is transferred into it.
- 8.7 If the target of 1,000 affordable homes is to be achieved over a ten year period, the Council needs to set aside funds now to provide the necessary subsidy. An opportunity to provide this subsidy, without impacting core revenue spending, is available thanks to the government's continued deployment of one-off resources each year to local authorities in the form of New Homes Bonus and Services Grant. In 2022/23, an initial tranche of £3.2 million was earmarked from New Homes Bonus and transferred to a Housing Investment Fund. Although there is no assurance that such grants will continue to be available into the future, if the Council is to provide affordable homes as part of its capital programme, it needs to maximise the amount of one off resources, eg New Homes Bonus and Services Grant, that are transferred into the Housing Investment Fund. Note that there is a risk that New Homes Bonus will reduce in future, as housing growth falls, so any other one off resources will likely be required as well.
- 8.8 It is proposed that a key MTFs assumption is that one-off resources such as New Homes Bonus and Services Grant are earmarked for the Housing Investment Fund.

9. CONSULTATION AND NEXT STEPS

- 9.1 Each year the Council carries out consultation as part of the development of the MTFS. A budget survey is being carried out and is due to close on 28th August 2023. The results will be reported to members to aid their consideration of the budget proposals.
- 9.2 Consultation with members will take place in September 2023 on detailed revenue budget proposals. Individual Policy Advisory Committees will consider the budget proposals relating to the services within their areas of responsibility, and Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet will consider the budget proposals for the Council as a whole.
- 9.3 Proposed fees and charges for 2024/25 will be considered by the Policy Advisory Committees and Cabinet later in the Autumn; capital budget proposals will be considered by the Corporate Services PAC and Cabinet in January 2024. The final budget will be presented to Council on the 21st February 2024.

Policy Advisory Committee

Revenue Budget Proposals 2024/25 - 2028/29

Service	Proposal	24/25	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Existing Savings							
Land Charges	Migration of land charges register to HM Land Registry	-30	63				33
Land Charges	Staff reduction	-13					-13
MK Planning Support	Process improvement and automation		-15				-15
	Sub-total	-43	48	0	0	0	5
New Savings							
Spatial Planning and Economic Development	Additional contribution from Business Rates Pool	-150					-150
Parking	Delete residual Park and Ride site costs	-100					-100
Development Management	Additional CIL recharge for administration	-50					-50
Parking	Short-term additional parking at Sandling Road	-50					-50
	Sub-total	-350	0	0	0	0	-350
OVERALL CHANGE IN BUDGET (£000)		-393	48	0	0	0	-345

Negative figures shown above represent a reduction in expenditure budgets, or increased income targets. Positive figures indicate increased expenditure, or a reduction in the income budget.

Agenda Item 12

PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**06 September
2023**

MBC response to Kent County Council Emerging Local Transport Plan Consultation

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	06/09/23
Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	By 18/09/23

Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development.
Lead Head of Service	Karen Britton (Head of Spatial Planning & Economic Development)
Lead Officer and Report Author	Tom Gilbert (Principal Planner) & Thom Hoang (Principal Planner)
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Kent County Council (KCC) has prepared an early draft Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5), as it starts the process of replacing the fourth plan, Delivering Growth without Gridlock, adopted in 2017. The consultation on the emerging LTP5 commenced on the 27 June 2023 and will run through to 18 September 2023.

This report summarises the purpose of the LTP5 consultation (see background document 1) and what KCC is seeking views on.

It recommends that members agree a formal response to the consultation, as drafted by officers and appended to this report in Appendix 1. It also provides a simplified list of Local Transport Plan Consultation challenges, policy outcomes and objectives, as well as associated MBC comments, in Appendix 2.

Purpose of Report

Decision

To inform members of the emerging LTP5 Consultation and to seek agreement to submit the response appended to this report.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee recommend that the response to the consultation at Appendix 1 of this report be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development. This would allow the response to be sent by the submission deadline.

MBC response to Kent County Council Emerging Local Transport Plan Consultation

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities and may contribute to the delivery of infrastructure associated with the first priority.</p>	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations support the achievements of the four, cross cutting objectives by ensuring that plans from the County authority do not materially harm the council's ability to achieve these objectives.</p>	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager
Risk Management	<p>The recommendations seek to reduce the risk associated with alignment with the adopted Local Plan, as well as the emerging Local Plan Review by ensuring that plans produced by the county council are not in conflict with our own and those set out in government policy.</p>	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager
Financial	<p>The proposals set out in the recommendation do not have any direct financial impact as it's</p>	Section 151 Officer &

	a response to a consultation. Costs of responding are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager
Legal	<i>There are no legal implications arising from the report.</i>	Cheryl Parks Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
Privacy and Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules. • We recognise the recommendations will impact what personal information the Council processes and so have completed a separate data privacy impact assessment [at reference]. 	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Sarah Ward - Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation will not have a negative impact on Crime and Disorder.	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager
Procurement	The recommendation has no immediate impact on budget headings or expenditure in the current year.	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and will become clearer in future consultations.	Mark Egerton – Strategic Planning Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 Kent County Council (KCC) has prepared an early draft Local Transport Plan 5 (LTP5), as it starts the process of replacing the fourth plan, Delivering Growth without Gridlock, adopted in 2017.

2.2 Presently Kent County Council are consulting on the emerging LTP5. The consultation runs from **27th June to 18th September 2023**. This report sets out the context to the LTP5, summarises what the consultation involves and the proposed Maidstone Borough Council response.

Background

2.3 Kent County Council as the local transport authority is required by the Transport Act 2000 to produce a Local Transport Plan. Specifically, it has a duty to:

- Develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within their area, and;
- Carry out their functions to implement those policies.

2.4 The purpose of LTP5 is to help inform central government on the pipeline of proposals KCC have regarding transport schemes, the funding required, and the contribution these will make to national policy goals and targets.

2.5 This proposed consultation is the first public consultation stage of the fifth Local Transport Plan for Kent.

2.6 The main reasons given for the review are the new transport challenges arising across the county and changing policy context since the adoption of the previous Local Transport Plan. Both mean a new plan and actions are needed.

Content of the consultation

2.7 The LTP5 consultation document (background document 1) is sets out in four parts:

- The context,
- The challenges,
- The ambition, and;
- Policy outcomes to be delivered.

2.8 It sets out the ambition and policy outcomes that KCC want to deliver regarding future transport schemes. It should be noted that the early draft LTP5 being consulted on is not a completed full Local Transport Plan. The consultation document does not contain detail of initiatives or proposals for local transport improvements for places across the county. Those details will be part of a draft full Local Transport Plan next year. At this stage, KCC is only seeking views on whether they are focused on the right challenges and the right outcomes for Kent, and what actions KCC should take, either on a countywide basis or in different places of Kent to meet its objectives.

2.9 The context section of the consultation document sets out the changes to local policy (borough and county) and national policy (central government) since the last Local Transport Plan was adopted.

2.10 The consultation sets out that there are 9 challenges that are currently being faced across the county. These include:

- CHALLENGE 1 - Our highways assets are in a phase of managed decline which in turn risks them becoming less resilient to new pressures.
- CHALLENGE 2 - Following a decline in the number of injuries and fatalities on Kent's roads, these levels have risen in 2021.
- CHALLENGE 3 - Traffic is causing congestion, poor air quality and negatively impacting Kent's economy.
- CHALLENGE 4 - Transport challenges in Kent arise from how the existing population of 1.6 million people and 70,000 businesses in the county choose to travel as well as traffic generated by new developments being built.
- CHALLENGE 5 - Some indicators of public health, such as obesity and life expectancy, have been worsening.
- CHALLENGE 6 - The financial viability of the public transport service has declined due to cost pressures and changes in passenger demand, leading to cuts in public transport services.
- CHALLENGE 7 - Kent's international gateways need government leadership – the impacts which arise and affect our local communities and the national economy cannot be resolved entirely by ourselves.
- CHALLENGE 8 - Related to all the previous points, carbon dioxide (CO₂e) emission reductions from management and use of the road network are forecast to remain at too high a level compared to the reduced levels needed to contribute towards reducing the worst effects of climate change.
- CHALLENGE 9 - We need more funding and need to know what funding we will have over the next few years so we can improve transport in Kent.

2.11 Faced with these challenges KCC has developed an ambition for transport in the county, please see below:

'The ambition for what our plan will achieve and how we plan to do that is:

We want to improve the health, wellbeing, and economic prosperity of lives in Kent by delivering a safe, reliable, efficient and affordable transport network across the county and as an international gateway. We will plan for growth in Kent in a way that enables us to combat climate change and preserve Kent's environment.

We will do this by delivering emission-free travel by getting effective dedicated infrastructure to electrify vehicles, increase public transport use and make walking and cycling attractive. This will be enabled by maintaining our highways network and delivering our Vision Zero road safety strategy. These priorities will ensure our networks are future-proof, resilient and meet user needs.'

2.12 Based on the ambition and identified nine challenges across the county, KCC have proposed nine policy outcomes to address them. The policy outcomes are accompanied by seventeen detailed policy objectives. These are, as previously

stated, not scheme specific but broad ideas that will help KCC to focus on proposals at the next stage of consultation. The policy outcomes include:

- POLICY OUTCOME 1: The condition of our managed transport network is kept to satisfactory levels, helping to maintain safe and accessible travel and trade.
- POLICY OUTCOME 2: Deliver out Vision Zero road safety strategy through all the work we do.
- POLICY OUTCOME 3: International travel becomes a positive part of Kent's economy, facilitated by the county's transport network, with the negative effects of international haulage traffic decreased.
- POLICY OUTCOME 4: International rail travel returns to Kent and there are improved rail and public transport connections to international hubs.
- POLICY OUTCOME 5: Deliver resilient transport, future-proofed for growth and innovation, aiming for an infrastructure-first approach to reduce the risk of highways and public transport congestion due to development.
- POLICY OUTCOME 6: Access to Kent's historic and natural environment is enhanced.
- POLICY OUTCOME 7: Road-side air quality improves as decarbonisation of travel accelerates, contributing towards the pursuit of carbon budget targets and net zero in 2050.
- POLICY OUTCOME 8: A growing public transport system supported by dedicated infrastructure to attract increased ridership, helping operators to provide more and invest in better services.
- POLICY OUTCOME 9: Transport makes a positive contribution to public health due to increasing numbers of people using a growing cycling and pedestrian network with dedicated infrastructure, and any increase in disturbance from aviation noise is avoided.

