

# AGENDA

## STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING



Date: Tuesday 8 November 2016

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,  
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors D Burton (Chairman), English,  
Mrs Grigg (Vice-Chairman),  
D Mortimer, Munford, Prendergast,  
Springett, de Wiggondene and Wilby

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1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Urgent Items
4. Notification of Visiting Members

**Continued Over/:**

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**Issued on Monday 31 October 2016**

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact Caroline Matthews on 01622 602743**. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council,  
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone Kent ME15 6JQ**

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### **PUBLIC SPEAKING**

In order to book a slot to speak at this meeting of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee, please contact Caroline Matthews on 01622 602743 or by email on [carolinematthews:@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:carolinematthews:@maidstone.gov.uk) by 5 pm one clear working day before the meeting. If asking a question, you will need to provide the full text in writing. If making a statement, you will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on. Please note that slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2016**

**Present:** Councillor D Burton (Chairman), and  
Councillors English, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Grigg, D  
Mortimer, Round, Springett, de Wiggondene and  
Wilby

**Also Present:** Councillors Willis

74. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Munford and Prendergast.

75. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:

Councillor Gooch for Councillor Munford;  
Councillor Ring for Councillor Prendergast.

76. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

**RESOLVED:** That item 19 – Additional Transport Modelling – Motorway Junctions be taken in advance of item 14 – River Medway Cyclepath, as it was put forward that consideration of item 19 would help inform later items.

77. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

The Chairman agreed to take an urgent update to item 20 – Community Infrastructure Levy: Draft Charging Schedule, which removed erroneous references within the report and recommendations to a Schedule of Modifications.

78. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Willis was in attendance as a Visiting Member, and indicated a wish to speak on all items on the agenda except item 17 – Response to M20 Lorry Park Consultation, and item 20 – Community Infrastructure Levy: Draft Charging Schedule Submission.

79. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

80. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

81. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 SEPTEMBER 2016

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

82. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

83. NOTIFICATION OF STATEMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no statements or questions from members of the public.

84. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

85. STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

**RESOLVED:** That the committee work programme be noted.

86. REFERENCE FROM THE HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE - AIR QUALITY WORKING GROUP

The committee considered the reference from Communities, Housing and Environment Committee which recommended the appointment of two Members of the committee to the newly established Air Quality Working Group.

**RESOLVED:** That Councillors Burton and English be appointed to sit on the Air Quality Working Group as representatives of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee.

87. OUTSIDE BODIES - STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - MEMBERS VERBAL UPDATES

The Chairman invited Members of the committee who were appointed to relevant outside bodies to provide an update on that body's work.

Updates were received on the Rail Steering Group, South East Rail Partnership, Quality Bus Partnership and Maidstone East Strategic Board.

**RESOLVED**: That the verbal updates be noted.

88. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT - ADDITIONAL TRANSPORT MODELLING - MOTORWAY JUNCTIONS

The Senior Transport Planner introduced the report providing an update on the progress of work undertaken by Mott McDonald to model the impact of the submitted Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Local Plan on M20 junctions 5 to 8.

It was explained that:

- Kent County Council (KCC) had raised the issue that the VISUM modelling did not depict traffic modelling on the M20.
- Highways England (HE) recommended localised modelling to be performed on this area, and put forward that developments in neighbouring boroughs should be factored into modelling.
- Mott McDonald were commissioned to undertake the work and produced modelling for the local plan period 2016-2031, taking into account both consented and non-consented developments.
- The results of modelling indicated that in 2031 all junctions would be over capacity, but that the impact of non-consented developments could be mitigated using high level approaches such as part signalisation and changes to road markings.
- A full technical report had been submitted to HE in September 2016. Feedback from this had been received and considered, and a statement of common ground between MBC and HE was expected to be made in November 2016.

Councillor Willis addressed the committee as a Visiting Member.

The committee discussed joint working between neighbouring boroughs during the development of local plans.

It was noted that a report on the Regulation 18 Consultation on the Tonbridge and Malling local plan was included at item 15 of the agenda.

**RESOLVED**: That the report be noted.

89. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION ON THE TONBRIDGE AND MALLING LOCAL PLAN

The Planning Policy Manager introduced the report informing the committee that the Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan Regulation 18

consultation had opened, and notifying of the intention to present a draft response to the 8 November 2016 meeting for agreement.

Councillor Willis addressed the committee as a Visiting Member.

Member raised the following matters during discussion:

- Concern regarding highways pressure and congestion on Hermitage Lane, and the need for robust mitigation schemes such as an alternative route, should be included in the draft consultation response.
- Reassurance was required from neighbouring councils and the highways authority that non-strategic routes would be given due consideration. An example given was the A26 network, and the potential additional traffic on the Malling Road resulting from new developments at Kings Hill.
- Air quality, open space and other ecological issues should be included in the Council's response to the consultation.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

90. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - RIVER MEDWAY CYCLEPATH

The Local Economy Project Officer presented the report providing an update on the scheme to create a cycle path along the River Medway from Aylesford to Barming Bridge, and requesting the committee's agreement to commence physical works in advance of the completion of the Cycle Tracks Conversion Order.

Members were advised that most landowners affected by the scheme were in support of the project, however some had requested movement of the path. Officers had considered this alternative and concluded that it would compromise the path's amenity and security.

In response to questions it was explained that:

- Vehicular access would be restricted by a locked gate stationed at the end of Unicomes Lane, accessible only to those with vehicular rights. There was enough width to allow pedestrians the space to move to the side of the path when a vehicle needed to pass.
- Signage would be used to encourage mutual respect between cyclists and pedestrians sharing the pathway.

**RESOLVED:** That the commencement of physical works to improve the existing public footpath, prior to the completion of the Cycle Tracks Conversion Order process, be agreed.

For – 9

Against – 0

Abstain – 0

91. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - KENT COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4 - DELIVERING GROWTH WITHOUT GRIDLOCK 2016-2031 - CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Planning Policy Manager spoke to the report setting out a draft response to Kent Council's (KCC) consultation on their Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4): Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016-2031.

The committee was advised that:

- The emerging LTP4 covered the same time period as MBC's Local Plan.
- A Leeds/Langley relief road had been included in the LTP4 as a priority.
- It was felt that MBC's priorities had not been given prominence in the LTP4 and there may be a lack of synergy between the LTP4 and MBC policies.

Councillor Willis addressed the committee as a Visiting Member.

During discussion it was noted that a proposed Leeds/Langley relief road had been discussed at the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board, and there had been support for this option to be investigated. It was put forward that references in the draft response to question 7 of the consultation suggesting the de-prioritisation of the scheme should be omitted, namely:

- That the first two sentences of the draft response to Question 7 as set out at paragraph 4.17 be retained, and that the remainder of the paragraph be deleted.
- That the draft response to Question 7 as set out at paragraph 4.18 be deleted.

A Member raised the issue that there was a need for additional rail services to London, and that the borough would benefit in particular from a connection to London Cannon Street. It was put forward:

- That the first sentence of the draft response to Question 5 as set out at paragraph 4.10 of the report of the Head of Planning and Development be amended to read: "With respect to rail and bus improvements the document would benefit from clarification as to how KCC will work to influence the new Southeastern franchise from 2018 with regard to London services, in particular to prioritise services to London Cannon Street."

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the proposed response as set out in Section 4 of the report be agreed subject to the following amendments:

- a) That the first sentence of the draft response to Question 5 as set out at paragraph 4.10 of the report of the Head of Planning and Development be amended to read: "With respect to rail and bus improvements the document would benefit from clarification as to how KCC will work to influence the new Southeastern franchise from 2018 with regard to London services, in particular to prioritise services to London Cannon Street."

For – 9                      Against – 0                      Abstain - 0

- b) That the first two sentences of the draft response to Question 7 as set out at paragraph 4.17 be retained, and that the remainder of the paragraph be deleted.

- c) That the draft response to Question 7 as set out at paragraph 4.18 be deleted.

For – 9                      Against – 0                      Abstain - 0

- 2) That the response as amended be forwarded to Kent County Council as the Borough Council's formal response to the Local Transport Plan 4 consultation by the deadline of 30 October 2016.

For – 9                      Against – 0                      Abstain – 0

92. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - RESPONSE TO M20 LORRY PARK CONSULTATION

The Senior Transport Planner presented the report detailing the council's submitted response to a Highways England consultation on site options for a lorry park on the M20.

It was explained that the response made reference to KCC's emerging Local Transport Plan 4, and stated the need for smaller lorry parks and enforcement.

The committee was informed that the consultation was not open in time for a draft response to be presented to the September 2016 meeting of the committee for agreement, and therefore had been submitted under delegated authority.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

93. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - GOVIA THAMESLINK 2018 TIMETABLE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Senior Transport Planner introduced the report providing a proposed response to the Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) for agreement. The consultation set out proposed changes to the GTR timetable in 2018, following the completion of the Thameslink Programme.

Councillor Willis addressed the committee as a Visiting Member.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- The number of stops proposed should result in a journey of less than an hour which was welcomed.
- The consultation requested that responses give a preference with regard to whether the route travelled via St Mary Cray or Swanley. There was a general preference towards Swanley.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the proposed 2018 Govia Thameslink Railway timetable consultation be noted.
- 2) That officers be given delegated authority to produce a response to the consultation questions set out in section 4 of the report, to include the Committee's preference towards a Swanley stop as sought by paragraph 4.3 of the report.
- 3) That officers be given delegated authority to submit the response to GTR as the Borough Council's formal response to the 2018 timetable consultation by the deadline of 8 December 2016.

For – 9

Against – 0

Abstain – 0

94. **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY: DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE SUBMISSION**

The Principal Planning Officer introduced the report which sought approval for minor changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Regulation 123 List, and an urgent update to omit reference to a Schedule of Modifications which was not required. It was clarified that the altered recommendations in the urgent update report did not affect the submission document.

It was explained that there had been few responses received to the consultation that took place between 5 August and 16 September 2016. None of the responses suggested changes, and there was general support for the Draft Regulation 123 List.

In response to questions the committee was advised that:

- One developer with an interest in a specific site had queried the viability evidence.
- The charges outlined in the Draft Charging Schedule could be amended at any time. The Draft Regulation 123 List was a separate document and could be revised.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the revised Draft Regulation 123 List as set out in Appendix B to the report of the Head of Planning and Development be approved;
- 2) That the officer responses to the representations received on the Draft Charging Schedule as set out in Appendix C to the report of the Head of Planning and Development be noted;

For – 9      Against – 0      Abstain - 0

- 3) That the Council be recommended to approve the Community Infrastructure Levy: Draft Charging Schedule (set out in Appendix A), and Draft Regulation 123 List (Appendix B) for submission to the Planning Inspectorate in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended).

For – 9      Against – 0      Abstain – 0

95. DURATION OF MEETING

6.31 p.m. to 8.40 p.m.



# 6 Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee Work Programme

Democratic Services Team  
E: [democraticservices@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:democraticservices@maidstone.gov.uk)

28/10/16

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Title of Report and Brief Summary:</b>	<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Public or Private (if Private the reason why)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>8 November</b>	<b>Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan Examination Update</b>	Cheryl Parks	Public	
<b>8 November</b>	<b>Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan – Results of Referendum</b>	Cheryl Parks	Public	
<b>8 November</b>	<b>Local Plan Examination Update</b>	Mark Egerton	Public	
<b>8 November</b>	<b>Response to Regulation 18 Consultation on the Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan</b>	Mark Egerton	Public	
<b>8 November</b>	<b>Maidstone Transport Operators’ Group</b>	Cheryl Parks	Public	
<b>8 November</b>	<b>Planning Service Review</b>	William Cornall	Public	
<b>8 November</b>	<b>Q2 Strategic Plan Performance Update</b>	Alex Munden	Public	
<b>8 November</b>	<b>Q2 Budget Monitoring Report</b>	Ellie Dunnet	Public	
<b>6 December</b>	<b>Cancelled Meeting</b>			
<b>10 January</b>	<b>Finance, Resources and Review</b>	Tay Arnold	Public	Summary update report on the wider Planning Department finance and resource position (deferred from 15/16)
<b>10 January</b>	<b>Examination of the Local Plan – Inspector’s Modifications</b>	Mark Egerton	Public	
<b>10 January</b>	<b>Developing Master Plans for Key Local Plan Sites</b>		Public	

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Title of Report and Brief Summary:</b>	<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Public or Private (if Private the reason why)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
10 January	Public Realm Design Guide and Public Art Policy		Public	Reference from HCL Committee
10 January	Strategic Plan 2015-2020 Refresh		Public	
10 January	MTFS – Budget Proposals 2017-18		Public	
10 January	MTFS – Fees and Charges		Public	
7 February	Parking Services Annual Report		Public	
7 February	Q3 Budget Monitoring Report		Public	
7 February	Q3 Strategic Plan Performance Update		Public	
14 March				
11 April/TBC	Playing Pitch Strategy and Indoor Built Facilities Strategy		Public	<b>COMMENT: POSSIBLE JOINT MEETING WITH HCL COMMITTEE</b>
11 April	5 Year Housing Land Supply		Public	
June	Neighbourhood Planning Update		Public	
TBC – Early 2017	CIL Governance Structure	Andrew Thompson	Public	
TBC	Q4 Budget Monitoring Report		Public	

Date of Meeting	Title of Report and Brief Summary:	Contact Officer:	Public or Private (if Private the reason why)	Comment
TBC	Q4 Strategic Plan Performance Update		Public	
TBC	Local Development Updates			
TBC	Planning Support Service Options			
TBC	Brunswick Street Update			
TBC	Union Street Redevelopment			
See notes	Retrospective Planning Applications and Enforcement			SPST invited to Planning Committee workshop on 25 October 2016 and further workshop planned for 24 January 2017
TBC	Enforcement			
TBC	PDR – Greensand Ridge			
TBC	Development of Supplementary Planning Documents for the Green and Blue Infrastructure			
TBC	Implementation of Rewilding Initiatives			
TBC	Development of Supplementary Planning Documents for 2016/17			
TBC	Parks, Open Spaces, Play Areas & Nature Reserves			<b>COMMENT: POSSIBLE JOINT MEETING WITH HCL COMMITTEE?</b>
TBC	Update on Park and Ride post Sittingbourne Road Site Closure			
TBC	Renewal of Park and Ride Contract			

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Title of Report and Brief Summary:</b>	<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Public or Private (if Private the reason why)</b>	<b>Comment</b>
TBC	<b>Report on Committee Taking Part in KCC Bus Transport Select Committee – Chairman Invited</b>			
TBC	<b>Low Emissions Strategy</b>			
<b>Ad hoc</b>	<b>Neighbourhood Plans</b>	Cheryl Parks		Consultation responses; examiner reports; referendum approvals etc.

**Committee Workshops Planned/Proposed**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Content</b>
Early 2017	<b>Housing and Planning Act - Changes to National Policy in Relation to Plan Making</b>	<b>Update of Policy and Legislative Changes and the Impact on Plan Making including Housing and Planning Act</b>
Early 2017	<b>Master Plans for Lenham and Invicta Barracks</b>	
TBC	<b>Master Plan for Maidstone East Redevelopment</b>	
<b>25 October 2016 / 24 January 2017</b>	<b>Retrospective Planning Consent and Enforcement Workshop</b>	

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# Agenda Item 13

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**8 NOVEMBER 2016**

#### **REFERENCE FROM PLANNING COMMITTEE**

##### WEST STREET, HARRIETSHAM, KENT

The Planning Committee, at its meeting held on 6 October 2016, considered application 16/505808 – Subdivision of dwelling to create 2 separate dwellings (part retrospective) – 12 West Street, Harrietsham, Kent. A copy of the report of the Head of Planning and Development is attached as Appendix A.

The Committee agreed to grant permission subject to the condition and informatives set out in the report.

Arising from the discussion on the application, the Committee also agreed to ask the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee to look, in consultation with the appropriate County Council Member, at traffic and parking issues in West Street, Harrietsham, and the surrounding area, and how they might be addressed by Traffic Regulation Orders.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee be requested to look, in consultation with the appropriate County Council Member, at traffic and parking issues in West Street, Harrietsham, and the surrounding area, and how they might be addressed by Traffic Regulation Orders.

## REPORT SUMMARY

<b>REFERENCE NO - 16/505808/FULL</b>		
<b>APPLICATION PROPOSAL</b> Subdivision of dwelling to create 2 separate dwellings (Part retrospective).		
<b>ADDRESS</b> 12 West Street Harrietsham Kent ME17 1JD		
<b>RECOMMENDATION – Permit with conditions</b>		
<b>SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION/REASONS FOR REFUSAL</b> The proposed development is considered to comply with the policies of the Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000, the Submission Version of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework and there are no overriding material considerations to indicate a refusal of planning consent.		
<b>REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE</b> - It is contrary to the views of Harrietsham Parish Council.		
<b>WARD</b> Harrietsham/Lenham	<b>PARISH COUNCIL</b> Harrietsham	<b>APPLICANT</b> Mr Ross McCall <b>AGENT</b> Judd Architecture Ltd
<b>DECISION DUE DATE</b> 21/09/16	<b>PUBLICITY EXPIRY DATE</b> 26/08/16	<b>OFFICER SITE VISIT DATE</b> 05/08/16
<b>RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY (including appeals and relevant history on adjoining sites):</b>		

No relevant planning history.

## MAIN REPORT

## 1.0 Site description

- 1.01 The detached building is located on the northern side of West Street, some 30m to the west of the junction with Forge Meadow. Works started on its subdivision in April 2016 and the properties will be known as 12 and 14 West Street. The property is 2 storey with a shallow pitched roof; it has tile-hanging at first floor level and painted stone at ground floor level; there is an existing single storey rear extension of facing brick; and a detached single garage to the rear, accessed from the eastern side of the building.
- 1.02 West Street does vary in terms of the character and size of the residential properties found; there is on-street parking available; and there are GII listed buildings to the immediate west and south-west of the site. For the purposes of the adopted Local Plan, the application site is within the defined village boundary of Harrietsham.

## 2.0 Proposal

- 2.01 This is a part retrospective development that is for the subdivision of the existing (3-bed) house into 2 separate (2-bed) residential units. The only external changes are minor fenestration alterations at ground floor level and the front elevation is to be unaltered. One of the units will retain the existing single garage to the rear of the site; and the other unit will have no off-road parking provision.