2.13 Further details on the policy outcomes and objectives can be found in background paper one.

Summary of proposed response

2.14 The response to the consultation is via a template questionnaire and the proposed response is outlined in appendix 1 of this report. In preparing the response officers have reviewed the existing plans and strategies in the Borough with relevance to transport. A second appendix (Appendix 2) has also been provided to specifically outline the challenges, outcomes and objectives identified by KCC and the proposed Council responses to these for ease. These responses have then been added to appendix 1 in the required points of the questionnaire.

2.15 In summary, whilst MBC is supportive of the emerging LTP5 and its overall approach there are concerns. These include:

- The ambition is lacking with regard to: the tourism & leisure sectors, accessibility for all and timely delivery of infrastructure.
- Challenges 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9 need to be amended and a new challenge with regards to electric vehicles and zero carbon

transport is needed. The council also feels that the LTP5 document is lacking on the changing context with regards to travel which needs to be addressed.

- Policy outcomes 1, 5, 6 and 8 need to be amended and new one added around emerging development growth in the county; and;
- Policy objectives 3A, 3B, 5A, 5B, 5C, 6A, 7A, 7B, 7C, 8A, 8B, and 9A, need to be amended to see the retention of the Leeds Langley Relief Road as a scheme in the LTP and support the extension of Thameslink to Maidstone Railway Stations amongst other comments.

2.16 A full list of the Council's comments on the challenges, outcomes and objectives is in appendix 2.

Next Steps

2.17 Following the close of the consultation on the 18th September 2023 proposals will be developed and a further consultation on a full Local Transport Plan is expected in 2024.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 Option 1: That the Committee recommend that the response to the consultation at Appendix 1 of this report be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development. This would allow the response to be sent by the submission deadline.

3.2 Option 2: That the Committee recommend that the response at Appendix 1 of this report be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development, subject to further comments and changes. The consultation deadline is 18th September 2023 and so comments and changes would need to be incorporated to meet the deadline.

3.3 Option 3: That the Committee do not agree a response to the consultation. This would mean that KCC would continue production of its LTP5 without relevant input from Maidstone Borough Council at this stage.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Option 1: That the Committee recommend that the response to the consultation at Appendix 1 of this report be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development. This would allow the response to be sent by the submission deadline.

5. RISK

5.1 The risk associated with these proposals, as well as any risks should the Council not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 The MBC response to the KCC consultation on the Emerging Local Transport Plan provided alongside this report will have been considered by the Committee and their comments will be reported to the Cabinet Member.

6.2 Alongside national transport strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework the Kent Local Transport Plan provides the context for Maidstone's Integrated Transport Strategy (MITS). Given the current review of the Kent LTP5 it would also be timely to review the MITS. With changes in the impact and trends for climate, connectivity needs, travel preferences and patterns through demographic changes and technology advances there is a changed community context for the borough's transport strategy too.

6.3 It is proposed that as a starting point Maidstone Borough Council needs to ensure that the MITS meets sustainable development objectives. This means:

- Ensuring that people have genuine choice as to how they travel.
- Ensuring that transport systems support the borough's economic prosperity.
- Securing access to transport systems wherever people live and their mobility.
- Ensuring that transport is affordable.
- Ensuring safety throughout our transport systems.
- Reducing health impacts from air quality.
- Enabling reduced environmental and climate change impacts.
- Enabling improved resilience and greater efficiency for our transport systems.

6.4 It proposed that a comprehensive review is conducted commencing with a thorough future focussed debate on the challenges and outcomes that the community wants to see and that this then forms the foundation for a new strategy.

6.5 The objective would be to produce a strategy for the period to 2050 with intermediate short term plans to achieve the long-term outcomes enabling the council to set out its long term ambition and bridge the gap while technology becomes available. This approach mirrors the council's Strategic Plan which contains five-year areas of focus enabling the council to regularly review and respond to change and progress and to prioritise resources.

6.6 MBC's approach has been structured but not rigid with more frequent review where needed e.g., in order to respond to the impact of the Covid19 pandemic – and this would be the same with respect to the MITS.

6.7 The work would be evidence based including for example assessment of progress towards the council's carbon net zero aspirations and take into account the public's lived experience of our transport systems and aspirations for their future travel choices.

7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: MBC response to Kent County Council Emerging Local Transport Plan Consultation
 - Appendix 2: List of Local Transport Plan Consultation challenges, policy outcomes and objectives and MBC comments.
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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Background document 1: EMERGING LOCALTRANSPORT PLAN: TURNING THE CURVE TOWARDS NET ZERO, Kent County Council (June 2023) - [Documents | Emerging Local Transport Plan | Let's talk Kent](#)

Local Transport Plan

Public consultation 27 June to 18 September 2023
Consultation Questionnaire

We would like to hear your views on our new emerging Local Transport Plan. Your feedback will help us to understand the transport challenges faced in Kent and ensure our ambition for the future of Kent's transport network is stretching but realistic, focusing on the right outcomes and objectives to make journeys better within our county whilst supporting the delivery of net zero by 2050.

Your feedback will also help us to develop proposals for how and where in Kent we should focus on improving transport. The proposals we develop will be set out in a full draft Local Transport Plan, which will be consulted on next year.

Until the full Local Transport Plan 5 is adopted by the Council no final decisions have been made concerning its content and proposals. It is important we hear your feedback at this stage. This questionnaire can be completed online at www.kent.gov.uk/ltp5

Alternatively, if you are unable to complete the questionnaire online, please complete this Word/paper form and return to:

Email: ltp5@kent.gov.uk

Address: Local Transport Plan
Kent County Council
Invicta House
Maidstone
ME14 1XX

Please ensure your response reaches us by midnight 18 September 2023.

What information do you need before completing the questionnaire?

We recommend that you view the consultation material online at www.kent.gov.uk/ltp5 before responding to this questionnaire.

You can answer all or as many of the questions as you like. If you would rather not provide feedback on a section or question, just move on to the next one.

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If you need any help taking part in this consultation or have any questions, please contact us at lt5@kent.gov.uk or telephone us and leave a voice message at 03000 416 595.

Privacy: Kent County Council (KCC) collects and processes personal information in order to provide a range of public services. KCC respects the privacy of individuals and endeavours to ensure personal information is collected fairly, lawfully, and in compliance with the United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation and Data Protection Act 2018. Read the full Privacy Notice at the end of this document.

Alternative formats: If you require any of the consultation material in an alternative format or language, please email: alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call: 03000 42 15 53 (text relay service number: 18001 03000 42 15 53). This number goes to an answering machine, which is monitored during office hours.

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Section 1 – About you

Q1. Are you responding...?

Please select the option from the list below that most closely represents how you will be responding to this consultation.

Please select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	As a Kent resident	
<input type="checkbox"/>	As a resident from somewhere else, such as Medway	
<input type="checkbox"/>	In a professional capacity, please specify:	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of a Charity or a Voluntary, Community or Social Enterprise organisation (VCSE)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of a business	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On behalf of a District / Borough / Town / Parish Council in an official capacity	
<input type="checkbox"/>	As a Parish / Town / Borough / District / County Councillor	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify:	<input type="text"/>

Q1a. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us the name of your organisation. Please write in below.

Q2. Please tell us the first 5 characters of your postcode:

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Please do not reveal your whole postcode. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please use your organisation's postcode. We use this to help us to analyse our data. It will not be used to identify who you are.

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Q3. How did you find out about this consultation?

Select **all** that apply.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Email from KCC's Transport Strategy team	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Email from Let's talk Kent / KCC's Engagement and Consultation team	
<input type="checkbox"/>	KCC County Councillor	
<input type="checkbox"/>	From my Parish / Town / Borough / District Council	
<input type="checkbox"/>	From a friend or relative	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Poster	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social media	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Kent.gov.uk website	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Newspaper	
<input type="checkbox"/>	From another organisation, please specify:	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other, please specify:	<input type="text"/>

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Section 2 – Local Transport Plan

Our emerging draft Local Transport Plan sets out the following new ambition for the Council.

We want to improve the health, wellbeing, and economic prosperity of lives in Kent by delivering a safe, reliable, efficient and affordable transport network across the county, and as an international gateway. We will plan for growth in Kent in a way that enables us to combat climate change and preserve Kent's environment.

We will do this by delivering emission-free travel by getting effective dedicated infrastructure for electric vehicles, increase public transport use, and make walking and cycling more attractive. This will be enabled by maintaining our highways network and delivering our [Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy](#). These priorities will ensure our networks are future-proof, resilient and meet user needs.

Q4. Do you support our new ambition?

Select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Partly
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't know

Q4a. Please tell us the reason for your answer in the box below:

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Maidstone Borough Council broadly supports the ambition set out in the consultation document for the Local Transport Plan. Sustainable transport is a key component of sustainable growth. If sustainable transport can be made affordable, convenient and accessible, it will encourage behavioural changes and active lifestyle; it will contribute to improving air and noise quality, and consequently public health. Other benefits include making the built environments safer for children, facilitating economic activities and access to opportunities. This is in line with the Council's own Strategic Plan 2019-2045, especially priority Embracing Growth & Enabling Infrastructure, the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy 2011-2031 and adopted Maidstone Local Plan 2011-2031 spatial vision.

However, it is felt that the ambition does not address several key concerns we have as a Council. These concerns are set out below as a result we have edited the ambition to suggest changes. It has been edited by adding text which is underlined.

Firstly, Kent as a tourist destination. Specifically, the Maidstone Economic Development Strategy (2021) has a priority to make Maidstone town centre a destination like other parts of Kent and so leisure and tourism elements should be included in the LTP5 ambition.

Secondly, Kent transport should be fully accessible. The Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy 2011-2031 strategic objective 5 states:

'Ensure the transport network considers the needs of all users, providing equal accessibility by removing barriers to use.'

Therefore, the Council feels that the ambition should be edited to read: *'We want to improve the health, wellbeing, and economic prosperity of lives in Kent by delivering a safe, reliable, efficient, **accessible**, and affordable transport network across the county and as an international gateway. We will plan for*

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growth in Kent in a way that enables us to combat climate change and preserves Kent's environment.'

Thirdly, the timely delivery of infrastructure. The adopted Maidstone Local Plan 2011-2031 spatial objective 11 states:

'To ensure that key infrastructure and service improvements needed to support delivery of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan are brought forward in a co-ordinated and timely manner, and that new development makes an appropriate contribution towards any infrastructure needs arising as a result of such new development.'

This is supported by spatial 6 of the emerging Local Plan Review currently at examination. Therefore, the Council feels that the ambition should be edited to read:

*'We will do this by delivering emission-free travel by getting effective dedicated infrastructure to electrify vehicles, increasing public transport use **by improving convenience and accessibility**; making walking and cycling attractive; maintaining our highways network; **planning for growth in a way that reduces the need to travel where this is appropriate and possible**; **seeking investment opportunities and timely delivery of infrastructure** and delivering our Vision Zero road safety strategy. These priorities will ensure our networks are future-proof, resilient and meet user needs.'*

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Q5. Our emerging draft Local Transport Plan describes nine challenges concerning transport in Kent that we intend to address. Please tell us if you agree or disagree with us focusing on these challenges.

Select **one** option per challenge/row.

Challenges	Agree	Disagree	Don't know
1. Our highways assets are in a phase of managed decline which in turn makes them less resilient to new pressures.	✓		
2. Following a decline in the number of injuries and fatalities on Kent's roads, these levels have risen in 2021.	✓		
3. Traffic is causing congestion, poor air quality and impacting Kent's economy.	✓		
4. Transport challenges in Kent arise from how the existing population of 1.6 million people and 70,000 businesses in the county choose to travel, as well as traffic generated by new developments being built.	✓		
5. Some indicators of public health, such as obesity and life expectancy, are worsening.	✓		
6. The financial viability of the public transport service has declined due to cost pressures and changes in passenger demand.	✓		
7. Kent's international gateways need government leadership – the impacts which arise and affect our local communities and the national economy cannot be resolved entirely by ourselves.	✓		
8. Carbon dioxide (CO ₂ e) emission reductions from management and use of the road network are forecast to go off-track, compared to the levels of reduction needed to contribute towards reducing the worst effects of climate change.	✓		

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<p>9. We need more funding and need to know what funding we will have over the next few years so we can improve transport in Kent.</p>	<p>✓</p>		
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Q5a. If you would like to make any comments on the challenges or would like to suggest any others that we should consider, please tell us in the box below:

If your comment relates to a specific challenge, please make that clear in your answer.

Challenges	Comment provided
<p>CHALLENGE 1 - Our highways assets are in a phase of managed decline which in turn risks them becoming less resilient to new pressures.</p>	<p>It is recognised that with current resources, KCC appear to tolerate this position. As part of the actions going forward, it is recommended that KCC should identify parts of the country that have leveraged resources, how they have done so and from there, advocate to bring greater resources to the county.</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 2 - Following a decline in the number of injuries and fatalities on Kent's roads, these levels have risen in 2021.</p>	<p>Challenge 2: The fatalities and injuries are a consequence rather than a challenge to Kent's transport system. As currently worded, it is unclear what the actual challenges leading to the increased fatalities and injuries are. We recommend that Challenge 2 should be revised to identify the underlying issues, whether this is safety issues of the highways network, or drivers and road user's behaviours, or something else. This will help identify appropriate plans and actions. Reference should be made to road safety education in this regard.</p> <p>It should also be noted that travel volumes reduced significantly during the pandemic hence the trends currently observed (decline in the</p>

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Challenges	Comment provided
	<p>number of injuries and fatalities on Kent's roads before 2021) need to be treated with caution.</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 3 - Traffic is causing congestion, poor air quality and negatively impacting Kent's economy.</p>	<p>This challenge should be amended to refer to impacts on health from poor air quality.</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 4 - Transport challenges in Kent arise from how the existing population of 1.6 million people and 70,000 businesses in the county choose to travel as well as traffic generated by new developments being built.</p>	<p>The description under Challenge 4 seems to be unclear. Stating that impacts of new development have marginal effects can be misleading. MBC suggests that this is revised to state the need to promote and enable sustainable behavioural changes in light of the current dominant choice of transport mode. It should also acknowledge that this issue will be exacerbated if not addressed, considering the amount of growth (and with it, additional population) being proposed across Kent by Local Planning Authorities.</p> <p>It should be noted that the emerging strategic sites (such as Heathlands and Lidsing) offer the opportunities to ensure sustainable travel choices and patterns are embedded from the outset. In addition, these sites offer the economy of scale required to deliver strategic transport infrastructure – which can help address the challenge around funding.</p> <p>It is also recommended that the LTP5 is accompanied by a map showing the proposed strategic settlements across Kent and their</p>

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Challenges	Comment provided
	<p>associated indicative growth figures (houses, employment land, retail floorspace, infrastructure provided), as well as their status (allocated, safeguarded, or proposed in a draft Local Plan) to investigate the emerging trend for inter-settlement travels and to ensure sustainable transport choices are made available for these accordingly.</p> <p>In light of the new Monitor and Manage approach, further consideration must also be given to the review and financial mechanisms to counter the risks associated with this approach. This is of critical importance when an identified mitigation scheme involves multiple stakeholders, and multiple highways authorities. This is of strategic importance to ensure that when a development fails to achieve its target, arrangements and contributions will have been in place to update the mitigation(s), their costs, and deliver them in time, so that the knock-on effects on the network and other development sites will be minimised.</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 5 - Some indicators of public health, such as obesity and life expectancy, have been worsening.</p>	<p>Worsening public health is an unintended consequence rather than a challenge for the transport system. It is therefore recommended that Challenge 5 is revised, for example, to state that the current business as usual transport trends will lead to negative impacts on public health, as currently shown by some indicators.</p> <p>The description text under Challenge 5 currently reads: 'These trends are made more difficult to</p>

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Challenges	Comment provided
	<p>tackle as we have become increasingly less active as part of our travel. Activity levels for public transport and walking and cycling are far higher compared to door-to-door private transport.'</p> <p>It is suggested that this paragraph is revised to elaborate further on how the challenges relate to the named public health indicators (obesity and life expectancy). In addition, indicators for public respiratory conditions should also be included.</p> <p>(Policy Outcome 5A should then be revised to reference active travels and public health accordingly. See comments further below)</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 6 - The financial viability of the public transport service has declined due to cost pressures and changes in passenger demand, leading to cuts in public transport services.</p>	<p>No comment.</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 7 - Kent's international gateways need government leadership – the impacts which arise and affect our local communities and the national economy cannot be resolved entirely by ourselves.</p>	<p>No comment.</p>

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Challenges	Comment provided
<p>CHALLENGE 8 - Related to all the previous points, carbon dioxide (CO₂ e) emission reductions from management and use of the road network are forecast to remain at too high a level compared to the reduced levels needed to contribute towards reducing the worst effects of climate change.</p>	<p>No comment.</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 9 - We need more funding and need to know what funding we will have over the next few years so we can improve transport in Kent.</p>	<p>Question is raised whether KCC has exhausted all funding options, including any unused SELEP funding.</p> <p>MBC would like to raise the lack of progress on ITS scheme despite the funding secured from allocated development.</p>
<p><i>Additional challenge</i></p>	<p>An additional challenge to be considered is the increasing number of electric vehicles and alternative zero carbon transport. This requires a holistic coordinated approach with energy and transport sectors to plan before their impacts become much bigger issues on public areas, for example, charging infrastructures, grid capacity (to facilitate these vehicles without straining the grid), grid greening, infrastructure becoming outdated, etc. There is scope to work with electricity and transport operators and other</p>

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Challenges	Comment provided
	<p>stakeholders to plan for and to future-proof supporting infrastructure.</p>
<p><i>Additional comments</i></p>	<p>It is recommended that the LTP5 makes reference to a changing context regarding the levels of car driver licence holding, the cost of travel, the demographic change and consequently what implications these have on transport needs and transport planning. For 25 years, each new generation of young people has been taking up progressively fewer driving licences and undertaking fewer trips and less mileage by car. The trend has gone almost unnoticed by transport policy makers, but it is likely to continue. This has major implications for transport policy.</p> <p>https://www.transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/190118%20Why%20are%20younger%20people%20travelling%20less%20by%20car_What%20follows(1).pdf</p>

As part of our Local Transport Plan, KCC is required to present the level of carbon emissions generated by transport use on the Kent network and demonstrate how we think that will change in the future if we do not take any new actions.

Q6. To what extent is lowering the carbon emissions of travel and helping to reduce the severity of climate change, important to you?

Select **one** option.

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- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Very important |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Slightly important |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Neutral |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Low importance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Not at all important |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Don't know |

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There are a range of actions that could be taken to help reduce the carbon emissions from journeys. **Please note that we are not proposing any of these actions as part of our new Local Transport Plan at this stage – they are based on ideas which have been tried elsewhere and which could be considered for areas of Kent in the future.**

Q7. Please select from the list below those actions that you think we should consider taking if funding were available.

*Select **all** that apply.*

✓	Provide on-street electric vehicle charging points in residential areas and town centres.
✓	Provide rapid charging hubs to help with using electric cars or vans for longer distance journeys in Kent.
✓	Provide access to more car club vehicles that are electric and zero emission.
✓	Run more events like Maidstone Cycle Fest, to help people experience walking, cycling, and taking public transport around town
✓	Provide more choice by introducing hubs at bus and rail stations and around community facilities that provide access to shared transport such as bicycles for hire, car club vehicles.
✓	Provide one single digital service on smart phones and computers, to book and pay for whole journeys in one go across all forms of transport used.
✓	A scheme to scrap vehicles in return for travel vouchers that can be used on the bus, trains, car clubs and other shared transport available.
✓	Reduce speed limits in towns to make roads safer to help people walk and cycle and help cars journeys produce less emissions.
✓	Reduce traffic around schools where appropriate to make walking and cycling more popular, safer, and easier.
✓	Reduce air pollution and emissions from deliveries in urban areas by supporting deliveries by electric cargo bikes.