## 3.0 Policies and other considerations

- Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000: H28
- National Planning Policy Framework (2012)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (2014)
- Maidstone Local Plan (Submission version): SP6, DM1, DM2, DM27
- Harrietsham Neighbourhood Plan Area Application was approved 29/10/12

**4.0 Consultee responses**

- 4.01 **Harrietsham Parish Council:** Wish to see the application refused and reported to Planning Committee for the following reasons;

*“Public Safety*

*West Street is a narrow road (7 meters in places) which is on a bus route and heavily used as access to the nearby commercial estate, it is also the route taken by local children walking to Harrietsham Primary School. Whilst West Street may not have parking restrictions imposed, it does have significant on-road parking problems and can become completely blocked by large vehicles trying to weave in and out of parked vehicles. Harrietsham Parish Council is concerned that access for the emergency services could be severely impeded by the current on-road parking and that any new development likely brings additional vehicles, which will make this situation worse. Harrietsham Parish Council note that, in an application for the adjacent property (10 West Street 13/1117 dated Sep 2014), the Maidstone Borough Planning department imposed a condition (condition 7) requiring off-road parking to be created and maintained stating that, development without adequate parking/turning provision is likely to lead to parking detrimental to road safety. Harrietsham Parish Council would wish to see a similar condition imposed on this development.*

*Public Health*

*Harrietsham Parish Council understands that concerns about the alleged disposal of dangerous materials (asbestos) in the grounds of the adjacent property (10 West Street) have been reported to Michael Swoffer at Maidstone Borough Council and that a Ground Contamination Survey has been requested, we request that any material impact arising from the findings of this survey should also be taken into account when considering this application.*

*Stop Notice*

*Harrietsham Parish council is aware that a stop notice was served on this development due to breach of planning regulations and considering the potential impact on public safety and public health previously outlined would request that this notice remains in place until these matters have been fully addressed.”*

- 4.02 **KCC Highways:** Raise no objection.
- 4.03 **Conservation Officer:** Raises no objection on heritage grounds.

**5.0 Neighbour responses:**

- 5.01 4 representations have been made raising concerns over parking provision and highway safety.

**6.0 Principle of development**

- 6.01 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 provides that all planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.02 Saved policy H28 of the adopted Development Plan allows for minor housing development in this area; and central Government guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) does encourage new housing in sustainable locations as an alternative to residential development in more remote countryside situations. I consider the site to be in a sustainable location, within the village boundary of Harrietsham.
- 6.03 The submitted version of the Development plan went to the Secretary of State for examination on the 20 May 2016 and examination is expected to follow in October/November of this year. This Plan is considered to hold significant weight;

and there is policy support for this type of development in this location, subject to its details which the report will go on to assess.

## **7.0 Visual impact and design**

- 7.01 The development will return the building to its original use as two dwellings; and the only external changes are minor ground floor fenestration alterations towards the rear of the building and the general refurbishment of the external walls were necessary. The Conservation Officer raises no objections in this respect and I am satisfied that the external works would not have an adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the building, the surrounding area, or upon the setting of any near-by listed building.

## **8.0 Residential amenity**

- 8.01 The subdivision of this property does not significantly impact upon the living conditions of any local resident given the existing use and layout of the property; the minor fenestration alterations; and the separation distances of properties to the rear of the site. In addition, the level of traffic movements resulting from the proposed development, which would make use of the existing garage to then rear of the site, would be of no more detriment to the amenity of local residents than the current situation. The development would also provide adequate internal and external living space for future occupants. I am therefore satisfied that this proposal would not cause adverse harm to the residential amenity of existing and future occupants.

## **9.0 Highway safety implications**

- 9.01 The development would see 1 unit retain the existing garage space and there would be no off-road parking provision for the other unit. For reference, the single property benefited from the single garage space.

- 9.02 The proposal has the potential to generate a marginal increase in car parking demand from an additional 2-bed house. Whilst this may represent at times some local inconvenience it is not considered that this represents a discernible or tangible detriment to road safety, or in the context of the NPPF a severe or significant impact. Neighbours have also made reference to the KCC SPG 'Kent Vehicle Parking Standards' (2006) and the 'Kent Design Guide Review: Interim Guidance Note 3 (2008) – Residential Parking', which recommends 1.5 spaces per 2-bed house in a village setting. However, this is only interim guidance and it does state that:

*"This Guidance Note relates primarily to development proposals involving new streets and places. The Guidance Table can be applied to minor (often infill) developments, but regard needs to be had for the severity of concerns about safety and/or amenity before recommendations of refusal are made in respect of numerically "inadequate" parking. Unless demonstrable harm is likely to be caused, it may be inappropriate to make such recommendations."*

- 9.03 The Highways Officer has confirmed that a highway safety objection to this application could not be sustained and confirms that no objection to this application is raised.

- 9.04 Furthermore, reference is made to MA/13/1117 that was for a new dwelling which was able to provide its own off-street parking. A condition refers to retaining this parking provision, but this does not mean that any other housing application in the village should be refused because there is no off-street parking provided. 10 West Street is a different application and every application must be considered on its own merits.

9.05 Bearing in mind Government advice to reduce car usage, the sustainable location of the site, and that there would be no significant highway safety issues arising from the development, I consider that an objection on the grounds of parking provision and highway safety could not be sustained and raise no objection in this respect.

**10.0 Other considerations**

10.01 Given the nature, scale and location of the proposal, I consider it unnecessary and unreasonable to raise objection or request further information in terms of landscaping and arboricultural issues; biodiversity; flood risk; air quality; noise; and land contamination. Foul sewage and surface water are to be discharged through the mains sewer.

10.02 The main issues raised by Harrietsham Parish Council and local residents have been addressed in the main body of this report. However, I would add that the issue of the illegal disposing of dangerous materials is not a material planning consideration, and these matters relate to 10 West Street. No ground excavation work is to be undertaken for the proposal, however an appropriate asbestos informative will be added.

**11.0 Conclusion**

11.01 The scheme is acceptable in terms of its design; its impact on adjacent residents; and the local highway network. As such, it is considered overall that the proposal is acceptable with regard to the relevant provisions of the Development Plan, the NPPF and all other material considerations such as are relevant. I therefore recommend approval of the application on this basis.

**12.0 RECOMMENDATION – APPROVE with conditions:**

**CONDITIONS**

(1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: PR01.PR02, PR03, PR04, PR05, PR06 received 12/07/16 and 02A received 20/07/16;

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development and to safeguard the enjoyment of their properties by existing and prospective occupiers.

**INFORMATIVES**

(1) The applicant is advised that no demolition/construction activities shall take place, other than between 0800 to 1800 hours (Monday to Friday) and 0800 to 1300 hours (Saturday) with no working activities on Sunday or Bank Holiday.

(2) Adequate and suitable measures should be carried out for the minimisation of asbestos fibres during demolition, so as to prevent airborne fibres from affecting workers carrying out the work, and nearby properties. Only contractors licensed by the Health and Safety Executive should be employed. Any redundant materials removed from the site should be transported by a registered waste carrier and disposed of at an appropriate legal tipping site.

Case Officer: Kathryn AltieriNB For full details of all papers submitted with this application please refer to the relevant Public Access pages on the council's website. The conditions set out in the report may be subject to such reasonable change as is necessary to ensure accuracy and enforceability.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING,  
SUSTAINABILITY AND  
TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

**8 November 2016**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**Yes**

**Second Quarter Budget Monitoring 2016/17**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Ellie Dunnet Chief Accountant
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

That the Committee notes the revenue position at the end of the second quarter and the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position where significant variances have been identified.

**This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

The budget is a statement, in financial terms, of the priorities set out in the strategic plan. It reflects the Council's decisions on the allocation of resources to all objectives of the strategic plan. The issues raised in this report identify areas where financial performance is at variance with priority outcomes.

**Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee	8 November 2016
Policy & Resources Committee	23 November 2016

## Second Quarter Budget Monitoring 2016/17

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an overview of the revenue budget and outturn for the second quarter of 2016/17, and highlights financial matters which may have a material impact on the medium term financial strategy or the balance sheet.
  - 1.2 As at 30 September 2016, this committee was showing a minor overall favourable variance of £21,252, although there are significant adverse and favourable variances within this total. The individual variances for each service area are detailed at **Appendix I**.
  - 1.3 The position for the Borough Council as a whole at the end of the second quarter shows an increase in the overspend forecast at the end of the first quarter. Additional controls for the overspending have been introduced to address this and are detailed at paragraph 2.7 of this report.
- 

### 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Director of Finance & Business Improvement is the Responsible Financial Officer and has overall responsibility for budgetary control and financial management. However, in practice, day to day budgetary control is delegated to Service Managers, with assistance and advice from their Director and the Finance section.
- 2.2 The medium term financial strategy for 2016/17 onwards was agreed by Council on 2 March 2016. This report advises and updates the Committee on the current position with regards to revenue expenditure against the approved budgets.
- 2.3 Attached at **Appendix I** is a table detailing the current budget and expenditure position for this Committee's services in relation to the second quarter of 2016/17, to September 2016. The Appendix details the net budget per cost centre for this Committee, excluding capital charges. Actual expenditure is shown to the end of September 2016 and includes accruals for goods and services received but not yet paid for.
- 2.4 The columns of the table in the Appendix show the following detail:
  - a) The cost centre description;
  - b) The value of the total budget for the year;
  - c) The amount of the budget expected to be spent by the end of September 2016;
  - d) The actual spend to that date;
  - e) The variance between expected and actual spend;
  - f) The forecast spend to year end; and
  - g) The expected significant variances at 31 March 2017.

- 2.5 **Appendix I** shows that of an annual budget of -£738,780 there was an expectation that net income of -£252,180 would be achieved by the end of the second quarter. At this point in time, the budget position for this Committee as a whole is a minor underspend of £21,252. However, the full year forecast indicates that there is expected to be a net underspend of £110,000 by 31 March 2017.
- 2.6 Explanations for variances within individual cost centres which exceed or are expected to exceed £30,000 are provided below in accordance with the Council's Constitution:

	<b>Positive Variance Q2 £000</b>	<b>Adverse Variance Q2 £000</b>	<b>Year end Forecast Variance £000</b>
<b>Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee</b>			
<b>Pay &amp; Display Car Parks</b> –Lockmeadow and King Street car parks have significantly outperformed against their income targets, despite the increased income budgets which were set for 2016/17. This trend is expected to continue through to the end of 2016/17. It should be noted that the forecast incorporates a shortfall of £50,000 for Mote Park car park. This has been offset against the overall underspend in the forecast outturn.	174		300
<b>On-Street Parking</b> – the surplus position in this area is expected to be maintained through to the year end. It should be noted that this surplus is ring-fenced.	29		60
<b>Development Management</b> – there is an overspend on staff costs including agency staff which is not being met by current income levels. The Head of Service is aware of the problem and is exploring options for addressing the issue. These include the Planning Review that is being considered elsewhere on this meeting's agenda.		-187	-300
<b>Building Regulations</b> – income is currently above budget in this area, and the underspend is expected to continue through to the end of the year. It should be noted that this service is required to break even on a rolling three year basis.	39		50
<b>Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Total</b>			<b>110</b>

2.7 The overall forecast for the Council at the end of the second quarter is an increase in the overspend projected at the end of the first quarter, despite planned actions to address this. Increased control in the following areas of spending have therefore been introduced across the Council with immediate effect in order to improve the current position:

1. Recruitment;
2. Temporary staff;
3. Discretionary spending; and
4. Contractual commitments.

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### **3 AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 In considering the current position on the revenue budget at the end of September 2016, the Committee can choose to note those actions and reconsider the outcomes at the end of the third quarter.
- 3.2 Alternatively, it could choose to take further action upon the consideration of the reported current position.

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### **4 PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Committee is requested to note the content of the report and agree on any necessary action to be taken in relation to the budget position.

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### **5 CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 This report is not expected to lead to any consultation.

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### **6 NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 6.1 The second quarter budget monitoring reports will be considered by the Service Committees in November 2016, culminating in a full report to Policy and Resources Committee on 23 November.
  - 6.2 Details of the actions taken by Service Committees to manage the pressures in their budgets will be reported to Policy and Resources Committee at this meeting.
-

## 7 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	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.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Risk Management</b>	The Council has produced a balanced budget for both capital and revenue expenditure and income for 2016/17 This budget is set against a backdrop of limited resources and an 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 this committee the best opportunity to take actions to mitigate such risks. The issues set out in this report do not exhibit the level of potential risk identified in previous years.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Financial</b>	Financial implications are the focus of this report through high level budget monitoring. The process of budget monitoring ensures that services can react quickly 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.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Staffing</b>	The budget for staffing represents approximately 50% of the direct spend of the	Director of Finance &

	council and is carefully monitored. Any issues in relation to employee costs will be raised in this and future monitoring reports.	Business Improvement
<b>Legal</b>	The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget. This monitoring process enables the Committee to remain aware of issues and the process to be taken to maintain a balanced budget for the year.	Kate Jardine, Team Leader (Planning), Mid Kent Legal Services
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	The budget ensures the focus of resources into areas of need as identified in the Council's strategic priorities. This monitoring report ensures that the budget is delivering services to meet those needs.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	No specific issues arise.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Community Safety</b>	No specific issues arise.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	No specific issues arise.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Procurement</b>	No specific issues arise.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Asset Management</b>	Resources available for asset management are contained within both revenue and capital budgets and do not represent a significant problem at this time.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement

## 8 REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix I: Second Quarter 2016/17 Revenue Monitoring – Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport

## **9 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee  
Second Quarter Budget Monitoring - Full Summary to September 2016**

Cost Centre	Budget for Year	To September	Actual	Variance	Forecast	Year end Variance	Explanation
Building Control	-£990	-£495	£553	-£1,048	-£990	£0	
Building Regulations Chargeable	-£295,160	-£156,636	-£196,087	£39,452	-£345,160	£50,000	Income is currently above budget in this area, and the underspend is expected to continue through to the end of the year. It should be noted that this service is required to break even on a rolling three year basis.
Building Surveying Section	£349,910	£175,095	£182,798	-£7,703	£349,910	£0	
Conservation	-£11,670	-£8,738	-£124	-£8,614	-£11,670	£0	
Development Control Advice	-£115,000	-£57,500	-£54,372	-£3,128	-£115,000	£0	
Development Control Appeals	£119,410	£64,910	£39,539	£25,371	£119,410	£0	
Development Control Applications	-£1,303,640	-£654,861	-£590,787	-£64,075	-£1,303,640	£0	The variance has arisen as income levels are below budget.
Development Control Enforcement	£49,860	£210	£0	£210	£49,860	£0	
Development Management Enforcement Section	£139,890	£69,945	£81,795	-£11,850	£139,890	£0	
Development Management Section	£765,090	£380,815	£567,433	-£186,618	£1,065,090	-£300,000	There is an overspend on staff costs including agency staff costs which is not being met by current income levels. The Head of Service is aware of the problem and is exploring options for addressing the issue.
Environment Improvements	£14,240	£7,120	£14,574	-£7,454	£14,240	£0	
Head of Planning and Development	£99,060	£49,380	£49,788	-£408	£99,060	£0	
Heritage Landscape and Design Section	£168,300	£84,300	£83,269	£1,031	£168,300	£0	
Land Charges	-£211,330	-£94,301	-£92,496	-£1,805	-£211,330	£0	
Mid Kent Local Land Charges Section	£26,140	£13,070	£6,635	£6,435	£26,140	£0	
Mid Kent Planning Support Service	£363,840	£181,920	£172,814	£9,106	£363,840	£0	
Mote Park - Enforcement	£23,940	£11,970	£11,952	£18	£23,940	£0	
Mote Park Pay & Display	-£172,560	-£102,907	-£75,324	-£27,583	-£122,560	-£50,000	The variance is due to lower than expected income levels.
Name Plates & Notices	£17,600	£8,800	£1,407	£7,393	£17,600	£0	
Neighbourhood Planning	£0	-£12,500	-£11,786	-£714	£0	£0	
Non Paying Car Parks	£9,230	£7,751	£7,515	£235	£9,230	£0	
Off Street Parking - Enforcement	-£192,070	-£94,685	-£99,860	£5,175	-£192,070	£0	
On Street Parking	-£284,830	-£139,541	-£168,728	£29,188	-£344,830	£60,000	The surplus for the year to date is expected to be maintained through to the year end. It should be noted that this surplus is ring-fenced
Other Transport Services	-£9,300	-£4,650	£189	-£4,839	-£9,300	£0	
Park & Ride	£186,150	£124,624	£114,041	£10,583	£186,150	£0	
Parking Services Section	£294,080	£147,540	£136,211	£11,329	£294,080	£0	
Pay & Display Car Parks	-£1,328,680	-£583,378	-£757,669	£174,291	-£1,678,680	£350,000	Lockmeadow and King Street car parks have significantly outperformed against their income targets, despite the increased income budgets which were set for 2016/17. This trend is expected to continue through to the end of 2016/17.
Planning Business Management	£101,020	£50,510	£50,095	£415	£101,020	£0	
Planning Policy	£180,360	£182,030	£185,529	-£3,499	£180,360	£0	
Residents Parking	-£223,930	-£128,961	-£138,214	£9,254	-£223,930	£0	
Socially Desirable Buses	£63,780	£7,343	£5,342	£2,001	£63,780	£0	
Spatial Policy Planning Section	£487,480	£244,140	£240,541	£3,599	£487,480	£0	
Street Naming & Numbering	-£49,000	-£24,500	-£40,005	£15,505	-£49,000	£0	
	<b>-£738,780</b>	<b>-£252,181</b>	<b>-£273,432</b>	<b>£21,252</b>	<b>-£848,780</b>	<b>£110,000</b>	

<b>Strategic Planning, Sustainability &amp; Transport</b>	<b>8 November 2016</b>
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Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?	<b>No</b>
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## Strategic Plan Performance Update Quarter 2 2016/17

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy & Communications
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Anna Collier, Policy & Information Manager. Alex Munden, Performance and Business Information Officer
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. Note the summary of performance for Quarter 2 of 2016/17 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and corporate strategies and plans.
2. Note the progress of strategic plan action plan at Appendix II
3. Note where complete data is not currently available.
4. Note the performance of Key Performance Indicators from Quarter 1 of 2016/17 for which data was not available at Policy & Resources on 26 July 2016

**This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

Key Performance Indicators monitor the delivery of the Council's Corporate Priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan 2015-20. The Performance Plan provides progress against the Council's key strategies which deliver the Council's corporate priorities.

**Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Wider Leadership Team	17 October 2016
Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transport Committee	8 November 2016
Policy & Resources Committee	23 November 2016

# Strategic Plan Performance Update Quarter 2 2016/17

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transport Committee is asked to review the progress of key strategies, plans, and performance indicators that support the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020
- 

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Having a comprehensive set of actions and performance indicators ensures that the Council delivers against the priorities and actions set in the Strategic Plan.
- 2.2 A midyear update has been provided for any objectives in the Strategic Plan Action Plan that were due between 1 April and 30 September 2016. Updates for these objectives can be found in Appendix II. These are progress updates against specific milestones through the last two quarters.
- 2.3 The Strategic Plan now has 33 Key Performance Indicators that were agreed by Committee in April 2016. This is in addition to the existing 14 plan and strategy updates.
- 2.4 Performance indicators are judged in two ways; firstly on whether performance has improved, sustained or declined, compared to the same period in the previous year. This is known as direction. Where there is no previous data, no assessment of direction can be made.
- 2.5 The second way is to look at whether an indicator has achieved the target set and is known as PI status. If an indicator has achieved or exceeded the annual target they are rated green. If the target has been missed but is within 10% of the target it will be rated amber and if the target has been missed by more than 10% it will be rated red.
- 2.6 Some indicators will show an asterisk (\*) after the figure, these are provisional values that are awaiting confirmation. Data for some of the indicators were not available at the time of reporting in these cases a date has been provided of when the information is expected.
- 2.7 Contextual indicators are not targeted but are given a direction. Indicators that are not due for reporting or where there is delay in data collection are not rated against targets or given a direction.
-

### 3. Quarter 2 Performance Summary

- 3.1 There are 33 key performance indicators (KPIs) which were developed with Heads of Service and unit managers, and agreed by Policy & Resources Committee for 2016/17. Four of these relate to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transport Committee.
- 3.2 Overall, 100% (2) of KPIs reported this quarter achieved their annual target for quarter 2. For all of indicators, performance improved compared to the same quarter last year.

RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A	Total
KPIs	2	0	0	2	4
Strategic Actions	1	1	0		2
Direction	Up	Across	Down	N/A	Total
KPIs	2	0	0	2	4

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### 4. Performance by Priority

#### Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all

- 4.1 The percentage of parishes satisfied with the level of communication and engagement with Maidstone Borough Council is 38.3%. A total of 62 responses were received from Parish Councillors and Clerks. Almost a third (32%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with engagement. Comments for this question and others from the survey as a whole are being reviewed and will help shape future communication and engagement.

#### Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

- 4.2 The number of school journeys undertaken without a car was 688 for quarter 2. This is a significant reduction on the performance observed in quarter 1. The data still demonstrates a positive modal shift. The reduction for quarter 2 may be due to the impact of summer holidays and the new intake of pupils in September.
- 4.3 All major planning applications were processed on time during quarter 2. 28 applications were completed within the agreed timescales. Of these, 6 were determined within 13 weeks, and the 22 were determined within developer agreed timescales. The majority of these have been complex housing applications which require S106 agreements to be negotiated. This shows how effective officers have been in negotiations and securing extensions of time for complex developments.
- 4.4 A total of 139 affordable homes were delivered, exceeding the target of 45 for the quarter. The affordable housing programme is maintaining a steady supply of new build affordable units. The annual target has already been exceeded with 225 affordable homes delivered to date. According to latest schedules, there are in excess of 300 affordable dwellings forecast for completion by the end of the year.

## 5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 The Strategic Plan Performance Update will be reported quarterly to the service committees; Communities Housing and Environment Committee, Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee, and Heritage, Culture, and Leisure Committee. The report will then go to Policy & Resources committee following these meetings, with any feedback from the Committees.

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## 6. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Council could choose not to monitor the Strategic Plan and/or make alternative performance management arrangements, such as the frequency of reporting. This is not recommended as it could lead to action not being taken against performance during the year, and the Council failing to deliver its priorities.

6.2 Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transport Committee review the performance data presented and request further information to understand previous, current, and future performance where relevant.

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## 7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The key performance indicators and strategic actions are part of the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2015-20 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. They also cover a wide range of services and priority areas, for example waste and recycling.	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy & Communications
<b>Risk Management</b>	The production of robust performance reports ensures that the view of the Council's approach to the management of risk and use of resources is not undermined and allows early action to be taken in order to mitigate the risk of not achieving targets and outcomes.	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy & Communications
<b>Financial</b>	Performance indicators and targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources	Section 151 Officer

	and determining good value for money. The financial implications of any proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and associated annual budget setting process. Performance issues are highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.	
<b>Staffing</b>	Having a clear set of targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place.	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy & Communications
<b>Legal</b>	None identified.	Legal Team
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	The Performance Indicators reported on in this quarterly update measure the ongoing performance of the strategies in place. If there has been a change to the way in which a service delivers a strategy, i.e. a policy change, an Equalities Impact Assessment is undertaken to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on individuals with a protected characteristic.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	A number of performance indicators relate to our performance in environmental services. This has a significant effect on our ability to monitor the Environment in Maidstone. This is also important as one of our key priorities is to provide a clean and safe environment.	Policy and Information Manager
<b>Community Safety</b>	We have Key Performance Indicators that relate to important areas of community safety. These ensure that the work being done by the Community Safety Unit is relevant, and that key areas such as	Policy and Information Manager

	safeguarding are being developed.	
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	None identified.	Policy and Information Manager
<b>Procurement</b>	Performance Indicators and Strategic Milestones monitor the any procurement needed to achieve the outcomes of the Strategic Plan.	Policy and Information Manager
<b>Asset Management</b>	Performance Indicators that measure our commercial activities monitor our use of our assets. Good performance shows good management of our assets, or can highlight where assets can be utilised more efficiently.	Policy and Information Manager

**8. REPORT APPENDICES**

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

- Appendix I: Strategic Plan Performance Update Q2 2016/17
- Appendix II: Strategic Plan Action Plan 6 Monthly Update

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

2016/17

# Quarter 2 Performance Update



For further information about Performance Management at Maidstone Council, please contact Alex Munden, Performance and Business Information Officer.

**OUR VISION**

That our residents live in decent homes, enjoy good health and a pleasant environment, with a successful economy that is supported by reliable transport networks.

**OUR MISSION**

Putting People First.

**OUR PRIORITIES**

Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all

Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough



**ACTION AREAS**

Providing a clean and safe environment

Encouraging good health and wellbeing

Respecting the character and heritage of our Borough

Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions

Enhancing the appeal of the town centre for everyone

Securing improvements to the transport infrastructure of our Borough

Promoting a range of employment opportunities and skills required across our Borough

Planning for sufficient homes to meet our Borough's needs

**OUR VALUES**

**Service**



Everything we do impacts on our customers, both internal and external. We will listen to and understand their needs, then take action to provide the right service in a positive and professional manner.

**Teamwork**



Working together to achieve our objectives and goals in a way that utilises the talents and creativity of everyone in our organisation.

**Responsibility**



We work in an environment that encourages us to take ownership for our actions. Making the right choices and decisions that lead to a satisfactory outcome for all.

**Integrity**



We have the courage to act on our convictions to build trust and honesty. We work with our partners and customers to create a feeling of openness and transparency in everything we do.

**Value**



Taking care and weighing up our options, aiming to get the maximum effect for every penny of public money we spend.

**Equality**



Valuing our differences and understanding how they can contribute to a better working environment and services that are fair and easy to access.

## Understanding Performance

### Key to performance ratings

Performance indicators are judged in two ways; firstly on whether performance has improved, been sustained or declined, compared to the same period in the previous year. For example, 2016/17 annual performance will be compared against 2015/16 annual performance. This is known as direction. Where there is no previous data, no assessment of direction can be made.

The second way in which performance is assessed looks at whether an indicator has achieved the target set and is known as PI status. Some indicators may show an asterisk (\*) after the figure, these are provisional figures that are awaiting confirmation.

Data Only indicators are not targeted but are given a direction. Indicators that are not due to be reported or where there is a delay in data collection are not rated against targets or given a direction.

RAG Rating	
	Target not achieved
	Target missed (within 10%)
	Target met
	No target to measure performance against
	Data Only

Direction	
	Performance has improved
	Performance has not changed / been sustained
	Performance has declined
	No previous performance to judge against

Strategic Actions have also been rated using the RAG Status (Red, Amber or Green). The ratings are there to provide an assessment of how well the strategy or plan is progressing.

### Performance Summary

This is the annual update on Maidstone Borough Council's Strategic Plan 2015-20. It sets out how we are performing against the Key Performance Indicators and Strategic actions that directly contribute to the achievement of our priorities: Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for all and securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough.

Outlined below is a summary of the ratings and direction that have been given for the annual results.

RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A	Total
KPIs	2	0	0	2	4
Strategic Actions	1	1	0		2
Direction	Up	Across	Down	N/A	Total
KPIs	2	0	0	2	4

# Priority 1: Keeping Maidstone an attractive place for all

## Respecting the Character of our Borough

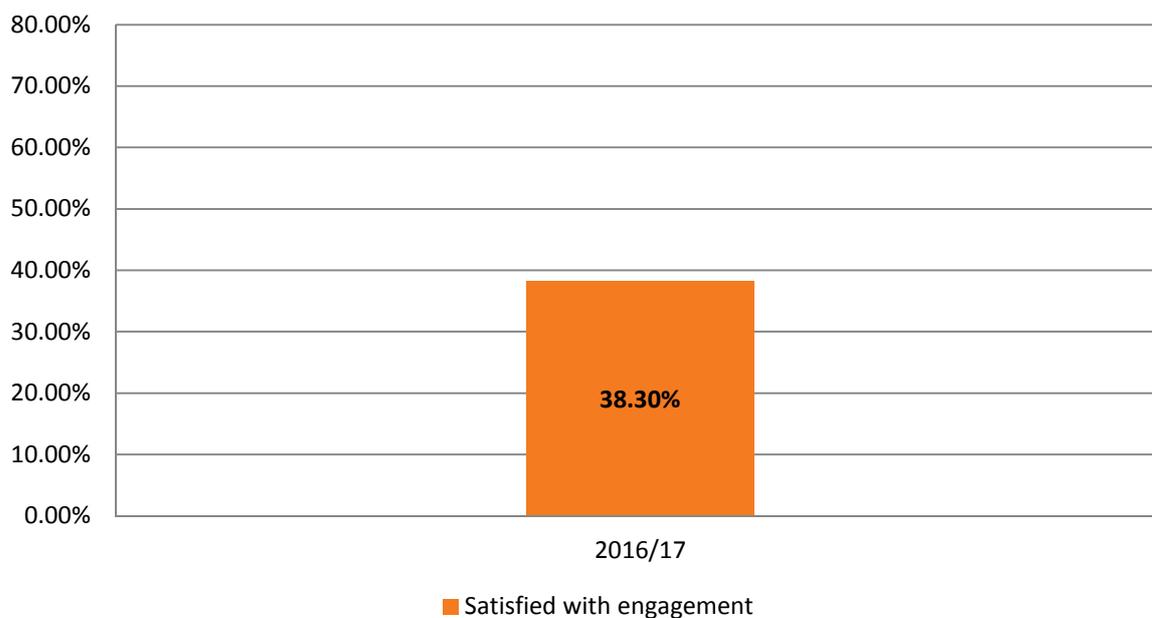
Maidstone is the County town of Kent. In terms of its geography, it is largely rural and the countryside offers high quality landscape and biodiversity. Approximately 50% of the borough population live in a parished area. We are focused on achieving economic prosperity, whilst at the same time balancing protecting the environment and landscape that makes the borough of Maidstone a great place to live, work in and visit.

NB: Parish charter developed in consultation with parishes and KALC

### Percentage of parishes satisfied with the level of communication and engagement they have with Maidstone Borough Council (Parish Survey)

The parish council survey was open from 18th July until 2nd October.

Current Performance	Q2 Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
38.3%					



**Performance Comment:** A total of 62 responses were received from Parish Councillors and Clerks. While the greatest proportion of respondents were satisfied with the level of communication and engagement from MBC, almost a third (32%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Comments around this question concerned queries to Officers going unanswered, however there were several positive comments about the Parish Liaison Officer role.

## Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

### Securing Improvements to the Transport Infrastructure for our Borough

Maidstone is strategically situated between London and the channel ports and is serviced by two motorway networks, the M20 and M2, with rail connections to central London. With regard to travelling in and around the Borough by car, congestion is an issue particularly at peak time in the town centre. The bus transport network serving Maidstone town is relatively strong whilst rural transport presents distinct challenges

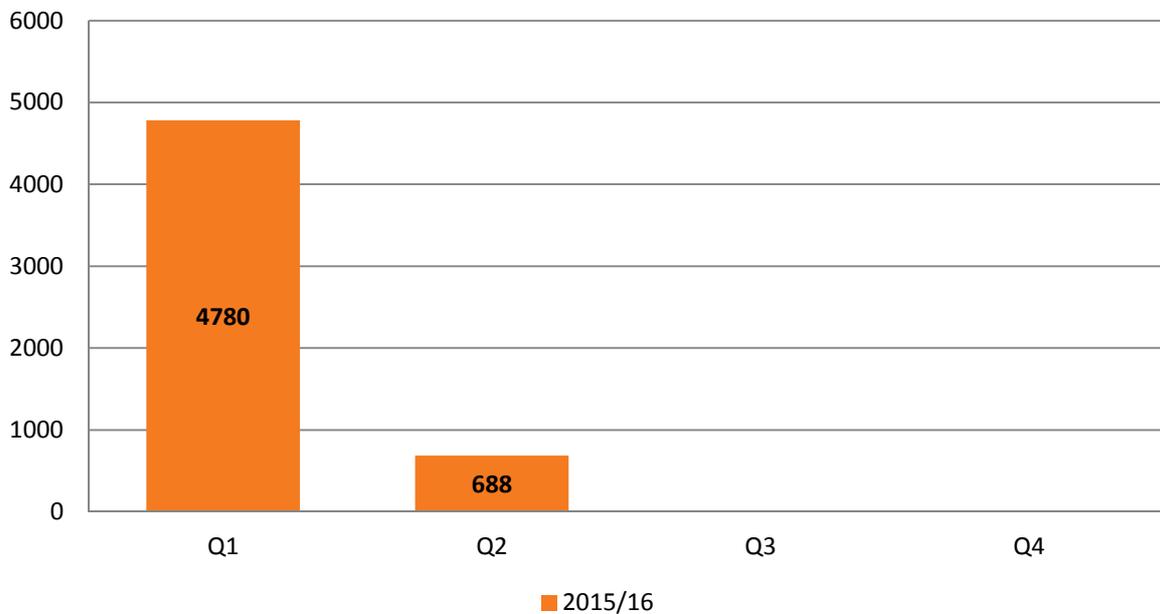
#### Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) Update

Following the request for minor changes to the documents by the Strategic Planning Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 6th July the revised Integrated Transport Strategy and the Walking and Cycling Strategy were adopted by the Strategic Planning Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 13th September. However, as a result of continuing discussions with KCC the latest revised documents were not subsequently reviewed by the Joint Transportation Board on 13 July 2016 as envisaged. Instead a joint report was presented by the KCC Head of Transportation and the MBC Head of Planning and Development which updated Members with respect to the 7 December 2015 resolution. Further to the JTB resolution of 13 July 2016, MBC will continue to work with KCC towards its joint adoption.

### Number of school journeys undertaken without a car as part of borough wide schemes

Figures for this are published by KM Charity Team. This reflects the objectives set out in the Integrated Transport Strategy in reducing the use of unsustainable transport.

Current Value	Q2 Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
688					



**Performance Comment:** As this is only the second quarter of monitoring this data we do not have a baseline. There has been a reduction in the numbers from last quarter; however the data still demonstrates a positive modal shift. The reduction in Quarter 2 may be due to the impact of the Summer holidays and new intake of pupils into the schools. The data includes schemes such as walking bus, Active Bug, Green footsteps, and Walk-Once-a-Week.

## Planning for Sufficient Homes to meet our Borough's Needs

Over the last five years, the supply of new, affordable housing within the borough has been greater than in neighbouring authorities, although still less than historic levels. 189 new affordable homes were built in the borough in 2013/14 and 163 in 2014/15. In total 413 new homes were delivered in 2014/15, of these new homes over 75% were built on land that had previously been developed.

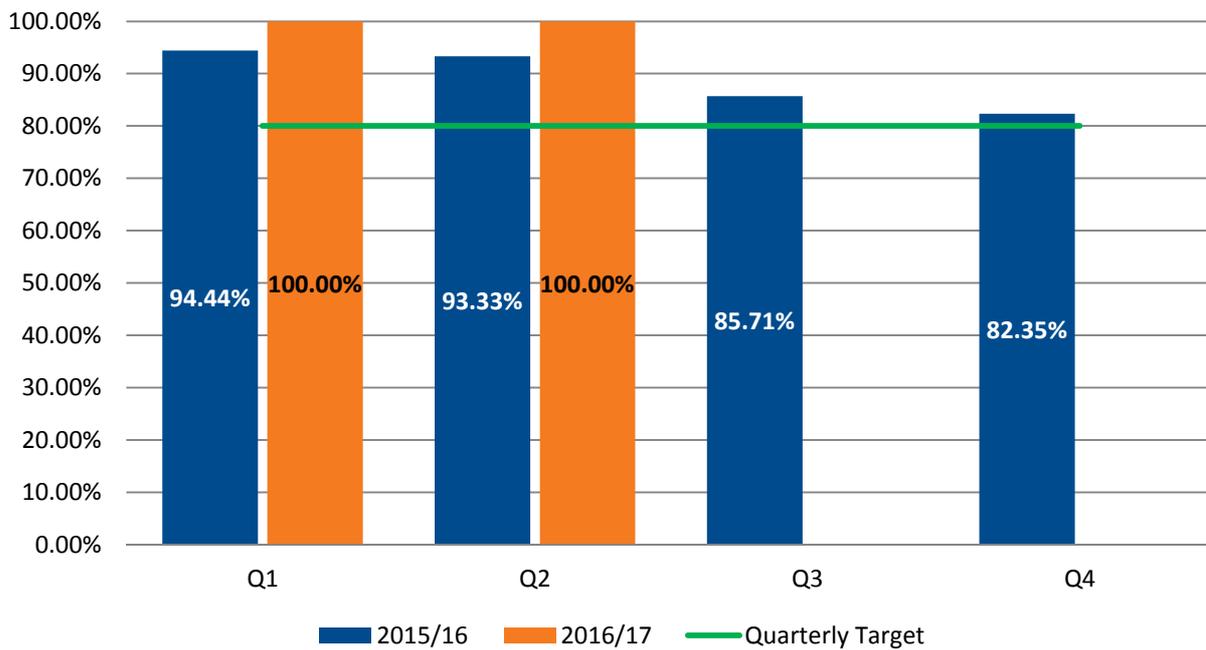
### Local Plan Update

The Maidstone Borough Local Plan examination hearings commenced on 4th October. It is anticipated that the examination hearings will run until December. There are fifteen scheduled hearing days with two additional full days and two additional half-days held as reserve dates. The Government appointed Inspector is Mr Robert Mellor. The Inspector has given detailed consideration to the representations made during the publication consultation in February and March 2016, as well as reviewing the evidence base, and has used these to produce a list of attendees for each session. Matters, Issues and Questions from the Examiner were dealt with by officers and published on 15th September. The remaining Matters, Issues and Questions (relating to the later scheduled hearings) continue to be dealt with by officers and will be sent to the Inspector by 20th October.

### Processing of major planning applications in 13 weeks

This indicator measures the percentage of major planning applications processed within the statutory timescale of 13 weeks, or within timescales agreed with the developer. This has increased importance to central government. Major developments are classified as those providing 10 or more dwellings, or on an area of 0.5 hectares or more where the number of dwellings is unknown. Major applications also include building(s) where floor space is 1000 square metres or more, or the site has an area of one hectare or more.