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	No actions should be taken.
✓	<p>Other, write your suggestions in box below:</p> <p>The Council would like to see the following actions from LTP4 taken forward for the Borough in LTP5:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extending Thameslink rail services to Maidstone. • Public transport improvements on radial routes into Maidstone from the rural service centres of Marden, Staplehurst, Headcorn, Harrietsham and Lenham.

In response to the transport challenges we face, and to help us deliver our overall ambition for transport in Kent, we have identified nine proposed Policy Outcomes that we want to achieve in Kent.

Q8. Do you support or oppose each proposed Policy Outcome?

Select **one** option for each policy outcome/row.

Policy Outcomes	Support	Oppose	Don't know
1. The condition of our managed transport network is kept to satisfactory levels, helping to maintain safe and accessible travel and trade.	✓		
2. Deliver our Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy through all the work we do.	✓		
3. International travel becomes a positive part of Kent's economy, facilitated by the county's transport network, with the negative effects of international haulage traffic decreased.	✓		
4. International rail travel returns to Kent and there are improved public transport connections to international hubs.	✓		

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5. Deliver a transport network that is quick to recover from disruptions and future-proofed for growth and innovation, aiming for an infrastructure-first approach to reduce the risk of highways and public transport congestion due to development.	✓		
6. Journeys to access and experience Kent's historic and natural environments are improved.	✓		
7. Road-side air quality improves as decarbonisation of travel accelerates, contributing towards the pursuit of carbon budget targets and net zero in 2050.	✓		
8. A growing public transport system supported by dedicated infrastructure to attract increased ridership, helping operators to invest in and provide better services.	✓		
9. Transport makes a positive contribution to public health due to increasing numbers of people using a growing cycling and pedestrian network with dedicated infrastructure and any increase in disturbance from aviation noise is avoided.	✓		

Q8a. If you would like to make any comments about the Policy Outcomes or would like to suggest any other outcomes we should consider, please tell us in the box below:

If your comment relates to a specific outcome, please make that clear in your answer.

Policy Outcome 1	The Council would like to see the A229 Blue Bell Hill between M20 junction 6 and M2 junction 3 and B2079 to Marden from A229 added to the Resilient Road Network Map figure 14 page 35. Also, a label for the A229 to the south of Maidstone should be added to figure 14.
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Additional Policy Outcome	A new Policy Outcome should be added [or: Policy Outcome 1 should be revised] to state that the emerging strategic settlements and existing settlements will be supported and connected in a holistic way. This would consider growth proposed by the Council in its emerging Local Plan Review at the Garden Community locations in the Borough.
Policy Outcome 2	Support – no comment
Policy Outcome 3	Support – no comment
Policy Outcome 4	Support – no comment
Policy Outcome 5	<p>Support.</p> <p>Reference to public health and active travels should be added to align with Challenge 5. In addition, as set out elsewhere in the document, it is not only development but also the dominant choice of transport that poses challenges to Kent’s transport system. As such, reference of ‘due to development’ should be removed.</p> <p>It is recommended that Policy Outcome 5 is revised to read: ‘Deliver resilient transport, future-proofed for growth and innovation, aiming for an active travel and infrastructure-first approach to reduce the risk of highways under capacity and public transport congestion and public health impacts due to development.</p>
Policy Outcome 6	Policy Outcome 6 should be amended to consider other tourism or leisure destinations as well.

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Policy Outcome 7	Support – no comment
Policy Outcome 8	Policy Outcome 8 should also add increase the coverage of the public transport system/ service to previously inaccessible areas. As it should not be just about improving existing infrastructure and services.
Policy Outcome 9	Support – no comment

Q9. We would like to know which of our proposed Policy Outcomes are most important to you. Please select the three most important from the list below.

✓	1. The condition of our managed transport network is kept to satisfactory levels, helping to maintain safe and accessible travel and trade.
	2. Deliver our Vision Zero road safety strategy through all the work we do.
	3. International travel becomes a positive part of Kent's economy, facilitated by the county's transport network, with the negative effects of international haulage traffic decreased.
	4. International rail travel returns to Kent and there are improved public transport connections to international hubs.
✓	5. Deliver a transport network that is quick to recover from disruptions and future-proofed for growth and innovation, aiming for an infrastructure-first approach to reduce the risk of highways and public transport congestion due to development.
	6. Journeys to access and experience Kent's historic and natural environments are improved.
	7. Road-side air quality improves as decarbonisation of travel accelerates, contributing towards the pursuit of carbon budget targets and net zero in 2050.
✓	8. A growing public transport system supported by dedicated infrastructure to attract increased ridership, helping operators to invest in and provide better services.
	9. Transport makes a positive contribution to public health due to increasing numbers of people using a growing cycling and pedestrian network with dedicated infrastructure and any increase in disturbance from aviation noise is avoided.

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For each of the nine planned policy outcomes we have proposed Policy Objectives to help us target our work to improve transport. We will measure the proposals we develop for our full draft Local Transport Plan against these.

Q10. Do you support or oppose each of these proposed Policy Objectives?

*Select **one** option for each policy objective/row.*

Policy Objectives	Support	Oppose	Don't know
1A). Achieve the funding necessary to deliver a sustained fall in the value of the backlog of maintenance work over the life of our Local Transport Plan.	✓		
2A). Achieve a fall over time in the volume of people killed or very seriously (life-changing) injured occurring on KCC's managed road network, working towards the trajectory to reach zero by 2050.	✓		
3A). Increase resilience of the road network serving the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel crossing, by adding holding capacity for HGV parking across the southeast region equivalent in capacity to Operation Brock, to reduce reliance on these disruptive schemes and the burdens and impacts they create on the transport network and affected communities in Kent.	✓		
3B). Increase resilience of the road network servicing the Port of Dover through delivery of the KCC bifurcation strategy including improvements to the M2 / A2 road corridor and its links to the M20 and a new Lower Thames Crossing for traffic towards the north.	✓		
4A). International rail travel returns to Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International stations, supported by the infrastructure investment needed at Kent's stations wherever necessary.	✓		
4B). A fall in the time it takes by public transport to reach international travel hubs compared to conditions in 2023.	✓		

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Policy Objectives	Support	Oppose	Don't know
5A). Strengthen delivery of our Network Management Duty to deliver the expeditious movement of traffic by using our new moving traffic enforcement powers and keeping on-street parking enforcement, delegated to the Districts, under review.	✓		

Policy Objectives	Support	Oppose	Don't know
5B). Reduce the amount of forecast future congestion and crowding on highways and public transport that is associated with demand from development by securing funding and delivery of our Local Transport Plan.	✓		
5C). The prospects for the future of transport increase across the whole county, with new innovations in transport services having a clear pathway to trial or delivery in Kent.	✓		
6A). Proposals in our Local Transport Plan are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution in providing new, faster, or more inclusive access to historic and natural environment destinations in the county, with proposals targeting access to such locations where appropriate.	✓		
7A). Reduce the volume of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions entering the atmosphere associated with surface transport activity on the KCC managed highway network by an amount greater than our forecast "business as usual" scenario. This means achieving a greater fall than those currently forecast of 9% by 2027, 19% by 2032 and 29% by 2037.	✓		
7B). No area in Kent is left behind by the revolution in electric motoring, with charging infrastructure deployed close to residential areas, reducing barriers to adoption.	✓		
7C). Proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution in providing lower emissions from transport in Air Quality Management Areas in the county.	✓		

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8A). We will aim to obtain the further funding to deliver the outcomes our Bus Service Improvement Plan (or its replacement) beyond its current horizon of 2024/25. We will ensure that our Local Transport Plan proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution towards achieving our Bus Service Improvement Plan.	✓		
8B). We will identify and support industry delivery of priority railway stations for accessibility improvements and route improvements to reduce journey times and improve reliability.	✓		

Policy Objectives	Support	Oppose	Don't know
9A). We will aim to deliver walking and cycling improvements at prioritised locations in Kent to deliver increased levels of activity towards the Active Travel England target and support Kent's diverse economy, presented in a Kent Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan.	✓		
9B). Represent and protect Kent residents from the impact of noise disturbance arising from new and expanded airports including maintaining our opposition to a second runway at Gatwick and the need for a reduction in night flights.	✓		

Q11. If you have any comments on the Policy Objectives or would like to suggest any more objectives, please tell us in the box below:

If your comment relates to a specific objective, please make that clear in your answer.

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Policy objectives	MBC's response
1A)	Support – no further comments
2A)	Support – no further comments
3A)	<p>The Council does not support this objective as it is not strong enough in eliminating the need for Operation Brock which has an impact on the economy and residents of the Borough through the delays caused when it is in use. The objective should be reworded to state that the need for Operation Brock will be eliminated.</p>
3B)	<p>The Council does not support this objective at the present time as it feels it not to be worded strong enough with regards to the 'outcomes for rural communities'. Operation Brock cuts rural communities off and makes everyday life much more challenging in the Borough. This was gathered from a recent survey the Council undertook in the Borough (August 2022) 'How does Operation Brock impact you?'. The results of the survey can be found on the link below:</p> <p>How does Operation Brock impact you? Lets Talk Maidstone (engagementhq.com)</p>
4A)	Support – no further comments
4B)	Support – no further comments

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Policy objectives	MBC's response
5A)	Policy Objective 5A: The Council seeks clarification what is meant by 'keeping on-street parking enforcement, delegated to the Districts, under review'.
5B)	Policy Objective 5B: The Council would like to see this amended to include the provision of highways improvements and the retention of the Leeds Langley Relief Road from LTP4.
5C)	Policy Objective 5C: In light of MBC's high expectations for new housing in the town centre and new garden communities, this is strongly supported.
6A)	Policy Objective 6A: MBC would like to see Maidstone town centre with its significant heritage is also featured – and its status as county town is also highlighted.
7A)	Policy Objective 7A: As currently worded, achieving 'a greater fall than those currently forecast' in transport emission does not provide the confidence that we will achieve net zero carbon target. In addition, this is accompanied by a set of policy objectives referencing EV expansion (Objective 7B) and development in the Air Quality Management Areas (Objective 7C). Whilst these are welcomed, MBC considers that more fundamental changes are required to meet the net zero carbon target. MBC urges KCC to show leadership in identifying these objectives which could then be implemented locally through ITS and Local Plans.