Current Value	Q2 Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
100%	80%	+20%	↑	✔	Target will be achieved

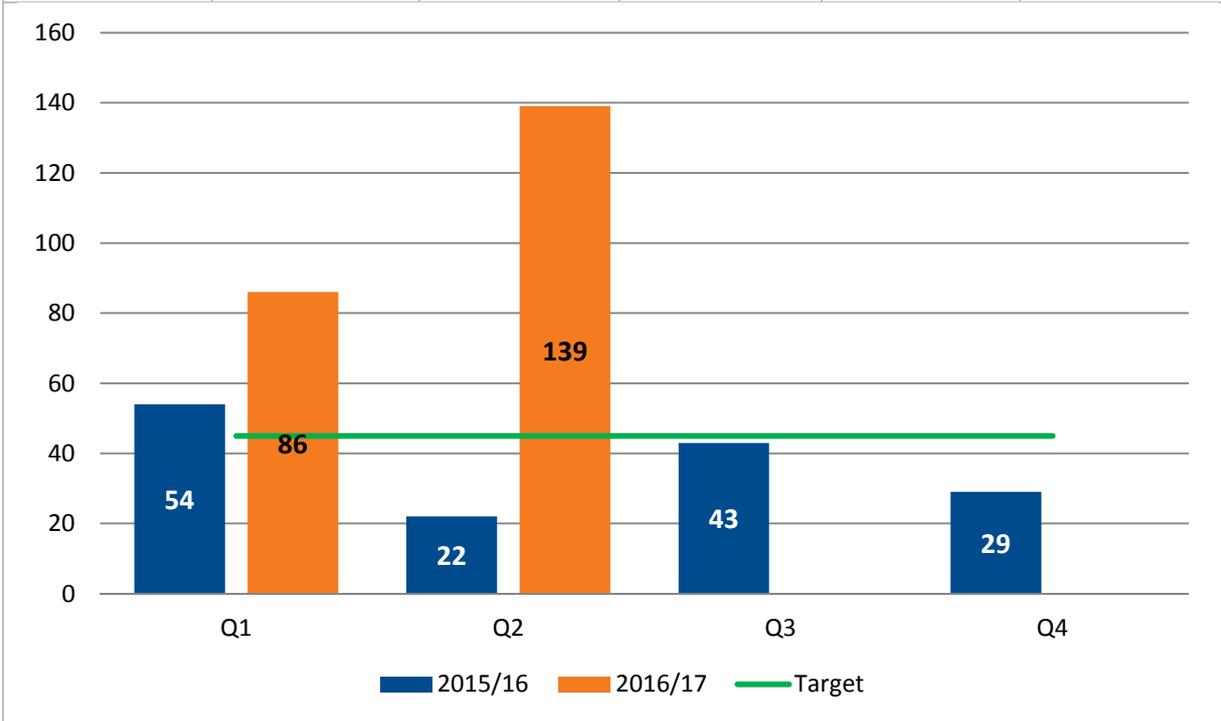


**Performance Comment:** Performance on major applications remains very strong. Q2 has achieved 100% with 28 applications being recorded within agreed timescales. Of these 6 have been determined within the 13 week period and 22 have been determined within an agreed timeframe. The majority of the 22 have been major housing applications which require complex S106 agreements to be negotiated and signed. The figures show how effective officers have been in negotiating and securing extension of time agreements which the developers are willing to sign up to. As a comparison to our neighbouring authority - Swale Borough Council have determined 15 major applications, 14 of which have been within agreed timescales (94%). Again this shows the throughput of major applications with MBC achieving almost double that of its neighbouring authority.

### Number of affordable homes delivered

Housing supply has not kept pace with demand. Many families are locked out of the housing market by unaffordable prices and unobtainable mortgages. Affordable dwellings include social-rented housing and intermediate housing. These can be new build or acquisitions; the figure does not take into account any losses.

Current Performance	Q2 Target	Value Vs Target	Direction	Status	Expected Outcome
139	45	+94	↑	✔	Target will be achieved



**Performance Comment:** The affordable housing programme for 2016/17 is maintaining a strong supply of newbuild affordable units with several schemes running to forecasted schedules. Performance has been excellent and the annual target has already been exceeded by 45 affordable dwellings at the mid point of the year, with 225 completed so far. According to latest schedules, there are in excess of 300 affordable dwellings forecast for completion by year end.

2016/17

# Quarter 2 Strategic Plan Action Plan Update



For further information about  
Performance Management at Maidstone  
Council, please contact Alex Munden,  
Performance and Business Information  
Officer.

**OUR VISION**

That our residents live in decent homes, enjoy good health and a pleasant environment, with a successful economy that is supported by reliable transport networks.

**OUR MISSION**

Putting People First.

**OUR PRIORITIES**

Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all

Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough



**ACTION AREAS**

Providing a clean and safe environment

Encouraging good health and wellbeing

Respecting the character and heritage of our Borough

Ensuring there are good leisure and cultural attractions

Enhancing the appeal of the town centre for everyone

Securing improvements to the transport infrastructure of our Borough

Promoting a range of employment opportunities and skills required across our Borough

Planning for sufficient homes to meet our Borough's needs

**OUR VALUES**

**Service**



Everything we do impacts on our customers, both internal and external. We will listen to and understand their needs, then take action to provide the right service in a positive and professional manner.

**Teamwork**



Working together to achieve our objectives and goals in a way that utilises the talents and creativity of everyone in our organisation.

**Responsibility**



We work in an environment that encourages us to take ownership for our actions. Making the right choices and decisions that lead to a satisfactory outcome for all.

**Integrity**



We have the courage to act on our convictions to build trust and honesty. We work with our partners and customers to create a feeling of openness and transparency in everything we do.

**Value**



Taking care and weighing up our options, aiming to get the maximum effect for every penny of public money we spend.

**Equality**



Valuing our differences and understanding how they can contribute to a better working environment and services that are fair and easy to access.

## Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

### Securing Improvements to the Transport Infrastructure for our Borough

Maidstone is strategically situated between London and the channel ports and is serviced by two motorway networks, the M20 and M2, with rail connections to central London. With regard to travelling in and around the Borough by car, congestion is an issue particularly at peak time in the town centre. The bus transport network serving Maidstone town is relatively strong whilst rural transport presents distinct challenges

#### The Local Plan

##### **Submission of Maidstone Borough Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination**

The Maidstone Borough Local Plan was submitted to the Secretary of State on 20th May 2016.

##### **Public consultation on the draft Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule**

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee resolved to publish the Draft Charging Schedule, Draft Regulation 123 List and Draft Instalments Policy for consultation at the meeting on 12 July and consultation took place between 5 August and 16 September.

##### **Adoption of the Integrated Transport Strategy by Strategic Planning Sustainability & Transport Committee (and Full Council)**

Following the request for minor changes to the documents by the Strategic Planning Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 6th July the revised Integrated Transport Strategy and the Walking and Cycling Strategy were adopted by the Strategic Planning Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 13th September. However, as a result of continuing discussions with Kent County Council the latest revised documents were not subsequently reviewed by the JTB on 13 July 2016 as envisaged. Instead a joint report was presented by the KCC Head of Transportation and the MBC Head of Planning and Development which updated Members with respect to the 7 December 2015 resolution. Further to the JTB resolution of 13 July 2016, MBC will continue to work with Kent County Council towards its joint adoption.

### **Submission of the Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination**

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee's approval for minor changes to the Draft Regulation 123 List will be sought on 11th October together with their recommendation to Full Council to approve the Draft Charging Schedule and revised Draft Regulation 123 List for submission for examination which is timetabled for December 2016/January 2017.

### **Planning for Sufficient Homes to meet our Borough's Needs**

Over the last five years, the supply of new, affordable housing within the borough has been greater than in neighbouring authorities, although still less than historic levels. 189 new affordable homes were built in the borough in 2013/14 and 163 in 2014/15. In total 413 new homes were delivered in 2014/15, of these new homes over 75% were built on land that had previously been developed.

### **Treat large scale major planning applications cumulatively as a project**

#### **Set a Pricing Structure**

A draft pricing structure for the new Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) has been produced which has been agreed in principle by the Head of Planning and requires verification from the Director. Following this, the fees would require approval in the normal way. This sets a combined pricing structure for pre application discussions, meeting with members, signing of a PPA agreement (which agrees the project management of the application) for a set fee. This consists of £3,500 for small scale major (50 units plus or 2,500 sqm commercial floor space) and £5,000 for large scale major (100 units plus or 5,000 sqm commercial floor space). The customer is then entitled to a number of pre application meetings, a member briefing and a completed PPA. This fee excludes the planning fee and fees negotiated through the PPA for specialist staff involvement i.e viability reviews/ES reviews etc.

Fees have also been raised by 5% across the service to cover the standard pre application fees and a new category introduced which covers member reviews (£509).

#### **Set a template S106 agreement with standard heads of terms**

A specimen draft S106 has been produced and is available for customers to review from the MBC website. This contains MBC' standard clauses and will enable developers to have a "head up" on the clauses we use. All Developer forum members were notified of its availability. A protocol is also being produced between Development Management (DM) and MKLS to cover the timely delivery of information necessary to deliver the S106. This will commit both DM and MKLS to meeting set time frames for progression of S106 agreement e.g production of first draft of S106 within 15 working days of instruction to MKLS. This document is currently in draft form and is expected to be agreed shortly.

### **Setting a standardised Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) for future developments**

A draft PPA template has been produced and feedback from officers is currently being incorporated into the template. Once all relevant feedback on the template has been received the PPA will be piloted. The fees associated with the PPA have been included on the Fees and Charges list put forward for 17/18. This provides a combined pricing structure for pre application discussions, meeting with members, signing of a PPA agreement (which agrees the project management of the application). This set fee consists of £3,500 for small scale major (50 units plus or 2,500 sqm commercial floor space) and £5,000 for large scale major (100 units plus or 5,000 sqm commercial floor space). This fee excludes the planning fee and fees negotiated through the PPA for specialist staff involvement.

### **Migration of all historic S106 data into a new system**

All historic S106 data has been successfully migrated into the test Exacom system. A few minor changes are being made by IT regarding the nightly update to the Exacom system from Uniform. Once this issue has been resolved the updates will be automated into the live system.

<b>Strategic Planning Sustainability &amp; Transport Committee</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> November 2016</b>
Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?	<b>Yes</b>

## Planning Service Review

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Strategic Planning & Sustainability & Transport Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	N/A
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	William Cornall – Director of Regeneration & Place
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. The committee is requested to note that the review will commence in January 2017, to be completed with the recommendations implemented by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

**This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – An exemplar planning service is integral to this objective, by maintaining and enhancing the built environment and public realm.
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough – An exemplar planning service will ensure developers will choose Maidstone as a location in which to invest.

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Committee – Strategic Planning Sustainability & Transport	8 <sup>th</sup> November 2016

# Planning Service Review

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 A review of the Planning Service is required as a mechanism for continuous improvement for the Department, and also to ensure that the service provides ongoing value for money to the Council and the end user, as well as to ensure that customer expectations are met.

---

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A small working group of Officers from the Corporate Leadership Team, Planning and the Business Transformation teams has been formed to scope the service review. Collectively, the working group felt that there were the following **drivers for change**;

- Costs of the service exceed income.
- High volumes of appeals and associated costs.
- A possible disconnect between Development Management & Planning Policy teams.
- A need to improve customer satisfaction and to manage expectations.
- A need to improve the overall quality of new completed developments.
- The Housing & Planning Act 2016, bringing private sector competition.
- The need to fund infrastructure to support growth.
- Difficulties in recruiting and retaining Planning staff.
- A low risk appetite in terms of decision making.

- 2.2 Furthermore, the working group felt that the **desired outcomes** from the review would be as follows;

- Value for Money, narrowing the gap between income and expenditure.
- Customer satisfaction (from service users) is increased.
- Planning is fully engaged with strategic corporate objectives.
- Applications are policy compliant upon receipt.
- More applications processed with consistency and certainty via Planning Performance Agreements.
- Appeal volumes are reduced.
- Infrastructure delivery is maximised through CIL, s106 & s278.
- Strategies / SPD's are concise, easily readable documents.
- High quality design and place shaping are embedded within the service.
- Planning staff are always proactive, collaborative and commercially astute.
- Planning is a trusted service for applicants, developers elected members and the public, with easy and effective engagement between stakeholders.
- Improved resilience across the department.
- Points of current service failure are removed.
- A coherent communication strategy around growth.
- Improved usage of IT / Customer Relationship Management systems.

2.3 The working group decided that the following service areas **should be within the scope of the review;**

- Fees and other income / business management.
- Pre-application service to include fee incentives.
- Planning Performance Agreements.
- Development management to include larger applications.
- Strategic Planning.
- Planning administration / shared services support.
- Enforcement.
- Section 106 / CIL management and maximisation.
- Specialisms - Heritage, Conservation, Trees.
- Public engagement and public relations.
- Style & content of reporting.
- Exploration of outsourcing / commissioning / shared service opportunities.
- Department staffing structure, to include management.

2.4 The working group decided that the following service areas **should be outside the scope of the review;**

- Land charges
- Building control
- Emergency Planning

2.5 The working group considered that the various **stakeholders** pertinent to the review would be as follows;

- Chair and Vice Chair of Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transport Committee.
- Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Committee.
- Members.
- Parishes.
- Department Management Team.
- CEO.
- Kent Developers Group.
- Swale Borough Council (in the context of the Planning Registration shared service).

2.6 The author has already met with the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transport Committee and the Planning Committee, all of whom welcomed the review, and have input into the scope detailed in this report.

2.7 The other stakeholders detailed will be engaged through a number of mechanisms to include workshops, surveys or interviews.

2.8 The working group agreed a clear set of deliverables that they would desire from the review. Furthermore, of these deliverables, it was all agreed which could be undertaken by the Council's own Business Transformation team, and which we would require external expertise to complete. The external work will largely be undertaken by a specialist Planning advisor, but one that has a focus upon service innovation rather than a technical planning specialist. We have agreed that the following three firms will be invited to bid for this work:

- iESE
- Association for Public Service Excellence (Apse)
- Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace)

2.9 Park Sims Training, a niche communications training firm who specialise in plain English will undertake the review of the reporting formats, contents and protocols, as this is only a relatively small part of the overall assignment. They have worked successfully with other council departments previously, with excellent results.

2.10 **Therefore, the deliverables will be as per the table below:**

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Undertaken by whom</b>
To undertake a stakeholder audit.	Business Improvement.
To undertake an exercise of stakeholder engagement / consultation.	External
Vision statement for the Planning Service.	External
Forecasting / analysis of future department workload.	Business Improvement
High level process maps for all key service areas.	Business Improvement
Recommended staffing structure to effect changes.	External & Business Improvement
Recommended areas for commissioning/ procurement type approach.	External
Recommended commissioning protocols.	Procurement team
Recommended fee and time scales.	External & Business Improvement
Recommended reporting formats, content and protocols.	Park Sims Training

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

**3.1** The committee is requested to note that the review will commence in January 2017, and that the procurement of the external consultant will be undertaken before then. The review will be completed with the recommendations implemented by 30th June 2017.

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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The only option is 3.1.

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### **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

5.1 As discussed previously, the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the two planning committees have been consulted with, as well as the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive.

---

## 6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 All Members of both planning committees will be involved in the workshop/s that will be held and the progress made with the review will be formally reported to both committees at the midpoint.

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## 7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The best possible Planning service will underpin all the Corporate objectives and of course the delivery of the emerging Local Plan.	Chief Executive. Alison Broom
<b>Risk Management</b>	N/A	
<b>Financial</b>	The service review will evidence best practice in getting value for money and could identify opportunities for efficiencies within the service. It may therefore help to mitigate the factors that are currently leading to overspends within Development Management.	Section 151 Officer Mark Green
<b>Staffing</b>	It is important that the review is welcomed by all the Planning staff, and that it is handled sensitively, so that staff morale is maintained and that they will ultimately own and implement the deliverables.	Head of Planning. Rob Jarman
<b>Legal</b>	It will be important to involve the Legal team who deal with planning matters in any review of processes, such as s106 agreements, managing appeals and inquiries etc.	Interim Head of Legal Partnership
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	N/A	
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	The review will build mechanisms into the planning process to embed high quality	Head of Planning. Rob Jarman

	design, both in visual terms as well as in terms of sustainability.	
<b>Community Safety</b>	N/A	
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	N/A	
<b>Procurement</b>	The external consultant will be procured in accordance with the Council's standing orders.	Section 151 Officer. Mark Green
<b>Asset Management</b>	N/A	

## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

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

None.

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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

## Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

**8 November 2016**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?	<b>No</b>
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## Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Council
<b>Lead Director or Head of Service</b>	Rob Jarman Head of Planning and Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Cheryl Parks, Project Manager, Local Plan
<b>Classification</b>	Non-exempt
<b>Wards affected</b>	Staplehurst, Marden & Yalding, Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton, Sutton Valence and Langley, Headcorn

### **This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:**

1. That the Committee notes the result of the referendum of 3 November 2016 on the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan as set out in the urgent update report.
2. That the Committee considers the recommendations set out in the urgent update report that will reflect the referendum result.
3. That the Committee makes any necessary recommendation to Council for consideration on 7 December 2016.

### **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough - the 'made' plan will form part of the Development Plan for Maidstone and will be used in the determining of planning applications for the plan area.

### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	8 November 2016
Council	7 December 2016

# Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report secures an agenda item for the Committee meeting on 8 November 2016 to discuss the outcome of the referendum on the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Development Plan, the results of which will not be known until after the agenda is published.
  - 1.2 With the agreement of the Chairman, the referendum result and subsequent recommendations will be presented in a separate urgent update report to be published after the Committee agenda, but in advance of the actual Committee meeting date. To avoid any further delays to the potential making of the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Development Plan, such an approach is necessary to allow for ratification of any recommendations of this Committee at Council on 7 December 2016.
- 

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In November 2015 this Committee approved the Council's response to the formal consultation on the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Development Plan. The response, along with all others received was sent to the appointed Examiner early in 2016.
- 2.2 The Committee will be fully aware of the series of events leading to the cessation of the original examination, and the need for a new Examiner to be appointed as this has been the subject of reports in recent months.
- 2.3 Following the conclusion of the second examination by Mr Derek Stabbing, this Committee agreed the recommendations in the Examiner's report and resolved to send the Neighbourhood Plan to a local referendum at its meeting of 13 September 2016.
- 2.4 The referendum is scheduled for 3 November 2016. If the outcome of the referendum is a 'Yes' (i.e. more than half of those voting in favour of the Plan), section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that the Council must make (adopt) the Neighbourhood Plan as soon as reasonably practicable after the referendum. Procedural recommendations will be proposed regarding the making of the Neighbourhood Plan into the Development Plan for Maidstone. Should the outcome of the referendum be a 'No' then the recommendation will be that the Neighbourhood Plan is not made (adopted). The only other circumstances in which the Committee could decide not to recommend the making of the Neighbourhood Plan is if to do so would breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the Convention rights (s.38A(6) PCPA 2004). This point is tested as part of the examination process, but the Committee should consider whether any new issues have arisen since the examination that would prevent the Neighbourhood Plan moving to referendum.

---

### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 As with any voting process, the outcome of the referendum cannot be predicted. Given the required timescales for reporting to Committees and the desire to achieve consideration by Council on 7 December 2016 to prevent any further delay, Members are recommended to accept the inclusion of the urgent update report which will be provided in advance of the Committee meeting and then to consider the subsequent recommendations as set out in that report.
- 3.2 An alternate option would be to not accept an urgent update report and instead wait for the next scheduled meeting of this Committee on 6 December 2016 to consider the outcomes of the referendum and the way forward. This would result in the recommendations not being considered by Council until March 2017, it being not practicably possible to pass the recommendation to the Council meeting which is to take place the following day, 7 December. This option is not recommended as this would lead to a long delay in the recommendations of this Committee going on to Council regarding the making of the Neighbourhood Plan. .

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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Members are recommended to follow the option set out at 3.1 above for the reasons stated.