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Policy objectives	MBC's response
7B)	Support – no further comments
7C)	Support – no further comments
8A)	Support – no further comments
8B)	Support – no further comments
Additional policy objective suggested	New policy objective 8C: To support improved new public transport routes in the county such as the extension of Thameslink to Maidstone Railway Stations.
9A)	<p>Policy Objective 9A: MBC has put forward a number of prioritised locations in Maidstone based on the: Maidstone Local Plan 2011-2031, emerging Maidstone Local Plan Review, Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy 2011-2031, and the Maidstone Walking and Cycling Strategy 2011-2031 when it responded to the KCWIP stakeholder consultation in July 2023. MBC welcomes opportunities to work together to ensure these locations (and any other locations that KCC considers appropriate) are included in the Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. MBC would like to see further progress on this work. MBC would like to emphasise the importance of its timely progress to ensure a holistic approach to sustainable transport at all levels.</p> <p>Maidstone Borough Council would like to know where the prioritised locations are and how they will be selected.</p>

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Policy objectives	MBC's response
9B)	Support – no further comments

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Q12. If you have any other comments or suggestions on the emerging draft Local Transport Plan or its evidence base, please tell us in the box below:

Please note comments that do not address the content of the plan or evidence base will not be considered. If your suggestion relates to a specific section/page please provide details.

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Section 3 – Equality and health analysis

To help ensure that we are meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 we have prepared an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) on our emerging Local Transport Plan.

An EqIA is a tool to assess the impact any proposals would have on the protected characteristics: age, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, and carer's responsibilities. The EqIA is available online at www.kent.gov.uk/ltp5 or in hard copy on request.

Q13. We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything we should consider relating to equality and diversity, please add any comments below:

Please do not include any personal information that could identify you within your response.

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No comment.

We are required to develop a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) as part of a Strategic Environmental Assessment to support the full final plan. We have prepared a HIA on our emerging Local Transport Plan.

The HIA is used to identify the health and wellbeing impacts of the proposed plan to help us with our planning. The HIA is available online at www.kent.gov.uk/ltp5 or in hard copy on request.

Q14. We welcome your views on our Health Impact Assessment and if you think there is anything we should consider relating to health and wellbeing, please add any comments below:

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Please do not include any personal information that could identify you within your response.

No comment.

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Section 4 – More about you

We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally, and that no one gets left out. That's why we are asking you these questions. We'll use it only to help us make decisions and improve our services.

If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to.

It is not necessary to answer these questions if you are responding on behalf of an organisation.

If you are responding **on behalf of someone else**, please answer using their details.

Q15. Which of the following best describes your working status?

*Select **one** option.*

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Working full time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Working part time |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | On a zero-hours or similar casual contract |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Temporarily laid off |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Freelance/self employed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Unemployed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Not working due to a disability or health condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Carer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Homemaker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Retired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Student |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Other, please specify: |

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Q16. Are you...?

Select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Male
<input type="checkbox"/>	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q17. Is your gender the same as your birth?

Select **one** option.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say

Q18. Which of these age groups applies to you?

Please select **one** option.

0-15	<input type="checkbox"/>	16-24	<input type="checkbox"/>	25-34	<input type="checkbox"/>	35-49	<input type="checkbox"/>	50-59	<input type="checkbox"/>
60-64	<input type="checkbox"/>	65-74	<input type="checkbox"/>	75-84	<input type="checkbox"/>	85+ over	<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Q19. Do you regard yourself as belonging to a particular religion or holding a belief?

*Please select **one** option.*

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

Q19a. If you answered 'Yes' to Q19, which of the following applies to you?

*Please select **one** option.*

- Christian
- Buddhist
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Sikh
- Other
- I prefer not to say

If you selected Other, please specify:

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The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a long standing physical or mental condition that has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis, and HIV/AIDS, for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Q20. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?

Please select **one** option.

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

Q20a. If you answered 'Yes' to Q20, please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you.

You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply. If none of these applies to you, please select 'Other' and give brief details of the impairment you have.

- Physical impairment
- Sensory impairment (hearing, sight or both)
- Longstanding illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV/AIDS, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy
- Mental health condition
- Learning disability
- I prefer not to say
- Other

Other, please specify:

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A Carer is anyone who provides unpaid care for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support. Both children and adults can be carers.

Q21. Are you a Carer?

Select **one** option.

- Yes
- No
- I prefer not to say

Q22. Are you ...?

Select **one** option.

- Heterosexual/Straight
- Bi/Bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/Lesbian
- Other
- I prefer not to say

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Q23. To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong?

Select **one** option. (Source 2011 Census)

White English	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Scottish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Welsh	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed White & Asian	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Northern Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mixed Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Gypsy/Roma	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British African	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Irish Traveller	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black or Black British Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>
White Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>	Arab	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>	I prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Asian or Asian British Other*	<input type="checkbox"/>		

*Other - If your ethnic group is not specified on the list, please describe it here:

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire; your feedback is important to us. All feedback received will be reviewed and considered in the development of our emerging Local Transport Plan.

We will report back on the feedback we receive, but details of individual responses will remain anonymous, and we will keep your personal details confidential.

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Closing date for responses: 18 September 2023.

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Last updated: 30 April 2023

Who are we?

We, Kent County Council (KCC), take our privacy obligations seriously and we've created this privacy policy to explain how we treat your personal information collected in this questionnaire. Personal information is information we hold which is identifiable as being about you.

Our collection, use and disclosure of your personal information is regulated under the United Kingdom Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. We are responsible as 'controller' of that personal information for the purposes of those laws. Our Data Protection Officer is Benjamin Watts.

The personal information we collect and use

Information collected by us

In the course of responding to consultations published by Kent County Council we collect the following personal information when you provide it to us:

- responses to questionnaire / consultation
- equalities data collected through questionnaire response - age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexuality, disability, pregnancy or maternity or if you are a Carer
- employment and education details
- postcode.

We ask you not to provide information that will identify you in your response in this questionnaire.

You do not need to submit any equalities or postcode information if you do not want to. KCC is committed to the principle that all our customers have the right to equality and fairness in the way they are treated and in the services that they receive. Any information you do give will be used to see if there are any differences in views for different groups of people, and to check if services are being delivered in a fair and reasonable way.

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We will not ask you to provide your name, email or full home address. If you provide this information, it will not be entered into spreadsheets or databases used to process response data and will not be used in producing reports. We will follow our Data Protection policies to keep your information secure and confidential. Your equality data will be anonymised before it is shared with external organisations who have been commissioned on individual projects to undertake analysis and reporting on our engagement and consultation activities.

How we use your personal information

We collect and use this information in order to:

- understand your views about a particular topic or KCC activity
- analyse consultation and engagement activity
- inform KCC's future strategy, policy, service design and budget planning
- undertake equality monitoring.

We may use your postcode to analyse the geographical spread of responses and in some cases to understand in more detail how responses are impacted by location. We will only ask you for the first five characters of your postcode to avoid being able to identify specific households in less populated areas.

We may use your postcode to carry out a type of profiling to estimate which one of a number of lifestyle groups you are most likely to fall into. We do this using geodemographic segmentation tools. We do not make any decisions about individual service users based solely on automated processing, including profiling.

How long your personal data will be kept

We will hold any personal information provided by you in this questionnaire for up to six years following the closure of a consultation. Our Retention Policy is available from our website or on request.

We rely on UK GDPR Article 6(1)(e): 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' and Article 6(1)(c) 'for compliance with a legal obligation to which the controller is subject' as our lawful basis.

We rely on Article 9(2)(g) 'processing is necessary for reasons of substantial public interest' (statutory etc. and government purposes, equality of opportunity or treatment) as the lawful basis on which we collect and use your special category data.

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The processing is necessary for our statutory purposes including equalities monitoring or to understand the potential impact of proposals on conditions related to special category data within your response (e.g. when identifying or keeping under review the existence or absence of equality of opportunity or treatment between groups of people with the view to enabling such equality to be promoted or maintained.) It is necessary for identifying or keeping under review the existence or absence of equality of opportunity or treatment between groups of people with the view to enabling such equality to be promoted or maintained. You can read [KCC's Equality Policy on our website](#) or on request.

Who we share your personal information with

We may share your personal data with those listed below:

- services within the Council who are responsible for the management of the engagement or consultation activity
- a third-party supplier who has been contracted to independently analyse the consultation responses
- organisations such as schools and academies with whom we may be consulting in partnership or on behalf of
- district or borough councils or government departments with whom we may be consulting in partnership or on behalf of.

We will share personal information with law enforcement or other authorities if required by applicable law.

Any personal information provided that could identify you will be removed before consultation results are published.

We use a system to log your feedback, which is provided by Granicus.

Your rights

Under UK GDPR you have a number of rights which you can access free of charge which allow you to:

- know what we are doing with your information and why we are doing it
- ask to see what information we hold about you
- ask us to correct any mistakes in the information we hold about you
- object to direct marketing
- make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office.

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Depending on our reason for using your information you may also be entitled to:

- ask us to delete information we hold about you
- have your information transferred electronically to yourself or to another organisation
- object to decisions being made that significantly affect you
- object to how we are using your information
- stop us using your information in certain ways.

We will always seek to comply with your request, however, we may be required to hold or use your information to comply with legal duties.

For further information about your rights, including the circumstances in which they apply, see the [guidance from the UK Information Commissioner's Office \(ICO\)](#) on individuals' rights under UK GDPR.

If you would like to exercise a right, please contact the Information Resilience and Transparency Team at data.protection@kent.gov.uk.