---

### **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 If Members agree to the officer recommendations set out in the urgent update report, this Committee is requested to make further recommendations to Council with regard to the making of the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Development Plan:-
- To make the Neighbourhood Plan if the outcome of the referendum is 'Yes'
  - Not to make the Neighbourhood Plan if the outcome of the referendum is 'No'

---

### **6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The Neighbourhood Development Plan, once made will be part of the Development Plan for Maidstone, directly	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

	impacting the Corporate Priorities through its consideration when determining planning applications in the plan area.	
<b>Risk Management</b>	There is potential for reputational damage should the plan not proceed at this late stage. It has been adjudged as sound and legally compliant by the appointed examiner and agreed by Council for a local referendum, so risks are low.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Financial</b>	Referendum costs are recoverable through the Logasnet grant system. There is no cost involved in the adoption of the plan other than staff time.	Mark Green, Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	Once the plan has been made it will need to be publicised and published on the council's website. This will be completed with the assistance of the council's web team.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Legal</b>	There are no legal implications arising from this report. As to the results of the referendum and the actions to be taken thereafter, statute sets out the procedures to be followed and the Council is obliged to follow statutory requirements.	Kate Jardine, Team Leader (Planning) Mid Kent Legal Services
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	The needs of different groups have been considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Parish Council during the evolution of the plan.	Anna Collier, Policy & Information Manager
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	The plan has regard to sustainability and the natural environment as part of its policies. The approach has been agreed as part of the examination of the plan.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Community Safety</b>	N/A	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	N/A	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

		Development
<b>Procurement</b>	There are no further procurement considerations at this time.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development & Mark Green, Section 151 Officer
<b>Asset Management</b>	N/A	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

## 7. REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix A: Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan (version for referendum).

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## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none.



# STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

REFERENDUM PLAN 2016 — 2031  
SEPTEMBER 2016

**Staplehurst  
Parish  
Council**

**STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**  
**FINAL PLAN**  
September 2016



This plan has been prepared by:

**Staplehurst Parish Council, The Parish Office, Village  
Centre, High Street, Staplehurst, Kent, TN12 0BJ.**

Digital copies of this document can be downloaded from:

**[www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk)  
[www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)**





# **BUILDING A STAPLEHURST FIT FOR THE FUTURE**

## **PLAN PERIOD 2016 — 2031**



doc. ref: 099\_Q\_160922\_Referendum-Plan\_FINAL

Feria Urbanism is a planning and design studio that specialises in neighbourhood strategies, public participation and community engagement. Established in 2007, we have been involved in a diverse range of projects across the UK and have developed key skills in organising community engagement events to inform excellent planning and design.

Contact for further information

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**Strategic Planning**

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**Village Character**

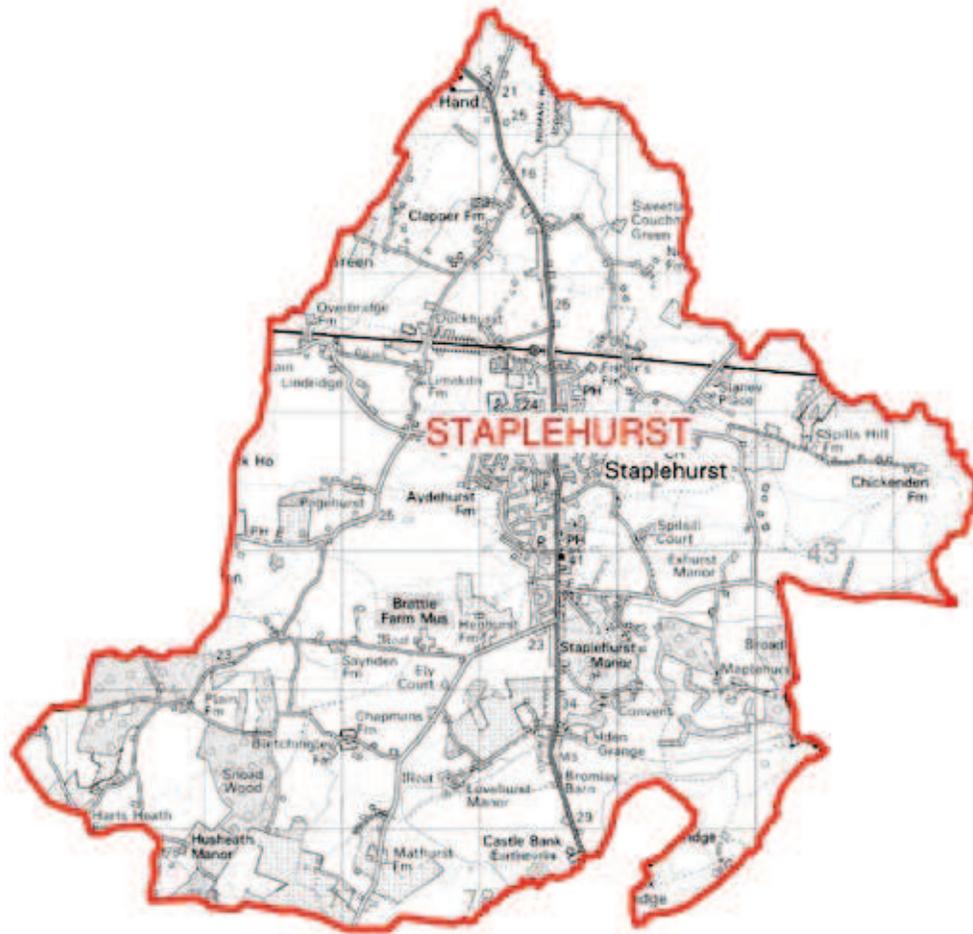
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**Next Steps**



# MAINTAINING + ENHANCING THE VILLAGE CHARACTER



**Neighbourhood Plan Boundary** This boundary is contiguous with the parish boundary and therefore the plan policies apply to the whole parish. The neighbourhood plan boundary was formally approved by Maidstone Borough Council 14<sup>th</sup> January 2013.

1.1 THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN HAS BEEN PREPARED BY STAPLEHURST PARISH COUNCIL ON BEHALF OF THOSE THAT LIVE AND WORK WITHIN THE PARISH OF STAPLEHURST.

1.2 THE PLAN SETS OUT A VISION FOR THE PARISH THROUGH UNTIL 2031 AND IS SUPPORTED BY A SET OF PLANNING POLICIES AND A SERIES OF SPECIFIC PROJECTS. IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING REGULATIONS, THIS PLAN HAS BEEN PREPARED THROUGH EXTENSIVE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION.

1.3 The community engagement process has informed the plan's primary aims and ambitions. The plan must therefore:

- Coordinate all new development proposals
- As far as is possible, provide certainty regarding the future of the parish
- Describe the necessary additional community infrastructure required to support a growing village
- Strengthen and enhance the historic village heart
- Improve choice over access and movement
- Introduce high quality architecture
- Ensure the feel of a village community is retained
- Support more retail opportunities
- Support continued investment in education
- Make walking and cycling easier and safer
- Create a happy and fulfilling place.

1.4 This neighbourhood plan comprises specific planning policies and objectives, all grouped under six policy themes. These are all supported by a strategic village framework, indicating how new development needs to integrate with the existing village. This plan has been informed by a series of distinct public engagement events, each using a wide range of different public consultation techniques.



Residents work together to decide how best to describe their community and their place.

# PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

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/ 8

**2.1 Staplehurst Parish Council recognises the need to plan for the future. There is much value in preparing plans and policies that anticipate changes to village life to help ensure an appropriate and coordinated response. Change is inevitable but how the village responds to this change is what matters.**

2.2 This neighbourhood plan represents the first opportunity in the history of Staplehurst for the community to create a legally binding, statutory plan that explains how new developments must integrate with the existing village; sets out the expected quality of design for new development and also links housing growth to investment in new village infrastructure, including improved community facilities.

## ALL PLACES ARE EITHER GROWING OR DECLINING. NOTHING STAYS THE SAME.

2.3 There has been a settlement near All Saints church, Staplehurst since about 1000 AD and the village lies on the Roman Road from Maidstone to Hastings, now the A229. The road between Marden and Headcorn crosses the A229 in the centre to create a crossroads, known as Cuckold's Corner.

2.4 Most development was confined to areas along this road until a number of residential areas were built, mainly in the 1960s and 1970s and to the east and west of the main A229 road. The parish covers an extensive area of countryside, mostly devoted to farming and industries related to agriculture, and there is a significant rural population in the parish, including traveller communities.

2.5 Although the railway station is next to the A229, it is some distance from the church so that the built up area of the village now extends nearly two kilometres from the station in the north to just south of Pinnock Lane. The station serves a wider catchment than just the parish and much of the vehicle traffic heading to the station brings people that live outside the parish. Although many people travel out of the parish to work (and a smaller number commute in), the community has large areas of dedicated employment land in the north west of the village adjacent to the station and sustains a large number of voluntary organisations providing a diverse range of activities and services. In addition to children growing up in the village, there are also a significant number of retired people, many living in retirement and care homes.



These images of Station Road (left) and Cuckold's Corner (right) reveal the significant changes that the village has undergone in the last century.

## COMMUNITY CONCERNS

2.6 The community engagement event in September 2013 revealed that a primary concern of the community was regarding the impact of housing growth on the character of the village. This reflected the findings of the Staplehurst Housing Survey 2010 (report by Tessa O’Sullivan, Rural Housing Enabler with support from Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst Rural Settlement Group and Maidstone Borough Council) that highlighted a widespread concern about new developments within the parish. Key findings included:

- 454 (64%) respondents indicated that they could not support more housing development in Staplehurst
- 601 (85%) respondents felt that the current infrastructure would not support more housing, with the most frequent comments relating to access and movement, and retail and the inadequacies of both.

2.7 Of the respondents who said they would support more development, 157 (22%) felt that affordable housing for people with a connection to the parish was needed.



Village Visioning Event September 2013

2.8 Further analysis found that the need for affordable housing was fairly evenly spread between single people, couples and families.

2.9 Given this background research, the neighbourhood plan seeks to directly address the deficiencies in infrastructure (especially foul and surface water drainage, community facilities, retail, access and movement) and the need for some affordable housing to meet specific needs.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN VISION

2.10 In response to this anxiety about new development in the village, combined with a recognition that some new affordable housing is desirable, the neighbourhood plan has been prepared with the express vision of:

1. Maintaining and enhancing the rural character of Staplehurst village, its immediate setting and the wider parish.
2. Coordinating all new development so that it contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and essential services for all members of the community.
3. Creating a robust yet flexible access and movement network appropriate for all modes of travel and for current and future populations.
4. Using land and resources efficiently so that new developments have a reduced demand for energy and move towards carbon neutrality.
5. Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the whole built environment and the wider countryside.
6. Enforcing the quality of new development through use of materials, details and inclusive design that responds to context.
7. Ensuring that land made available for development will be developed in such a way as to improve people’s quality of life, for both new and existing residents.
8. Delivering the community infrastructure necessary to support a growing village in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

2.11 Finally, the neighbourhood plan must be in general conformity with Maidstone Borough Council’s adopted Local Plan (2000) and its emerging Local Plan, as represented by the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Preparation (Regulation 18) 2014 — without such general conformity the neighbourhood plan cannot be adopted as a statutory planning document.



Effective community consultation is a key part of meeting the basic conditions necessary for a robust neighbourhood plan.

# MEETING THE CONDITIONS

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/ 10

**3.1 This neighbourhood plan must meet certain basic conditions before they can come into force. It will be checked by the local planning authority and be tested by independent examination before going to referendum. The plan needs to accord with the Neighbourhood Plans (General) Regulations 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework and Maidstone Borough Council planning policies.**

**3.2 The neighbourhood plan does not simply repeat the local or national planning policies. The Localism Act 2011 enables communities to create a plan that reflects the needs of the local population and future residents. A collaborative approach, led by Staplehurst Parish Council and involving local residents and other interest groups, including developers and neighbouring communities, has created a plan that broadly reflects local aspirations.**

## GENERAL CONFORMITY

3.3 The planning context for the production of neighbourhood plans is set out in the Localism Act 2011, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. For a neighbourhood plan to be approved, it must demonstrate that it:

- is in compliance with national planning policy as set out by the NPPF
- contributes to sustainable development
- is in general conformity with the spatial policies of the development plan for the local area
- is compatible with European policies
- reflects best practice in terms of quality urban design and sustainable planning principles.

3.4 The Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan also:

- contains a mix of uses that meets the need of the local community
- has been developed through widespread local consultation
- has general support from the residents of Staplehurst
- has general support of the various land owners/developers on whose land new development is being proposed
- provides development that will add to the village without unnecessarily infringing upon protected countryside
- creates a welcoming environment for residents, tourists and business interests alike
- promotes sustainable development through a holistic approach to development in the village
- enhances pedestrian and cycle routes in the village
- encourages a strong village economy through extra retail and employment opportunities to support the local jobs and reduce the need to travel.

## PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.5 This neighbourhood plan is in conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which has been taken into consideration at all stages of the plan's development.

3.6 Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the NPPF make clear that neighbourhood plans need to take the policies in the NPPF into account and that these policies are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, alongside local documents such as the Local Plan and neighbourhood plans.

3.7 Paragraph 16 of the NPPF states that neighbourhoods should develop plans that support the strategic development needs set out in Local Plans, including policies for housing and economic development and that neighbourhoods plan positively to support local development, shaping and directing development in their area that is outside the strategic elements of the Local Plan.

3.8 Staplehurst Parish Council considers that this neighbourhood plan supports both of these objectives. The range of policies in this neighbourhood plan both addresses the strategic growth agenda in the Maidstone Local Plan and helps shape and support development in response to the local context.

3.9 Paragraph 28 of the NPPF states that neighbourhood plans should include a policy on economic growth in the rural areas. This neighbourhood plan contains such a policy, PW1. Paragraph 58 of the NPPF requires neighbourhood plans to include policies that encourage good design in their areas and this is met through neighbourhood plan policies H1 and H2.

3.10 Paragraphs 150 — 157 of the NPPF set out how development plans should be aspirational but practical and should spatially address the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. This neighbourhood plan has been generated to address all of these aspects while remaining flexible in order to respond to change in the parish.



Three Day Design Forum October 2013

3.11 Paragraphs 183 — 185 of the NPPF provide some general guidance on the production of neighbourhood plans in addition to the requirements of paragraph 16. In particular, paragraph 184 makes it clear that “... neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than is set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies”.

3.12 This neighbourhood plan accepts the principle of development within the housing allocations as set out in the (Regulation 18) draft Local Plan and it is therefore considered to meet the objectives of paragraph 184 of the NPPF. It should also be noted that paragraph 185 of the NPPF states that once approved, the policies in the neighbourhood plan will take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood.

3.13 Staplehurst Parish Council acknowledges that there is no up to date and adopted Local Plan in place at Maidstone Borough Council. It therefore wishes to move quickly, but thoroughly, towards the adoption of this neighbourhood plan in order to give the community that lives and works in the parish the certainty and control it needs over its future.

## SUSTAINABILITY

3.14 Paragraphs 7 and 14 of the NPPF identify the components of sustainable development, and how planning applications and Local Plans can meet these requirements. It is considered that the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan fills an economic, social and environmental role in planning positively to shape the future development and needs of the parish. In addition, the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the policies set out in the emerging Maidstone Local Plan. This neighbourhood plan has been produced with the requirements of paragraph 14 of the NPPF in mind.

3.15 The policies in the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan have been produced in general conformity with the strategic policies of the emerging Maidstone Local Plan. These Local Plan policies have been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in line with the relevant European directives. The policies in the neighbourhood plan therefore supplement and help to implement these strategic policies. They are therefore considered sustainable in line with these regulations.

3.16 This neighbourhood plan is a sustainable plan that incorporates employment, key services and new facilities together with a range of access and movement options that help reduce the need to travel.

3.17 As part of the evidence base for the preparation of the neighbourhood plan, the parish council has undertaken a housing needs survey to understand local need to inform an appropriate mix of house types and tenures in Staplehurst. It has also held collaborative design and planning workshops to determine the most appropriate locations for new development that can contribute to the overall sustainability of the village while minimising any negative impact upon attractive areas of countryside.

## RURAL SERVICE CENTRE

3.18 This neighbourhood plan positively supports development by accepting the village's strategic role as a designated Rural Service Centre (RSC). The parish council acknowledges that Policy SP3 in the draft Maidstone Borough Council (Regulation 18) Local Plan designates Staplehurst a Rural Service Centre — that is, a larger rural settlement deemed suitable by MBC for additional houses.

3.19 This neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the policy themes and growth agenda as set out by Maidstone Borough Council. In this respect, the parish council firmly believes it meets the general conformity test for neighbourhood planning with respect to the borough or district level planning policies.

3.20 Staplehurst Parish Council recognises the importance of new development and the significant role the village can play in accommodating this development as a designated Rural Service Centre. This neighbourhood plan gives the community in Staplehurst the control and confidence it needs to help it develop as a prosperous and attractive Kentish village.

## SUPPORTING NEW DEVELOPMENT

3.21 This plan supports new development in a sustainable way. Development is located and designed so as to create a compact and balanced settlement that enhances connections across the village. This will help create a sustainable settlement that will connect residential neighbourhoods with services through the increased use of non-car modes of travel. The sites identified for development are informed by their immediate context. This is a direct response to paragraph 47 of the NPPF on delivering high quality homes in a rural environment; this plan identifies key sites in the village that reflect locations suitable for the long term success of the village.



This neighbourhood plan contains an assessment of the qualities that make Staplehurst special.

## 70 BEST PRACTICE IN RURAL DESIGN

3.22 To ensure that the design and layouts of new development are appropriate to the village, the plan encourages high quality design and sustainable planning based on an assessment of the positive qualities of the existing village. This plan seeks to integrate new development with the necessary social and physical infrastructure. Paragraphs 47 — 55 in the NPPF expect the delivery of high quality homes to match appropriate housing needs through sensitively designed new places. This plan indicates appropriate housing sites in the context of the wider village. In terms of design, a positive relationship between existing built areas and the new will be critical to the successful assimilation of new development.

3.23 The selection of the indicated development sites has been based on striking the right balance between the need for more housing and the protection of the countryside environment. Paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that new developments “... will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term”. The parish council considers this draft plan to be a long-term strategy that will enhance the village through high quality architectural form and layout.

## MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

3.24 The parish council believes that this neighbourhood plan supports the needs of the wider community by addressing the social, economic and environmental aspects of village life. This has been expressed through the identification of new areas of housing, new retail opportunities, together with a sustainable access and movement network across the village. The specific policy themes within the plan will benefit all elements of the community.

## EFFECTIVE LOCAL CONSULTATION

3.25 As set out in Section 14 (a) of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, consultation on the plan and the plan-making process must be brought to the attention of the people who live or work in the village. Staplehurst Parish Council has ensured that this is a plan that reflects local opinions and local needs. To ensure that public engagement and consultation were effective, input from the community has been sought at every stage and has been invaluable to the production of the plan. Throughout the process, members of the community have been able to shape discussions and form dialogues with fellow residents, with land owners and with other interest groups. The result has been that different groups have been able to find shared outcomes.

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3.26 There has been a series of consultation and engagement events that have directly influenced the drafting of the plan. All consultation material relating to these events (e.g. slideshows, reports and posters) have been published online during the plan preparation.

**3.27 Please see the accompanying Consultation Statement for full details on the consultation process undertaken as part of the preparation of this neighbourhood plan. Please see the accompanying Conditions Statements for more details on how the neighbourhood plan meets the required conditions.**

## BROAD LOCAL SUPPORT

3.28 From the outset, Staplehurst Parish Council has tried to ensure that a broad cross-section of the local community has been involved in the plan-making process. The consultation and engagement process has been open and transparent and interest groups such as land owners, local developers and school representatives have all been included in the process. All these groups are considered appropriate consultation bodies to include, as defined in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations Schedule 1.

3.29 This approach towards finding shared solutions to resolve issues in the village has the support from the various interest groups and from those on whose land development is being proposed. It is hoped that this support for the process will also translate into support for this neighbourhood plan.

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/ 14

## ESTABLISHING THE OVERALL VISION

3.30 The results of the local consultation and the parallel work to ensure the plan meets the basic conditions have been combined to establish a shared vision, bringing the plan in line with paragraph 183 of the NPPF. This vision is expressed in the form of eight key vision points. These points have structured the neighbourhood plan and informed the development of the individual policies and objectives.



These are the six policy themes that sit below a set of parish-wide planning policies. Together, they all ensure the plan can meet the vision and objectives.

## HOW HAVE THE PLANNING POLICIES + OBJECTIVES BEEN INFORMED BY THE VISION?

### NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN VISION POINTS

### PRINCIPAL POLICY THEMES DEVELOPED TO MEET THE OBJECTIVE

1	Maintaining and enhancing the rural character of Staplehurst village, its immediate setting and the wider parish.	PW	C	AM	VH	E	GW	H
2	Coordinating all new development so that it contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and essential services for the whole community.	PW	C	AM	VH	E	GW	H
3	Creating a robust yet flexible access and movement network appropriate for all modes of travel and for current and future populations.	PW	AM	GW	H			
4	Using land and resources efficiently so that new developments have a reduced demand for energy and move towards carbon neutrality	PW	C	AM	GW	H		
5	Protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the whole built environment and the wider countryside.	PW	C	VH	GW	H		
6	Enforcing the quality of new development through use of materials, details and inclusive design that responds to context.	PW	C	AM	VH	E	GW	H
7	Ensuring that land made available for development will be developed in such a way as to improve people's quality of life, for both new and existing residents.	PW	C	AM	VH	E	GW	H
8	Delivering the community infrastructure necessary to support a growing village in the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century.	PW	C	AM	VH	GW	H	

**Policies + Objectives Table** This table sets out how the planning policy themes of the neighbourhood plan link back to the eight vision points established through the consultation and engagement work. See pages 24 to 61 for a full description of each policy theme and the individual policies and objectives contained within.



Even historic places have been planned through deliberate decisions taken over the years, contributing to what is often seen as organic growth. This neighbourhood plan aims to continue this proven tradition of creating a planned settlement.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

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**4.1 A critical role of the neighbourhood plan is to provide a coordinated vision for the future of the village. This will make sure that individual development sites contribute in an effective and appropriate way to an overall vision. Without such coordination there is a risk of fragmented or piecemeal development.**

4.2 To better understand how new development should respond to the local context, an assessment of the village's activities, uses, street patterns, character and form has been undertaken, together with an appreciation of the landscape setting. This assessment is set out in a series of diagrams that help inform a strategic framework plan that will guide Staplehurst over the coming years.

## LIFE + ACTIVITY

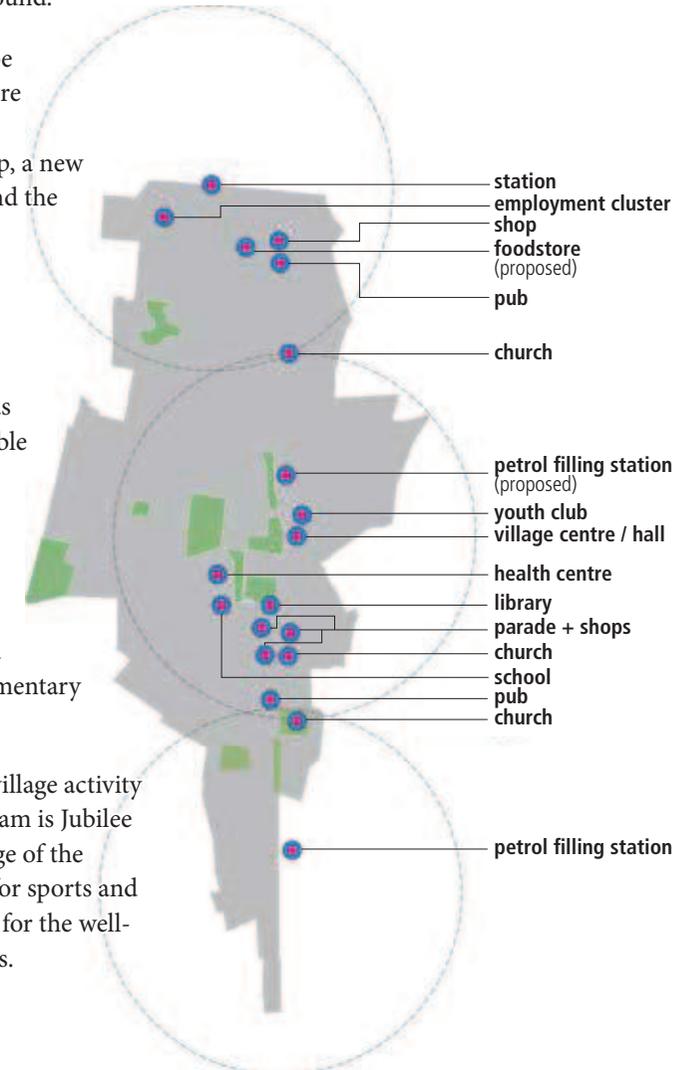
### The essential village services and facilities

4.3 The distribution of the village's essential services and facilities is very much skewed towards the village heart, reflecting the historic origins of Staplehurst. This is where the Village Centre, youth club, health centre, parade of shops, school and three churches can be found.

4.4 Other services can be found to the north, where there is another pub, a local convenience shop, a new foodstore (proposed) and the railway station. To the south, there is a petrol filling station.

4.5 The village can therefore be described as comprising three walkable "neighbourhoods" (i.e. north, central and south), each of around one kilometre across. The plan seeks to further define these and ensure they are complementary with one another.

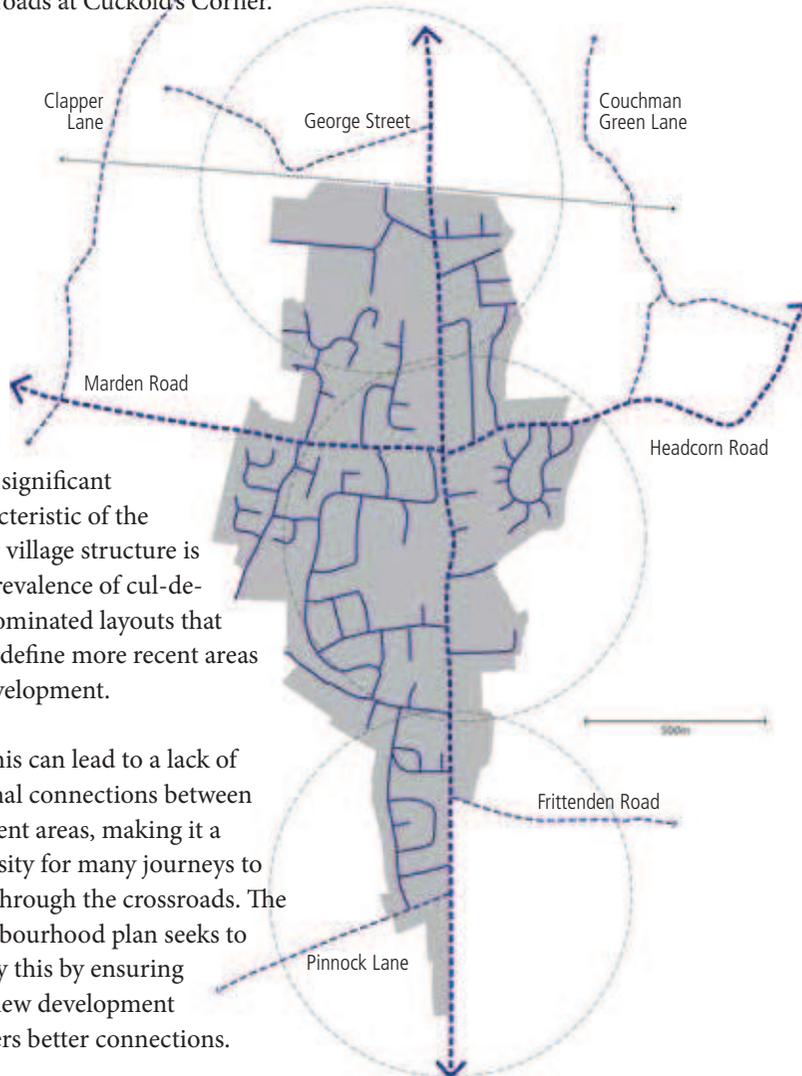
4.6 A vital location for village activity not shown on this diagram is Jubilee Field, on the eastern edge of the village. This is a centre for sports and recreation and essential for the well-being of village residents.



## STREET STRUCTURE

The historic street pattern informs movement choices

4.7 The structure of the village is very much defined by its historic street pattern, formed around a crossroads at Cuckold's Corner.



4.8 A significant characteristic of the wider village structure is the prevalence of cul-de-sac dominated layouts that often define more recent areas of development.

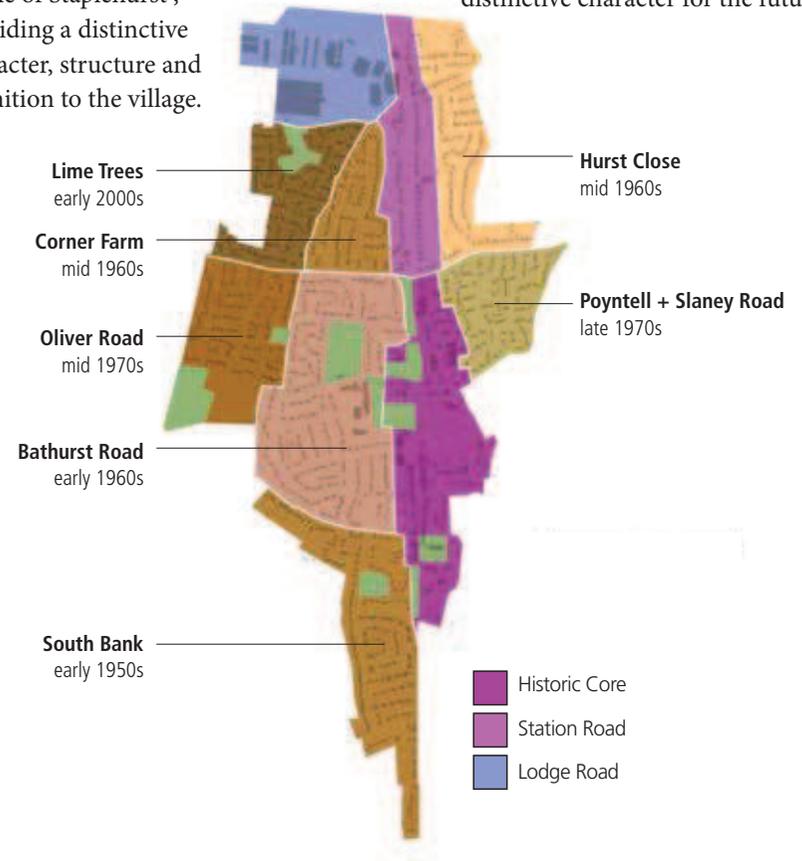
4.9 This can lead to a lack of internal connections between different areas, making it a necessity for many journeys to pass through the crossroads. The neighbourhood plan seeks to rectify this by ensuring that new development delivers better connections.

## CHARACTER AREAS

The different land uses and building layouts

4.10 The historic heart of the village is located between the crossroads and the All Saints Church on top of the hill. To the north, lies the Station Road character area of brick villas fronting the road. These two areas contain most of the village's essential services and facilities and can be described as the "spine of Staplehurst", providing a distinctive character, structure and definition to the village.

4.11 Attached to this spine, are various areas of predominantly residential development. These are the neighbourhoods that provide good homes for the residents of Staplehurst. New developments need to be of a high quality design that will also add new residential and mixed-use areas of distinctive character for the future.



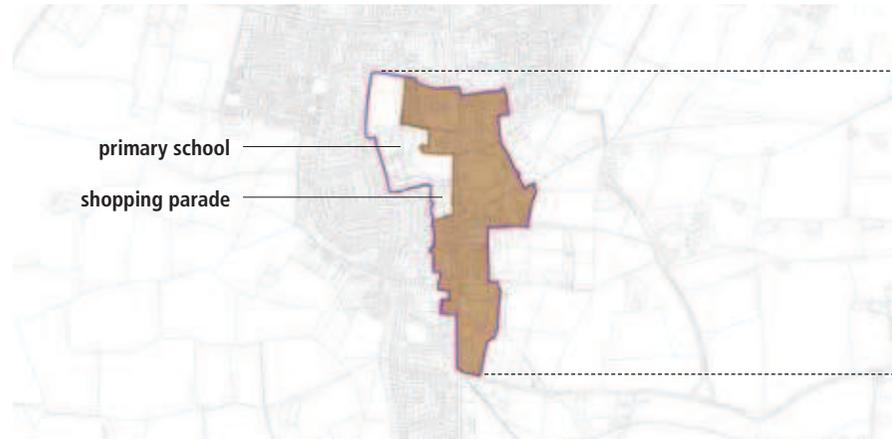
## CONSERVATION AREA + VILLAGE HEART

### The village core

4.12 There is widespread support from within the community for creating a stronger village heart. The cluster of uses in and around the High Street that support the social and community life of Staplehurst is vital for a growing village.

4.13 All ages and all activities can be found in this one part of Staplehurst. Primary school children and their parents, the elderly and teenagers. Football games, book reading, grocery shopping, pub meals and local Kentish beer. Taken together, these “people, places and activities” are what makes village life special. This village heart is defined by the purple boundary line shown below.

4.14 Maidstone Borough Council has 41 conservation areas that cover areas of special architectural or historic interest. One of these is in Staplehurst, shown by the brown shaded area below. Of the features in the village heart, only the school and shopping parade are not in the Conservation Area.

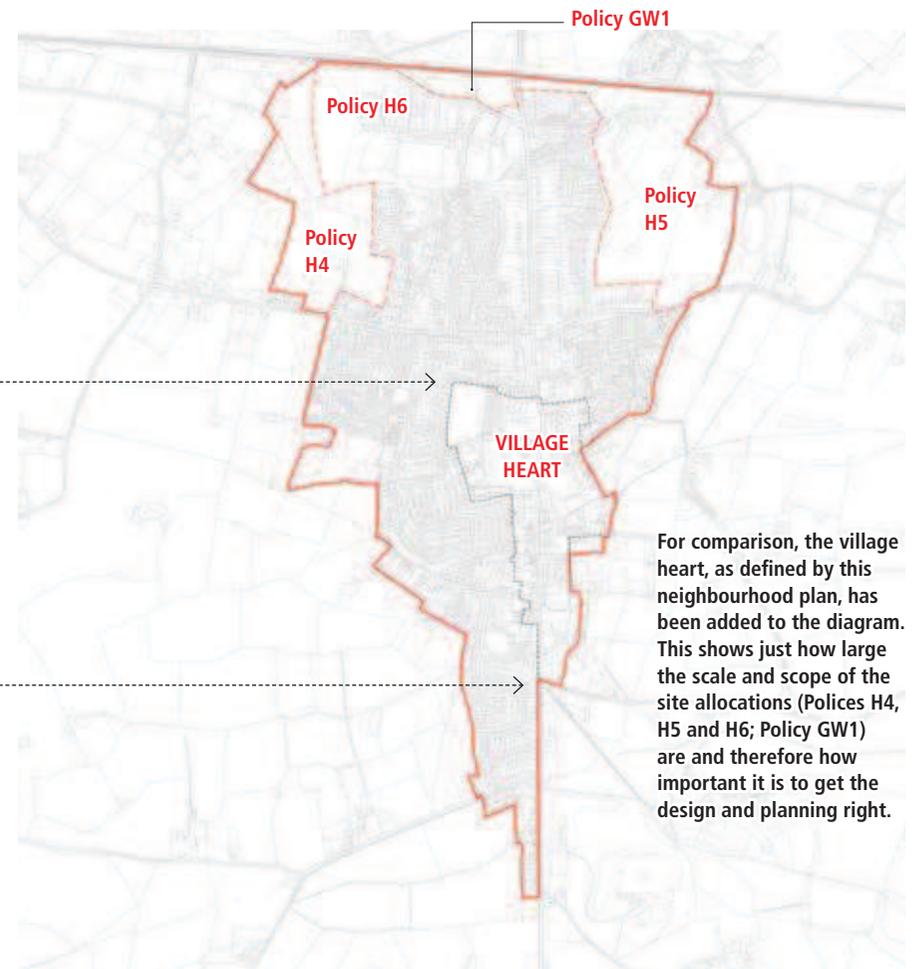


4.15 There is no “Article 4 Direction” for the Staplehurst Conservation Area. Under this direction, any work that changes the external appearance of a building, or affects its grounds may require planning permission from the Borough Council.

## LIMITS OF BUILT FORM

### The new village envelope

4.16 The inclusion of two housing allocations on the east and west of the village means the village envelope will increase. The diagram below shows a new village envelope for the neighbourhood plan period to 2031, indicated by the solid red line. The previous boundary is shown by the dotted red lines for the locations only where it was not contiguous with the new envelope line.