Keeping your personal information secure

We have appropriate security measures in place to prevent personal information from being accidentally lost or used or accessed in an unauthorised way. We limit access to your personal information to those who have a genuine business need to know it. Those processing your information will do so only in an authorised manner and are subject to a duty of confidentiality.

We also have procedures in place to deal with any suspected data security breach. We will notify you and any applicable regulator of a suspected data security breach where we are legally required to do so.

Who to contact

Please contact the Information Resilience and Transparency Team at data.protection@kent.gov.uk to exercise any of your rights, or if you have a complaint about why your information has been collected, how it has been used or how long we have kept it for.

You can contact our Data Protection Officer, Benjamin Watts, at dpo@kent.gov.uk. Or write to Data Protection Officer, Kent County Council, Sessions House, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ.

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The United Kingdom General Data Protection Regulation also gives you the right to lodge a complaint with the Information Commissioner who may be contacted at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns> or telephone 03031 231113.

For further information visit <https://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/about-the-website/privacy-statement>.

Appendix 2 – List of Local Transport Plan Consultation challenges, policy outcomes and objectives and MBC comments

Table 1: LTP5 identified challenges

Challenges	MBC's Response
<p>CHALLENGE 1 - Our highways assets are in a phase of managed decline which in turn risks them becoming less resilient to new pressures.</p>	<p>It is recognised that with current resources, KCC appear to tolerate this position. As part of the actions going forward, it is recommended that KCC should identify parts of the country that have leveraged resources, how they have done so and from there, advocate to bring greater resources to the county.</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 2 - Following a decline in the number of injuries and fatalities on Kent's roads, these levels have risen in 2021.</p>	<p>The fatalities and injuries are a consequence rather than a challenge to Kent's transport system. As currently worded, it is unclear what the actual challenges leading to the increased fatalities and injuries are. We recommend that Challenge 2 should be revised to identify the underlying issues, whether this is safety issues of the highways network, or drivers and road users' behaviours, or something else. This will help identify appropriate plans and actions. Reference should be made to road safety education in this regard.</p> <p>It should also be noted that travel volumes reduced significantly during the pandemic hence the trends currently observed (decline in the number of injuries and fatalities on Kent's roads before 2021) need to be treated with caution.</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 3 - Traffic is causing congestion, poor air quality and negatively impacting Kent's economy.</p>	<p>This challenge should be amended to refer to impacts on health from poor air quality.</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 4 - Transport challenges in Kent arise from how the existing population of 1.6 million people</p>	<p>The description under Challenge 4 seems to be unclear. Stating that impacts of new development have marginal effects can be misleading. MBC suggests that this is revised to state the need to promote and enable sustainable behavioural changes</p>

Challenges	MBC's Response
<p>and 70,000 businesses in the county choose to travel as well as traffic generated by new developments being built.</p>	<p>in light of the current dominant choice of transport mode. It should also acknowledge that this issue will be exacerbated if not addressed, considering the amount of growth (and with it, additional population) being proposed across Kent by Local Planning Authorities in response to national policies.</p> <p>It should be noted that the emerging strategic sites in Maidstone borough (such as Heathlands and Lidsing) offer the opportunities to ensure sustainable travel choices and patterns are embedded from the outset. In addition, these sites offer the economy of scale required to deliver strategic transport infrastructure – which can help address the challenge around funding.</p> <p>It is also recommended that the LTP5 is accompanied by a map showing the proposed strategic settlements across Kent and their associated indicative growth figures (houses, employment land, retail floorspace, infrastructure provided), as well as their status (allocated, safeguarded, or proposed in a draft Local Plan) to investigate the emerging trend for inter-settlement travel and to ensure sustainable transport choices are made available for these accordingly.</p> <p>In light of the new Monitor and Manage approach, further consideration must also be given to the review and financial mechanisms to counter the risks associated with this approach. This is of critical importance when an identified mitigation scheme involves multiple stakeholders, and multiple highways authorities. This is of strategic importance to ensure that when a development fails to achieve its target, arrangements and contributions will have been in place to update the mitigation(s), their costs, and deliver them in time, so that the knock-on effects on the network and other development sites will be minimised.</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 5 - Some indicators of public health, such as obesity and life expectancy, have been worsening.</p>	<p>Worsening public health is an unintended consequence rather than a challenge for the transport system. It is therefore recommended that Challenge 5 is revised, for example, to state that the current business as usual transport trends will lead to</p>

Challenges	MBC's Response
	<p>negative impacts on public health, as currently shown by some indicators.</p> <p>The description text under Challenge 5 currently reads: 'These trends are made more difficult to tackle as we have become increasingly less active as part of our travel. Activity levels for public transport and walking and cycling are far higher compared to door-to-door private transport.'</p> <p>It is suggested that this paragraph is revised to elaborate further on how the challenges relate to the named public health indicators (obesity and life expectancy). In addition, indicators for public respiratory conditions should also be included.</p> <p>(Policy Outcome 5A should then be revised to reference active travel and public health accordingly. See comments further below)</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 6 - The financial viability of the public transport service has declined due to cost pressures and changes in passenger demand, leading to cuts in public transport services.</p>	<p>No comment.</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 7 - Kent's international gateways need government leadership – the impacts which arise and affect our local communities and the national economy cannot be resolved entirely by ourselves.</p>	<p>Maidstone borough experiences significant adverse impact when the gateways at Kent's ports experience high demand resulting in implementation of Operation Brock. The consequences include congestion on the local road network and severance effects for communities. The absence of appetite at national level for sustainable solution needs to be addressed and KCC has a critical role in lobbying and using its influence in this regard.</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 8 - Related to all the previous points,</p>	<p>It is concerning that the cumulative impact of the transport policies currently being pursued by KCC and those set out for LTP5 do not produce a significant</p>

Challenges	MBC's Response
<p>carbon dioxide (CO₂ e) emission reductions from management and use of the road network are forecast to remain at too high a level compared to the reduced levels needed to contribute towards reducing the worst effects of climate change.</p>	<p>reduction in emissions and that options are not included to give the public choice with respect to changes to the transport systems that would achieve greater progress towards carbon zero targets</p>
<p>CHALLENGE 9 - We need more funding and need to know what funding we will have over the next few years so we can improve transport in Kent.</p>	<p>Question is raised whether KCC has exhausted all funding options, including any unused SELEP funding.</p> <p>MBC would like to raise the lack of progress on ITS schemes despite the S106 funding secured from allocated development.</p>
<p>Additional comments</p>	<p><i>An additional challenge to be considered is the increasing number of electric vehicles and alternative zero carbon transport. This requires a holistic coordinated approach with energy and transport sectors to plan before their impacts become much bigger issues on public areas, for example, charging infrastructure, grid capacity (to facilitate these vehicles without straining the grid), grid greening, infrastructure becoming outdated, etc. There is scope to work with electricity and transport operators and other stakeholders to plan for and to future-proof supporting infrastructure.</i></p>
<p>Additional comments</p>	<p><i>It is recommended that the LTP5 makes reference to a changing context regarding the levels of car driver licence holding, the cost of travel, the demographic change and consequently what implications these have on transport needs and transport planning. For 25 years, each new generation of young people has been taking up progressively fewer driving licences and undertaking fewer trips and less mileage by car.</i></p>

Challenges	MBC's Response
	<p>The trend has gone almost unnoticed by transport policy makers, but it is likely to continue. This has major implications for transport policy.</p> <p>https://www.transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/190118%20Why%20are%20younger%20people%20travelling%20less%20by%20car%20What%20follows(1).pdf</p>

Table 2: LTP5 identified policy outcomes

Policy outcomes	MBC's response
<p>POLICY OUTCOME 1: The condition of our managed transport network is kept to satisfactory levels, helping to maintain safe and accessible travel and trade.</p>	<p>Support. The Council would like to see the A229 Blue Bell Hill between M20 junction 6 and M2 junction 3 and B2079 to Marden from A229 added to the Resilient Road Network Map figure 14 page 35. Also, a label for the A229 to the south of Maidstone should be added to figure 14.</p>
<p>Additional Policy Outcome</p>	<p>A new Policy Outcome should be added [or: Policy Outcome 1 should be revised] to state that the emerging strategic settlements and existing settlements will be supported and connected in a holistic way. This would consider growth proposed by the Council in its emerging Local Plan Review at the Garden Community locations in the Borough.</p>
<p>POLICY OUTCOME 2: Deliver our Vision Zero road safety strategy through all the work we do.</p>	<p>Support – no further comment</p>
<p>POLICY OUTCOME 3: International travel becomes a positive part of Kent's economy, facilitated by the county's transport network, with the</p>	<p>Support – no further comment</p>

Policy outcomes	MBC's response
negative effects of international haulage traffic decreased.	
POLICY OUTCOME 4: International rail travel returns to Kent and there are improved rail and public transport connections to international hubs.	Support – no further comment
POLICY OUTCOME 5: Deliver resilient transport, future-proofed for growth and innovation, aiming for an infrastructure-first approach to reduce the risk of highways and public transport congestion due to development.	<p>Support.</p> <p>Reference to public health and active travel should be added to align with Challenge 5. In addition, as set out elsewhere in the document, it is not only development but also the dominant choice of transport that poses challenges to Kent's transport system. As such, reference of 'due to development' should be removed.</p> <p>It is recommended that Policy Outcome 5 is revised to read: 'Deliver resilient transport, future-proofed for growth and innovation, aiming for an active travel and infrastructure-first approach to reduce the risk of highways under capacity and public transport congestion and public health impacts due to development.'</p>
POLICY OUTCOME 6: Access to Kent's historic and natural environment is enhanced.	Support. Policy Outcome 6 should be amended to consider other tourism or leisure destinations as well.
POLICY OUTCOME 7: Road-side air quality improves as decarbonisation of travel accelerates, contributing towards the pursuit of carbon	Support – no further comment