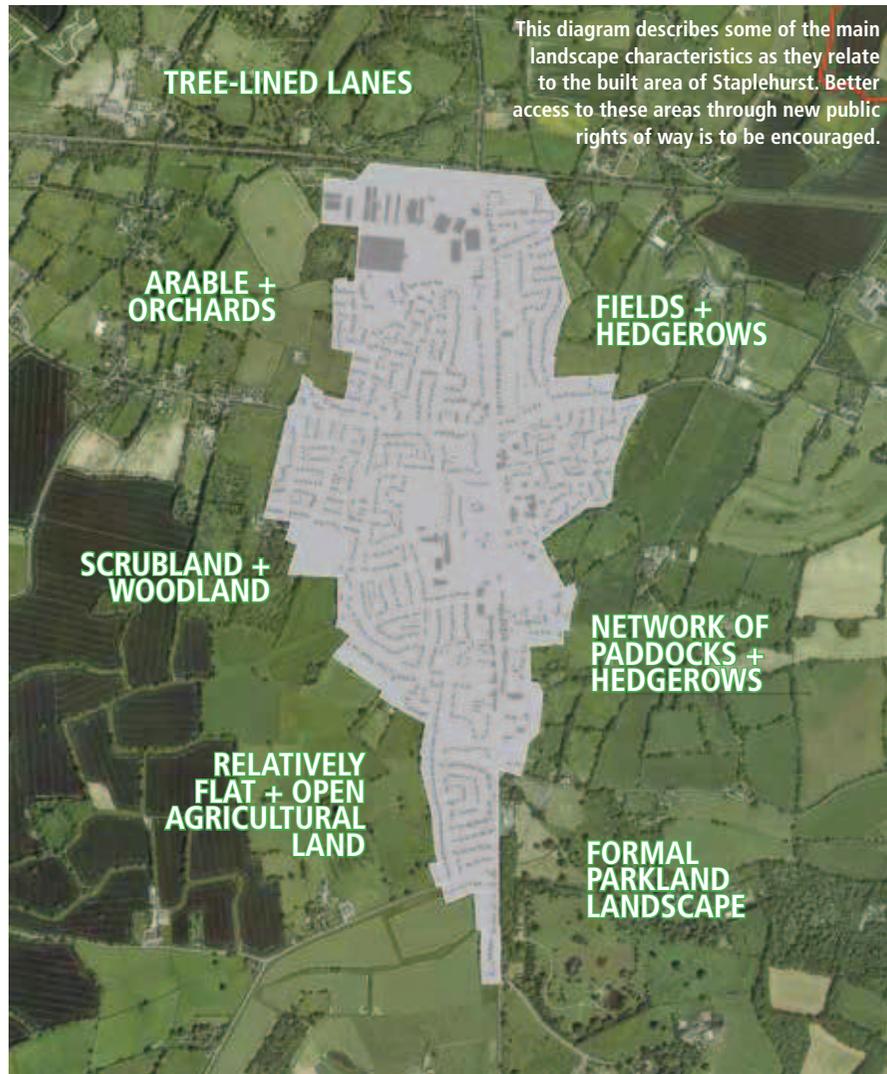


For comparison, the village heart, as defined by this neighbourhood plan, has been added to the diagram. This shows just how large the scale and scope of the site allocations (Policies H4, H5 and H6; Policy GW1) are and therefore how important it is to get the design and planning right.

## RURAL CHARACTER

### How the countryside informs the village setting

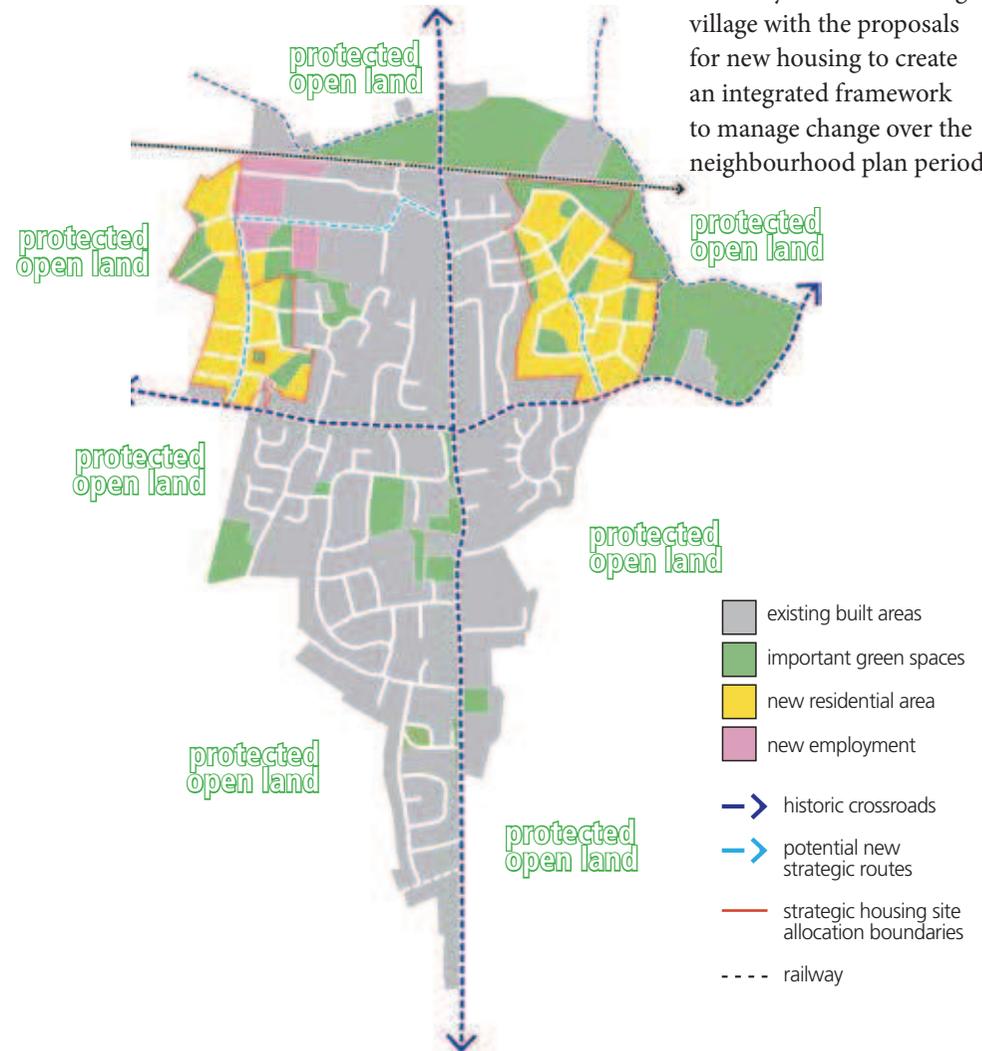
4.17 The immediate rural area comprises different areas of character. Their relationship with the built form of the village gives a particular sense of place.



## FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM

### Bringing It All Together

4.18 This plan brings together the analysis of the existing village with the proposals for new housing to create an integrated framework to manage change over the neighbourhood plan period.



## CONCEPT DRAWING + FRAMEWORK DIAGRAM

4.19 A principal aim of the plan-making process, in particular the consultation and engagement events, has been to ensure a strategic approach is taken at all times. Individual development sites have been assessed within the context of the whole village and wider parish to test how they can contribute to the bigger picture.

4.20 The concept drawing that emerged from the three day design forum has provided a sound basis for moving forward with the neighbourhood plan preparation. This drawing was tested at consultation events in January, February and March 2014, and through a questionnaire, and a majority of respondents (57% of respondents) supported it as a basis for future work.

4.21 The framework diagram (page 19) is based on refinements to the three day concept drawing and brings together the existing built areas with the potential areas for new homes and new employment. The framework diagram shows how the two housing allocations need to be sensitively but effectively integrated with the existing fabric of the village. This requires the landowners and developers to think strategically by looking beyond their red line allocation boundaries. This is necessary to ensure that the early phases of development do not prejudice the longer term objectives of the overall vision for a connected and integrated village.

## THE MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

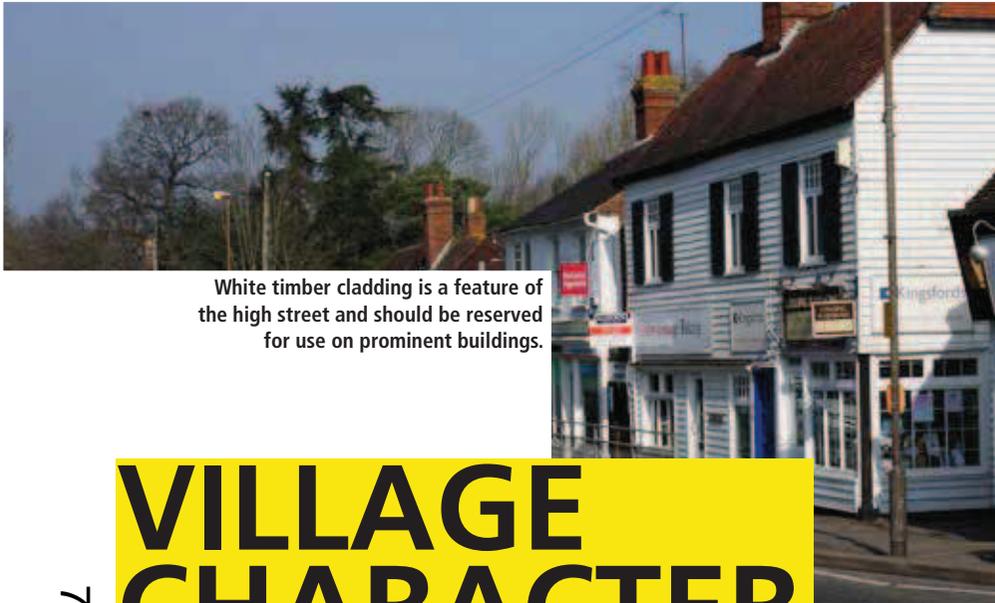
4.22 Policy SP3 in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Preparation (Regulation 18) 2014 designates Staplehurst a Rural Service Centre — that is, a larger rural settlement with a range of existing facilities and transport links making it suitable for additional houses.

4.23 These new homes are allocated in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Preparation (Regulation 18) 2014 Appendix A Housing Allocations to the east and west of the A229. Policy H1(36) is the housing allocation shown by the red line to the west of the village. According to Maidstone Borough Council calculations, this can accommodate up to 250 new homes. Policy H1(37) is the housing allocation shown by the red line to the east of the village and, according to Maidstone Borough Council calculations, this can accommodate up to 400 new homes. This is a total of up to 650 new homes over the plan period, based on Maidstone Borough Council housing number calculations for the capacity of each site.

4.24 The neighbourhood plan framework diagram looks beyond these two red lines to test how these two allocations will need to be integrated with the rest of the village. This is something this neighbourhood plan must do as the Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan does not address this integration issue.

# PLANNING POLICIES + KEY AREAS OF CHANGE





White timber cladding is a feature of the high street and should be reserved for use on prominent buildings.

# VILLAGE CHARACTER

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/ 22

**5.1 What makes the historic heart of Staplehurst distinctive? The way the buildings frame and enclose space contributes significantly to the sense of place. Special buildings, such as the pub, are located on corners to create small but memorable landmarks. New developments in Staplehurst can and should take inspiration from the village heart.**

**5.2 New housing should be influenced by the traditional character and style of the village, referencing the local context through high quality materials and styles appropriate to the place. The aim for all new developments should be to leave a positive architectural legacy and to add to the character of the village. This does not exclude innovative modern or contemporary architecture and this will be encouraged where appropriate.**



**High Street, Staplehurst** Buildings linked together in a terraced row help enclose the space and define the street's form. The roof line has a distinct rhythm created by chimneys, towers and visible gable ends. Most building lines are on the back of footway with no private front garden spaces.



**The King's Head Pub** This taller building located on a corner plot on higher ground helps create a distinctive local landmark. The pub rises to three storeys with a steeply pitched roof. The built form comprises several different blocks with a modulated building line, stepping back from the footway on occasions to define doorways and entrances.

## ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS FROM STAPLEHURST

5.3 These particular architectural details have been selected as they represent some of the more effective building and design techniques that help add to the character and quality of the parish. The fact these examples have primarily been drawn from the older parts of the village does not mean more recent developments in Staplehurst are poor quality. Rather that the distinctive sense of place evident in the historic heart is what the community admire most about where they live. New development proposals must learn from this and look to incorporate techniques such as this, where appropriate. See also the Staplehurst Village Design Statement (April 2005) that remains a valid document and a source of useful guidance for all new development.



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- 01 Simple but traditional Padian-style housing provides the sense of importance and quality to some of the properties in Staplehurst.
- 02 Careful and deliberate use of colour helps to identify and pronounce the characteristics of the building. In this example brick, coloured window frames, traditional tall roofing all contrast with the white rendered walls.
- 03 The use of double bays on the ground creates flexible spaces that help allow a building to change use from residential to retail/cafe.
- 04 Careful use of brick, timber and tile cladding on buildings creates a Kentish village aesthetic and creates a sense of a strong and robust buildings.
- 05 Structural elements standing proud and on show (e.g. external timber trusses and joists) can accentuate a building's longevity.
- 06 Buildings positioned side-on to main streets can help mitigate traffic impacts and also allow for deliberate orientation in relation to the sun.
- 07 Traditional lapped-timber cladding can be accurately reproduced using modern materials for a longer lifespan.

- 08 Low rise mature hedging provides clear and defensible boundaries but does not obstruct the view of the fine architecture behind it.
- 09 Medieval stonework of the All Saints church needs to be celebrated and welcoming to not only visitors but villagers too.
- 10 Traditional fencing and shrub-planted borders used to separate private gardens from public streets or roads.
- 11 Maintaining the traditional look of the village pubs is important; there must be resistance against any modern or corporate identities being applied to their external appearances through branding or signage.
- 12 Half-timbered elevations on an arts and crafts style house, with a distinctive tall chimney feature.
- 13 Mature planting vegetation within private gardens softens the street scene and adds distinctive rural qualities to some buildings in the village.
- 14 The terraced row of houses at Cross-At-Hand represents a high density form of development appropriate to a village or rural setting.

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Throughout the process, residents have been encouraged to share their ideas through facilitated discussions.

# PLANNING POLICIES

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**6.1 In order to achieve the ambitions of the neighbourhood plan, a robust set of planning policies has been written. These set out what development can and cannot do, where it should be located and how the existing parts of the parish will benefit from new investment related to the new development.**

**6.2 The neighbourhood plan policies must be in “general conformity” with the Maidstone local plan and with national and European planning policy. General conformity means they do not have to be exactly the same and it is encouraged that they add more detail and more local knowledge to make the plan as responsive as possible to local people.**

## 7.1 PARISH-WIDE THEME (Policy Code PW)

***“Create an integrated set of neighbourhood planning policies that support sustainable development objectives across the whole of Staplehurst parish”***

### Policy Theme Background

7.2 While many of the planning policies deal with issues in and around the village of Staplehurst, this neighbourhood plan needs to deal with the whole parish. The neighbourhood plan therefore contains four overarching parish-wide policies that apply to all six of the policy themes that sit beneath them.

7.3 These four parish-wide policies are considered to be relevant to the whole parish and apply equally to all developments, be these community infrastructure (such as a new community hall or new shops), new homes, a new school site or new footpaths and countryside access.

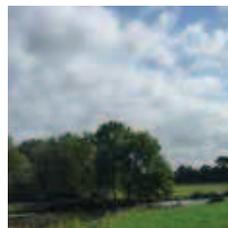
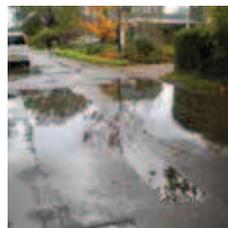
7.4 The parish-wide policies deal with the need to achieve the right level of investment in utilities and infrastructure for a growing village; the need to protect the countryside and biodiversity; the need to support a strong local economy with access to jobs and employment opportunities and the need to support renewable energy technologies in the right locations.

## POLICY PW1

### **PROPOSALS FOR NEW AND IMPROVED COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES IN THE PLAN AREA, INCLUDING THE PROJECTS LISTED AT PARAGRAPHS 7.10-7.16, WILL BE SUPPORTED SUBJECT TO THOSE PROPOSALS MEETING THE OBJECTIVES OF THIS PLAN AND BEING COMPATIBLE WITH OTHER PLANNING POLICIES IN THE PLAN.**

#### **Policy Supporting Text**

7.5 Staplehurst will inevitably experience growth over the next decade or more. This can only happen if the right level of investment is made in improvements to the infrastructure at the right time. Delivery of infrastructure need not all be ‘up-front’ but current and forecasted infrastructure shortfalls must be independently evaluated and a full mitigation plan must be supplied by the developer before large-scale housing applications can be approved. Investment in the necessary infrastructure to improve the streets and roads network and to address drainage issues, applies to all new development sites, be they residential, community or employment focused.



**Flooding on Chapel Lane (far left) and open countryside north of the village (left).**

**7.6 Access + Movement** Future changes to the street and road network need to acknowledge the rural character of the village; encourage more choice of routes throughout the village to help reduce traffic congestion at peak times on the A229 and Marden and Headcorn Roads. Changes to the streets and roads improvements must encourage greater use of other modes of transport, including walking and cycling throughout the village, to make them a safer and more viable option. Better links between the east and west and the north and south of the village will help reduce congestion and promote healthier lifestyles through active travel modes.

**7.7 Drainage Infrastructure** Staplehurst has experienced a number of incidents of surface water flooding, both from public foul water sewers and rainwater drains, in recent years. Further development must incorporate robust measures to avoid making the situation worse, and if possible, ameliorate the problems that exist at present time. The integration of proven and effective techniques, including the selective use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) where shown to be appropriate, will be essential through a number of interventions to prevent further flooding. Best practice guidance indicates a number of means to positively reduce the risk of flooding in Staplehurst, including use of permeable surfaces, on-site attenuation systems and the inclusion of specially designed landscape into all new development.

7.8 Policy PW1 is linked to a set of specific projects identified through the neighbourhood plan process. Policy PW1 will act as “hook” or a starting point for these projects to be developed further. The projects may require further feasibility work, perhaps outside the scope of the neighbourhood plan, to establish how they can be funded and delivered.

7.9 While community consultation confirmed a new Village Centre building as the main project, this order of priority should not be seen as fixed or definitive but more as an overall indication of preference. The list needs to be treated as flexible if it is to be responsive to different funding opportunities.

## Specific projects linked to Policy PW1 in a general order of preference and the further work required

### 7.10 Improved Village Centre

Feasibility study to understand the cost/benefit of redeveloping the site through demolition, rebuild, conversion or refurbishment with the aim of creating a community hall fit for purpose. An improved village hall and/or village centre is a priority for the village and so will also be a priority for any s106 and/or CIL contributions; and the present Village Centre site should be protected as being in community use.

### 7.11 Improved drainage infrastructure

All new developments to use best practice techniques in mitigating against further drainage problems.

### 7.12 Investment in the school

Continued investment in the primary school. Land search required for a suitable site to be safeguarded for another education site, subject to land ownership and support from Kent County Council.

### 7.13 Better retail opportunities

Development of two retail clusters, one in the village heart, another at the railway station. Feasibility study, to including land owner agreements, needed at the station.

### 7.14 Investment in the medical centre, sports facilities + the library

Continued investment in medical facilities and the library in the village heart. Focus new sports investment at facilities in Jubilee Field subject to funding applications.

### 7.15 Buses, parking + traffic

Rationalisation of parking provision in the village heart, better crossing points and better bus services. Landowner agreements needed.

### 7.16 Better broadband communications

Use the expected growth of the village, to be managed through the neighbourhood plan, to argue for better telecommunications and broadband technology in Staplehurst. Cooperation of utility companies needed.

## POLICY PW2

**PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE BEYOND THE EXTENDED VILLAGE ENVELOPE WILL BE ASSESSED IN TERMS OF THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF THE DEVELOPMENT UPON THE VISUAL SETTING AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES OF THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS, THE POTENTIAL IMPACT UPON THE BIODIVERSITY OF THE AREA AND OTHER RELEVANT PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS, SUCH AS THE IMPACT OF TRAFFIC AND NOISE. PROPOSALS WHICH FAIL TO DEMONSTRATE THESE IMPACTS CAN BE SATISFACTORILY ADDRESSED WILL NOT BE SUPPORTED.**

### Policy Supporting Text

7.17 The neighbourhood plan strongly supports the protection of the wider countryside outside the areas identified for new development. See page 18 for map showing the village envelope. There is, therefore, a presumption against the development of any land other than those sites identified as suitable for development within this neighbourhood plan. The proximity of Staplehurst to the countryside is an important part of the identity of the village. Greater access to this countryside through improvements to the rights of way network will be sought from the developers of the new built areas of the village.