Policy outcomes	MBC's response
budget targets and net zero in 2050.	
POLICY OUTCOME 8: A growing public transport system supported by dedicated infrastructure to attract increased ridership, helping operators to provide more and invest in better services.	Policy Outcome 8 should also add increase the coverage of the public transport system/ service to previously inaccessible areas. As it should not be just about improving existing infrastructure and services.
POLICY OUTCOME 9: Transport makes a positive contribution to public health due to increasing numbers if people using a growing cycling and pedestrian network with dedicated infrastructure, and any increase in disturbance from aviation noise is avoided.	Support – no further comment

Table 3: LTP5 policy objectives

Policy objectives	MBC's response
1A) Achieve the funding necessary to deliver a sustained fall in the value of the backlog of maintenance work over the life of our Local Transport Plan.	Support – no comment

Policy objectives	MBC's response
<p>2A) Achieve a fall over time in the volume of people killed or very seriously (life-changing) injured occurring on KCC's managed road network, working towards the trajectory to reach zero by 2050.</p>	<p>Support – no comment</p>
<p>3A) Increase resilience of the road network serving the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel crossing, by adding holding capacity for HGV parking across the southeast region equivalent in capacity to Operation Brock, to reduce reliance on these disruptive schemes and the burdens and impacts they create on the transport network and affected communities in Kent.</p>	<p>The Council does not support this objective as currently expressed as it is not strong enough in its commitment to eliminating the need for Operation Brock which has an impact on the economy and residents of the Borough through the delays, congestion and severance for Maidstone's communities caused when it is in use. The objective should be reworded to state that the need for Operation Brock will be eliminated.</p>
<p>3B) Increase resilience of the road network servicing the Port of Dover through delivery of the KCC bifurcation strategy including improvements to the M2 / A2 road corridor and its links to the M20 and a new Lower Thames Crossing for traffic towards the north.</p>	<p>The Council does not support this objective at the present time as it feels it not to be worded strongly enough with regards to the 'outcomes for rural communities'. Operation Brock cuts rural communities off and makes everyday life much more challenging in the Borough. Lived experience was gathered from a recent survey the Council undertook in the Borough (August 2022) 'How does Operation Brock impact you?'. The results of the survey can be found on the link below:</p> <p>How does Operation Brock impact you? Lets Talk Maidstone (engagementhq.com)</p>

Policy objectives	MBC's response
4A) International rail travel returns to Ashford International and Ebbsfleet International stations, supported by the infrastructure investment needed at Kent's stations wherever necessary.	Support – no further comments.
4B) A fall in the time it takes by public transport to reach international travel hubs compared to conditions in 2023.	Support – no further comments.
5A) Strengthen delivery of our Network Management Duty to deliver the expeditious movement of traffic by using our new moving traffic enforcement powers and keeping on-street parking enforcement, delegated to the Districts, under review.	The Council seeks clarification what is meant by 'keeping on-street parking enforcement, delegated to the Districts, under review'.
5B) Reduce the amount of forecast future congestion and crowding on highways and public transport that is associated with demand from development by securing funding and delivery of our Local Transport Plan.	The Council would like to see this amended to include the provision of highways improvements and the retention of the Leeds Langley Relief Road from LTP4.

Policy objectives	MBC's response
<p>5C) The prospects for the future of transport increase across the whole county, with new innovations in transport services having a clear pathway to trial or delivery in Kent.</p>	<p>In light of MBC's high expectations for new housing in the town centre and new garden communities, this is strongly supported.</p>
<p>6A) Proposals in our Local Transport Plan are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution in providing new, faster, or more inclusive access to historic and natural environment destinations in the county, with proposals targeting access to such locations where appropriate.</p>	<p>Policy Objective 6A: MBC would like to see Maidstone town centre with its significant heritage is also featured – and its status as county town is also highlighted.</p>
<p>7A) Reduce the volume of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions entering the atmosphere associated with surface transport activity on the KCC managed highway network by an amount greater than our forecast "business as usual" scenario. This means achieving a greater fall than those currently forecast of 9% by 2027, 19% by 2032 and 29% by 2037.</p>	<p>Policy Objective 7A: As currently worded, achieving 'a greater fall than those currently forecast' in transport emission does not provide the confidence that we will achieve net zero carbon target. In addition, this is accompanied by a set of policy objectives referencing EV expansion (Objective 7B) and development in the Air Quality Management Areas (Objective 7C). Whilst these are welcomed, MBC considers that more fundamental changes are required to meet the net zero carbon target. MBC urges KCC to show leadership in identifying these objectives for the county as a whole which could then be implemented locally through ITS and Local Plans.</p>

Policy objectives	MBC's response
7B) No area in Kent is left behind by the revolution in electric motoring, with charging infrastructure deployed close to residential areas, reducing barriers to adoption.	Support – no further comments
7C) Proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution in providing lower emissions from transport in Air Quality Management Areas in the county.	Support – no further comments
8A) We will aim to obtain the further funding to deliver the outcomes our Bus Service Improvement Plan (or its replacement) beyond its current horizon of 2024/25. We will ensure that our Local Transport Plan proposals are clearly evidenced in terms of their contribution towards achieving our Bus Service Improvement Plan.	Support – no further comments
8B) We will identify and support industry delivery of priority railway stations for accessibility	Support – no further comments

Policy objectives	MBC's response
<p>improvements and route improvements to reduce journey times and improve reliability.</p>	
<p>Additional policy objective suggested</p>	<p>New policy objective 8C: To support improved new public transport routes in the county such as the extension of Thameslink to Maidstone Railway Stations.</p>
<p>9A) We will aim to deliver walking and cycling improvements at prioritised locations in Kent to deliver increased levels of activity towards the Active Travel England target and support Kent's diverse economy, presented in a Kent Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan.</p>	<p>Policy Objective 9A: MBC has put forward a number of prioritised locations in Maidstone based on the: Maidstone Local Plan 2011-2031, emerging Maidstone Local Plan Review, Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy 2011-2031, and the Maidstone Walking and Cycling Strategy 2011-2031 when it responded to the KCWIP stakeholder consultation in July 2023.</p> <p>MBC welcomes opportunities to work together to ensure these locations (and any other locations that KCC considers appropriate) are included in the Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. MBC would like to see further progress on this work. MBC would like to emphasise the importance of its timely progress to ensure a holistic approach to sustainable transport at all levels.</p> <p>Maidstone Borough Council would like to know where the prioritised locations are and how they will be selected.</p>
<p>9B) Represent and protect Kent residents from the impact of noise disturbance arising from new and expanded airports including maintaining our opposition to a second runway at Gatwick and the need for a reduction in night flights.</p>	<p>Support – no comment</p>

**PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

06 September 2023

**MBC response to the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan and
Kent Minerals Sites Plan reviews**

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	06/09/2023
Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	07/09/2023

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development.
Lead Head of Service	Karen Britton/Phil Coyne
Lead Officer and Report Author	Helen Garnett
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Consultation on the additional changes to the proposed review of the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan 2013-30 commenced on 13 June 2023 and will run through until 25 July 2023. MBC has submitted a draft response in order to meet this deadline, and has asked that a full formal response be provided after this meeting.

Purpose of Report

This is the third Regulation 18 consultation undertaken for this plan. Additionally, KCC is consulting on the amendments to the Kent Mineral Sites Plan – Nominated Hard Rock site allocation.

This report outlines the key additional Regulation 18 consultation changes proposed to the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan (2013-30). It also outlines proposed changes arising from the updated draft Minerals Sites Plan, including the extension of a site within Maidstone Borough. It recommends that members agree a formal response to the consultations, as drafted by officers and appended to this report.

This report has been brought back to committee following further information which came to light after the committee report had been finalised for the July PIED PAC.

This report makes the following recommendations to the Committee:

- 1.** The proposed response to the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan Review consultation and the Kent Mineral Sites Plan Nominated Hard Rock Sites at Appendix 1 of this report be recommended for approval by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development.

MBC response to the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan and Kent Minerals Sites Plan reviews

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations will enable the Council to ensure that plans at county council level do not materially harm its ability to achieve each of the corporate priorities.</p>	Phil Coyne, Interim Local Plan Director
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations support the achievements of the four, cross cutting objectives by ensuring that plans from a neighbouring authority do not materially harm the council's ability to achieve these objectives.</p>	Phil Coyne, Interim Local Plan Director
Risk Management	<p>The recommendations seek to reduce the risk associated with the production of a Local Plan Review by ensuring that plans produced by the county council are not in conflict with our own and those set out in government policy.</p>	Phil Coyne, Interim Local Plan Director
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost of responding to the consultation are all within already approved budgetary headings. • Any future recommendations / implication from the outcome of the 	Mark Green and Adrian Lovegrove Section 151 Officer &

	consultation that have financial implications will need to be considered as part of the in-year financial monitoring or if future years as part of the budget process.	Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Phil Coyne, Interim Local Plan Director
Legal	As part of its duty to co-operate, the Borough Council must engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with the County Council in the preparation of development plan documents in order to maximise the effectiveness of the activity of plan preparation. The Kent County Council are consulting with the Borough Council on an update/refresh to the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan 2013-30, which also forms part of Maidstone BC Local Development Plan Documents. The Borough Council has been consulted on and is responding to that consultation. Whilst there are no legal implications arising from the response, accepting the recommendations will help fulfil the Council's duties under s.33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations (2012) as amended.	Cheryl Parks Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Georgia Harvey Information Governance
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Nicola Toulson Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation will not have a negative impact on Crime and Disorder.	Phil Coyne, Interim Local Plan Director

Procurement	The recommendation has no immediate impact on budget headings or expenditure in the current year.	Phil Coyne, Interim Local Plan Director. Mark Green, Adrian Lovegrove. Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<p>The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and the listed updates are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implications of this report show significant environmental and social impacts and is directly opposed to Action 6.7 of the Council’s Biodiversity and Climate Action Plan to ‘Increase borough canopy cover expanding ancient forests and reconnecting of existing woodland including urban woods, and greening town centres.’ • The proposed extension to Hermitage Quarry is on 64 hectares, and environmental impacts include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Substantial loss of Oaken Wood an ancient replanted woodland – ‘The southern part of the site is designated as Plantation on Ancient Woodland Soils (PAWS) which would be lost to development and potentially fragmenting the remaining woodland. The ancient woodland soil has biodiversity value.’ ii) Loss of grade 2 agricultural land, iii) Loss of a designated Local Wildlife Site, which contains ‘biodiversity priority habitats’, iv) visual impacts to landscape in close proximity to the Kent Downs AONB, 	James Wilderspin Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

	<p>v) impact to aquifers and groundwater vulnerability,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a number of residential dwellings, and social impacts recognised in the 'Draft Sustainability Appraisal Report – Regulation 18 Consultation' (May 2023) include 'If the mineral is transported by road, there is a greater likelihood of negative impacts on air quality and climate change, and negative impacts may be caused on congestion, noise and disturbance, depending on route and distance. The total distance transported is likely to lead to higher emissions overall.' 	
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 This report sets out the key issues arising from the review of the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan 2023-38. The Minerals and Waste Plan was adopted in July 2016, with subsequent changes arising from an early partial review being adopted in 2020, for which KCC engaged with MBC through its statutory consultation process.

2.2 The matter had previously been considered at the July 2023 PAC, however additional information came to light in advance of that meeting relating to environmental designations.

2.3 The Kent Minerals and Waste Plan forms part of the Development Plan for Maidstone and sets out planning policies relating to minerals supply and waste management. All applications on minerals and waste related development are assessed by Kent County Council against the adopted plan, and other types of development affecting minerals and waste sites are assessed by Maidstone Borough, having regard to the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan.

2.4 At the beginning of 2022, KCC undertook a Regulation 18 consultation on its plan, then a subsequent Regulation 18 consultation on the whole draft plan in December 2022 in respect to further changes. MBC has made representations to these consultations. Comments received at that consultation have now been considered for inclusion in these additional changes, which also respond to updated evidence. This consultation regards a small number of changes only and does not extend to a consultation on the whole plan.

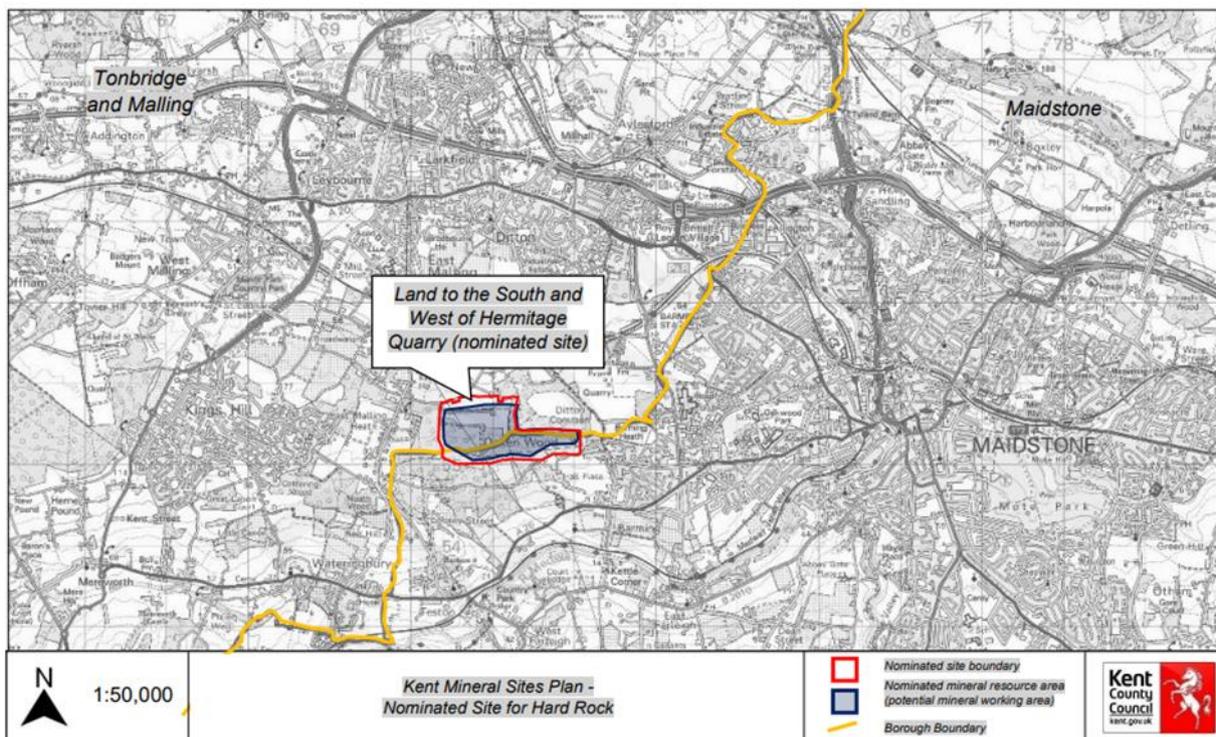
2.5 The full proposed amends can be found via this link: <https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/kent-minerals-and-waste-local-plan>.

2.6 The main relevant changes proposed to this iteration of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan involve the revision of mineral need over the plan period.

2.7 For soft sand the overall plan requirement has been increased in line with the extended plan period. The annual need remains the same. For hard rock, the total requirement over the plan period has increased. Consequently, further reserves will need to be allocated.

2.8 As a consequence of the latter change, the Kent Mineral Sites Plan has been updated to include further nominated hard rock allocations. The Sites Plan also updates the position in relation to Chapel Farm soft sand allocation in Lenham.

2.9 The additional hard rock allocation is located on land to the south and west of the existing Hermitage Quarry. The new allocation straddles the boundary of Maidstone Borough and Tonbridge and Malling Borough, with circa 2/5 of the allocation being sited within Maidstone.



2.10 The proposed allocation would abut the existing extraction site. The current extraction site, along with the proposed extension, lie within the Oaken Wood Local Wildlife Site and Ancient Woodland.

2.12 Paragraph 180 (a) of the NPPF states that LPA's should apply the following principles in determining planning applications: if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning should be refused. Paragraph c also states:

“development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists”.

2.13 Furthermore, Policy DM3 of the adopted Maidstone Local Plan states that developers will ensure new development ‘protect positive landscape character, areas of Ancient Woodland... from inappropriate development and avoid significant adverse impact as a result of development.’ And in respect to locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity ‘avoid damage to and inappropriate development considered likely to have a significant direct or indirect adverse effects’.

2.14 It is noted that this is an extension of an established minerals site, part of which already occupies an area designated as ancient woodland. The designations are noted, and it would be appropriate for any permission be subject to a condition to restore any wildlife sites and ancient woodland once extraction has been completed.

2.15 A number of residential dwellinghouses lie within close proximity to the nominated site boundary, but it is noted that the actual extraction site would be set an appropriate distance from these dwellings. Notwithstanding this setback to the extraction site, Policy DM11 of the draft plan states that:

2.16 Minerals and waste developments will be permitted if it can be demonstrated that they are unlikely to generate unacceptable adverse impacts from noise, dust, vibration (including vibration from blasting), odour, emissions (including emissions from vehicles associated with the development), bioaerosols, illumination, visual intrusion, traffic or exposure to health risks and associated damage to the qualities of life and wellbeing to communities and the environment.

2.17 Therefore, the plan offers some surety that the amenity of nearby residential properties can be preserved, providing that broader policies within the plan are adhered to.

2.18 It is noted that the extended allocation lies within close proximity to a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and MBC would also be concerned the proposal should not have significant impact on this designation.

2.19 In respect to Chapel Farm, new text has been inserted setting out need and supply. The allocation has not changed, nor has the rate of extraction.

2.20 In summary, the proposed additional allocation at Hermitage Quarry could adversely impact on an area designated as Local Wildlife Site and Ancient Woodland. On this basis, Maidstone Borough Council request that any permission be subject to a condition requiring reinstatement of the Local Wildlife Site and Ancient Woodland.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 Option 1: That the proposed response to this consultation at Appendix 1 of this report is recommended to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development for approval.

3.2 Option 2: That the proposed response to the consultation is not recommended to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development for approval. This would mean that KCC would continue production of its Development Plan Document without relevant and formal input from Maidstone Borough Council at this stage.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 For the reasons set out above, it is recommended that Option 1 is followed and that the proposed response as appended to this report is agreed.

5. RISK

5.1 The risk associated with these proposals, as well as any risks should the Council not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 Kent County Council has previously consulted on its Minerals and Waste Plan Review. At each consultation MBC has made representations on the proposed changes.

7. REPORT APPENDICES

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: MBC Response to the KCC Minerals and Waste Plan Regulation 18 consultation

Minerals and Waste Planning Policy
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Invicta House
Maidstone
ME14 1XX

Maidstone Borough Council

Maidstone House,
King Street,
Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ

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 [maidstoneboroughcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/maidstoneboroughcouncil)

By email to: mwlp@kent.gov.uk

Date: 09/08/2023

Dear sir or madam

Kent Minerals and Waste local Plan, and Kent Minerals Sites Plan; Regulation 18 Consultation Draft

Thank you for consulting Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) on the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-2039 - Further Proposed Changes, and the amendments to the Kent Mineral Sites Plan. Maidstone Borough Council's comments on the proposed changes are detailed below.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) places a legal duty on planning authorities to engage constructively, actively, and on an ongoing basis, to ensure the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in relation to strategic issues. Effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy.

We note that the proposed Kent Minerals Sites Plan proposes an extension to Hermitage Quarry and that allocation extends the workings into the borough of Maidstone.

Maidstone Borough Council recognises the need to preserve and plan for mineral extraction, however it has concerns that the proposed allocation lies within an area designated as a Local Wildlife Site and Ancient Woodland, meaning that the workings could cause harm to biodiversity. MBC therefore requests that any permission be subject to conditions requiring the reinstatement of habitats following completion of extraction.

It is noted that the extended allocation also lies within close proximity to a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and MBC requests that mitigations be put in place to prevent adverse impact on this designation.

These are the Council's views but are subject to formal ratification and agreement following the Planning and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee. I hope these comments are helpful and Maidstone Borough Council look forward to continuing, constructive dialogue on strategic issues as part of the duty to cooperate as our respective Local Plans progress.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Paul Cooper

Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development

Maidstone Borough Council, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