7.18 The countryside is well-loved by the local community and is often cited as a key reason why recent incomers to the village moved here from elsewhere. It is also an important attraction for tourism, an increasingly important part of an active rural economy. Maintaining and enhancing the biodiversity of the countryside is an integral part of this protection. The introduction of green corridors, both between and within new and existing areas of development, will be encouraged in the design of new development areas. These green corridors must link to the wider countryside. The introduction of easy-to-access recreational routes to help demarcate the interface between the built areas of the village and the wider countryside beyond will also be actively encouraged.

**POLICY PW3**

**RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS WILL BE SUPPORTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:**

- 1) Installations should be sensitive to the existing communities and the impact they may have upon the landscape and views.**
- 2) Productive agricultural land of the highest quality (e.g. Grades 1, 2 and 3a) should be protected.**
- 3) Schemes on previously developed land and on the roofs of industrial or employment buildings will be given priority consideration over those in other locations.**

**Policy Supporting Text**

7.19 Integral to the protection of countryside (see Policy PW2) is the need to sensitively promote sustainable forms of energy production in appropriate locations. The parish council acknowledges the role that renewable energy schemes will play in safeguarding the nation's energy security and the increasing role they will need to play to combat the harmful effects of climate change by helping to decarbonise energy generation.

7.20 However, the scale and size of certain renewable technologies, especially wind and solar, can have significant visual impacts upon the existing countryside scene. Developers will need to demonstrate the impact of their schemes clearly through the planning application process, a process which the parish council will be involved in as a statutory consultee.



**Wind power can be visually obtrusive but can also play an important role in power generation. Solar farms should be kept off prime agricultural land.**

POLICY PW4

**NEW DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN STAPLEHURST MUST HAVE REGARD TO THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND THE HERITAGE THAT IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE LANDSCAPE. LARGE DEVELOPMENTS (i.e. OVER 0.5 HECTARE) SHOULD BE SUITABLY INFORMED AND MAY NEED AN APPROPRIATE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK BASED ASSESSMENT AND HISTORIC LANDSCAPE SURVEY.**

**Policy Supporting Text**

7.21 Staplehurst has a rich and diverse heritage and has been an area favored for occupation and farming since the prehistoric period. There are some major route-ways traversing Staplehurst parish, some of which date back to the Roman period and possibly before, relating to the Iron Age and later use of the Weald’s rich resources. Staplehurst itself is one of Kent’s post medieval market towns, serving the medieval and post medieval farm and horticultural holdings in the surrounding area. Some of this heritage is identified in the Kent Historic Environment Record (held at Kent County Council) as designated and un-designated heritage assets. However, heritage is an integral part of the landscape. It is reflected as sites and the surrounds of sites but it is also the pattern of fields, route-ways and clusters of houses and farms. Understanding the heritage of an area includes understanding the landscape as a whole.

7.22 New developments within Staplehurst need to have regard to the historic environment and consultation with the Heritage Team at Kent County Council is advisable. There should also be regard to NPPF Section 12 on the historic environment and to Local Plans policies. Large developments (i.e. over 0.5 hectare) should be suitably informed and may need an appropriate archaeological desk based assessment and historic landscape survey. NPPF encourages “the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring” and that wherever possible, opportunities should be identified “to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.”

COMMUNITY THEME (Policy Code C)

***“Ensure that housing development brings an appropriate level of investment into community infrastructure”***

**Policy Theme Background**

8.1 New housing development in Staplehurst over the coming years should seek to bring with it financial investment in community infrastructure. This includes the village hall, the school, the library, the shops and services, the railway station, children’s play areas, footpaths, bus and rail services, countryside access and all the other services and facilities that make working and living in Staplehurst the positive experience it is. A growing village needs the level and quality of the associated community infrastructure to be expanded and improved to meet the needs of its residents and workers.

8.2 Planning permission for new housing will come with conditions attached that require the developer concerned to make an appropriate financial contribution to the village. This is known as “planning gain” and is an established planning procedure in the UK.

8.3 The difference in areas with an adopted neighbourhood plan is that the community, through the plan, can directly influence and prioritise the areas of village infrastructure it feels are in most need of investment. Early ideas include investment in the “Village Heart” area and also around the station in the north, including a possible new bridge over the tracks. The neighbourhood plan can also set out a long term plan to link housing growth to levels of community investment. Furthermore, a parish with an adopted neighbourhood plan will receive 25% of the revenues from the forthcoming Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to be charged by Maidstone Borough Council arising from the development that a parish chooses to accept in its plan area. Parishes without a neighbourhood plan, but where CIL is charged, will receive just 15%.

## POLICY C 1

### **MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING, INCLUDING ITS EXTENSION IF NECESSARY, TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.**

#### **Policy Supporting Text**

8.4 The Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan supports the continued investment in the local library site. The library is located at the heart of the village in proximity to other local services that are equally important to the community. The library provides a vital service to village life and the surrounding rural areas.

8.5 The library supports the local community cohesion and supports education and learning for all age groups. Investment here must aim to maintain and enhance the library as a modern, flexible space offering the right range of services, including internet connections and an appropriate range of up-to-date books, that will allow the library to continue to connect communities within Staplehurst village and the wider parish.

8.6 The neighbourhood plan identifies this as a key service to be protected, maintained and enhanced. Through the planning obligations linked to future development in Staplehurst, an appropriate level of funding will be directed towards the library service to ensure it will meet the needs of a growing village.



The library is a vital resource in the heart of the village.



**Policies C1, C2, C3, C4 and C6** Location of community facilities to be maintained and enhanced shown by the red lines. The "village heart" (see page 41) is shown by the black dotted line.

## POLICY C2

### **MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ITS FACILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR EXTENSION, TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.**

#### **Policy Supporting Text**

8.7 The primary school is a vital asset to Staplehurst village, the wider parish and beyond. The relatively central location of the school ensures direct access for much of the local community. It also lies in close proximity to the other services and facilities in the heart of the village. The planned future growth of Staplehurst will put the primary school under increased pressure to provide additional school places to children living in Staplehurst. Therefore, investment in the primary school to help it meet this demand is vital to ensure that it can continue to provide an excellent start in life for those growing up in the village.

8.8 Continued engagement will be required between Staplehurst Parish Council, Maidstone Borough Council, the school governors and Kent County Council to ensure this investment is delivered in a timely manner and at the appropriate level.



**The primary school is a vital village service and will be under increasing pressure as the village grows.**

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## POLICY C3

### **MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE YOUTH CLUB BUILDING AND ITS FACILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR EXTENSION IF NECESSARY, TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.**

#### **Policy Supporting Text**

8.9 Investment in youth facilities (including the youth club building and youth services delivered by the voluntary sector) in Staplehurst is necessary and required to ensure a balanced and happy community. The neighbourhood plan aims to maintain and enhance all local services that are used by its young residents.

8.10 A range of youth facilities is needed for different demographics within the under-18 population in Staplehurst, from pre-school children to independent teenagers. The current youth groups are popular and well-attended; the planned growth of the village means funding must be secured to ensure these services continue to meet the needs of the growing young population. Better youth facilities could be incorporated into a new Village Centre and this needs to be considered as part of any feasibility study.



**Youth club facilities are currently in the heart of the village, adjacent to the Village Centre.**

## POLICY C4

### **MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE HEALTH CENTRE BUILDING AND ITS FACILITIES, INCLUDING THEIR EXTENSION IF NECESSARY, TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.**

#### **Policy Supporting Text**

8.11 Demand placed on the excellent health facilities in the centre of the village is certain to increase following village expansion. Residents of all ages need access to high quality, local care. In order to ensure that the health care provision is maintained and enhanced for the current and future residents, a higher level of investment is needed. The current health centre is located in the heart of the village, in proximity to other vital village services.

8.12 The neighbourhood plan supports further investment into this single site, rather than into new satellite centres, to ensure the best quality service for its residents. The relatively central location makes it accessible to the majority of local residents and allows for “linked trips” as those attending the health centre can also perhaps drop children off at school or attend events in the Village Centre as part of the same journey.



**The health centre provides excellent care for current residents but it will need more investment as the village expands.**

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## POLICY C5

### **MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE JUBILEE FIELD SPORTS AND RECREATION SITE, INCLUDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW AND IMPROVED FACILITIES AT THE SITE.**

#### **Policy Supporting Text**

8.13 The process of engagement developing the Staplehurst neighbourhood plan has highlighted the need for enhanced sports and recreational facilities in the village. The Jubilee Field site, on the eastern edge of the village with access to wide open sports pitches, is considered to be the best location for further investment. There is currently a lack of indoor sports facilities within the parish (e.g. a high ceiling sports hall, performance space or similar) with most residents having to travel outside of the village to use such a space.

8.14 The Jubilee Field site has the capacity to accommodate new indoor and outdoor sports facilities for the current and future populations of Staplehurst. Through the planning obligations linked to future development in Staplehurst, an appropriate level of funding will be directed towards the sports and recreation facilities to ensure it will meet the needs of a growing village. These funds may be matched with grants from national agencies, sports federations and national governing bodies.

8.15 Investment in facilities at Jubilee Field must be complementary to investment within the “village heart” and not place both sites and their respective facilities in a competitive situation with one another.



**Jubilee Field will remain the focus for outdoor recreational facilities.**

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**Policy C5** Location of the Jubilee Field where facilities to be maintained and enhanced.

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**POLICY C6**

**SUPPORT THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE VILLAGE CENTRE SITE, RETAINING IMPORTANT ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES OF THE EXISTING BUILDING IF APPROPRIATE, TO PROVIDE NEW AND IMPROVED COMMUNITY CENTRE FACILITIES.**

**Policy Supporting Text**

8.16 The current Village Centre building was the village school from 1873 to 1987 and now serves the parish in a variety of ways. It provides space for clubs, societies and groups across the parish, as well as hosting the parish office. However, demand in the area is greater than the supply that can be provided by the current building. Moreover, the building is in need of repair and has significant running costs due to its inefficient heating and lighting systems. The building needs to be made fit for the current and future residents of the village. The engagement events as part of the neighbourhood planning process highlighted this as a critical issue for the village.

8.17 The majority feeling amongst residents was that the existing location of the Village Centre must be retained. This location is also within walking distance of the existing parade of shops in the centre of the village, allowing further linked trips between existing community facilities. The facility forms a key component of the cluster of facilities that comprise the village heart and it has relatively easy access directly off the high street. This location also gives it a prominence to “passing trade” and a new building here will have the opportunity to become a “shop window” or showcase for the range of village activities, subject to the right building configuration and design.



The current building might survive in a renovated or modified state but the location of the new Village Centre should be on the same site, right in the heart of the village.

8.18 Discussions were held as part of the neighbourhood planning process about whether or not to demolish, refurbish or rebuild. There was a general feeling that it would be a shame to demolish the entire building. The handsome stonework of the facade, the articulation of the main elevation and main structural elements could all be worth retaining. A creative architectural brief, that requires the skillful blending of the old and the new together to form a more modern building fit for the future, could be prepared. A more modern building, but with retained heritage elements, could generate a revenue stream for the village through function hire (e.g. weddings).

8.19 However, a cleared site could offer more flexibility to the design, and perhaps be more economically viable as it will not have the added restoration costs associated with the retention of heritage elements already on site. A cleared site may also allow fresh thinking as regards site layout and access arrangements, to create more useable outdoor spaces and allow for striking, modern design that is nevertheless sympathetic to the village context.

8.20 A decision on exactly how to proceed with this project — that is, retain, refurbish, convert, modify or demolish and rebuild — can only be taken following more thorough cost-benefit analysis outside the scope of this plan. Whatever the preferred approach will be, it must deliver a multi-purpose building of special architectural merit right in the heart of the village.

8.21 Investment in facilities at the Village Centre must be complementary to investment within the Jubilee Field and not place both sites in a competitive situation with one another.

06

## ACCESS + MOVEMENT THEME

*“Reduce pressure on the crossroads by ensuring alternative access routes; develop a better connected series of village streets”*

### Policy Theme Background

9.1 The work undertaken so far on the neighbourhood plan has revealed a weakness in the current design and layout of Staplehurst in that “all roads lead to the crossroads”. This means that many journeys through and around the village will pass through the Cuckcold’s Corner simply because other route options do not exist. See street structure diagram, page 17.

9.2 Therefore, new developments must seek to create alternative routes between:

- 1) different areas within the village; and,
- 2) outlying areas of the parish and the village.

9.3 This will allow people access to their homes and other destinations in Staplehurst without necessarily passing through the crossroads. Creating alternative routes will give people a greater choice of movement and reduce the pressure on the crossroads.

9.4 At the three day design forum in October 2013, minor modifications were suggested to ease traffic flows through the crossroads. These modifications are likely to be affordable, environmentally sensitive and reduce queuing times (see drawings on pages 49, 50, 60 and 61 in the Three-Day Design Forum report for more details).

9.5 Any design intervention at the crossroads must be combined with improvements to the street network across the village to encourage greater levels of walking and cycling, helping to reduce dependence on the car for short trips.

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## Neighbourhood Plan Objective 01

**There is a need to safeguard access points for new railway bridge crossings to the west of the current high street bridge link.**

**This can be achieved by ensuring that the layout of all new developments does not prevent the delivery of a new bridge link in future, either in this plan period or future plan periods.**

9.6 New and enhanced access points over the railway to the west of the current A229 road bridge will provide an alternative to the current limited number of routes. A new bridge crossing will be important if the growing village is to have the better connectivity it requires for the future.

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9.7 The primary function of this link will be to provide attractive, safe and convenient access for existing and new residents that live and work in the area to the west of the village. The secondary function will be to alleviate traffic levels along the main road (A229) by providing an alternative route for local traffic, reducing the impact of new development on the A229 crossroads.

9.8 The safeguarding of these access points, and routes to them, is therefore vital to the formation of more sustainable access and movement links across the village. The layout of future development adjacent to these access points must acknowledge this requirement by delivering residential and employment layouts that provide clear and direct connections to the safeguarded sites.

9.9 The precise location and scale of the crossing will be determined through further design and feasibility work. However, it is envisaged that the bridge will be a low impact, small-scale bridge or crossing suitable for local traffic only. Not only will a bridge of this type be more affordable to deliver but it will also deter or even prevent larger vehicles (e.g. HGVs) and high speed or high volumes of traffic. Instead, the bridge will provide local access for local residents using private cars, helping to reduce the impact of new traffic movements on the A229. Bridges should also be accessible for pedestrians and cyclists.

9.10 The financing of a new railway crossing could be through a combination of funding from Kent County Council and Network Rail. There may also be a role for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 agreements to help finance the new crossing. The delivery of the new railway crossing could be triggered by specific phasing of the adjacent development.

9.11 However, the precise nature of the funding and timing will be determined through a specific project agreement. In the first instance, the neighbourhood plan seeks to ensure that development plans and proposals secure the ability to deliver a new link through responsive and flexible housing layouts that do not prejudice the ability to deliver the link at a later date.



**Further detailed design work is required to understand exactly how and where a new rail bridge crossing could be delivered.**

## Neighbourhood Plan Objective 02

### **Ensure the network of footpaths and footways throughout the village is safe, convenient and comfortable, with wider footways where necessary.**

9.12 The network of the existing footpaths and footways throughout Staplehurst does not always allow for safe and convenient access. In many places, they are too narrow to be used comfortably. In other places, there are historical features of merit, such as the listed steps by Vine House, that add special character to the village but further frustrate easy movement.

9.13 To encourage more people to walk, the existing and future footpaths around the village need to be generous, well-surfaced, safe and well-connected. In the centre of the village, particularly around the crossroads, many existing footpaths could be widened to make walking more comfortable. The dominance of the through road is further emphasised by narrow footpaths that do not allow convenient access around the village and these can be widened to give greater priority to pedestrians. In heritage areas where features such as steps cannot be moved, alternative measures must be introduced, such as ramps or pavement build-outs, to help overcome the barriers to movement that steps can present.

9.14 With space for car parking limited within the historic part of the village, especially around the parade of shops, the school, health centre, library and Village Centre, an increase in the numbers of people walking will go some way to ease the pressure on giving over more land to car parking.



**Pavement widths adjacent to Cuckold's Corner are inadequate and must be made wider through highways improvements.**

## Neighbourhood Plan Objective 03

### **The proposed layout for new development sites must deliver a series of connected streets and lanes that will ensure a choice of routes for new and existing residents.**

9.15 Future development proposals for residential sites must be based on a series of well-connected streets and lanes that provide genuine movement choices for new and existing residents. The design and nature of these new streets and lanes must be informed by the existing positive characteristics of the village.

9.16 Residential development sites must avoid layouts dominated by wide, fast roads and many cul-de-sac streets as these frustrate movement choices and lead to additional car traffic. Instead, a well-designed hierarchy of street types must be used to create flexible layouts that respond to wide variety of activities, including car parking, children's play, walking and cycling and help foster a sense of community and well-being amongst the people that live there.

9.17 New streets and lanes must also be effectively "plugged into" the edges of the existing village so as to integrate new and existing communities with minimal disturbance and disruption. Feelings or perceptions of a series of disconnected neighbourhoods must be minimised through sensitive integration of new and existing areas.



**Unwelcoming pedestrian "cut-throughs" need to be avoided in new developments in favour of a well-connected street network.**

## Neighbourhood Plan Objective 04

### **Create a series of on-street and off-street cycling routes that are safe, convenient and comfortable and will encourage people to cycle for short trips in and around the village.**

9.18 The creation of new connected layouts comprising safe streets and lanes will also need to create streets safe for cycling. In certain areas, segregated or dedicated cycling infrastructure may be required, for example, at key junctions or around the school. These measures will help raise the level of utility cycling (e.g. riding to work, the shops or to school). Good quality cycle infrastructure will give cyclists the space they need to ride safely on the roads and keep the pavement space for pedestrians. Facilities that are to be shared between pedestrians and cyclists must be avoided if at all possible within the built-up part of the village.

9.19

9.19 Meanwhile, Staplehurst is surrounded by attractive open green space and areas. The creation of off-street recreational cycling routes will enhance existing access and connections between the built-up village and the green spaces beyond. These routes need to be convenient, accessible and enjoyable if they are to help encourage cycling as a recreational activity which in turn, may help raise levels of utility cycling. Such off-road routes through the countryside can often be safely and successfully shared between walkers and cyclists. Regular access to green open space has a significant positive impact upon an individual's mental health and access to the countryside setting of Staplehurst must be promoted by well-connected accessible cycle routes.



**Quality provision for cycling needs to be incorporated into all new developments.**

## Neighbourhood Plan Objective 05

### **Create better and more frequent pedestrian crossings, including along the A229 as the road passes through the village.**

9.20 The A229 carries a combination of through-traffic and local traffic. It is also a vital walking route between the heart of the village and residential areas. Better and more frequent pedestrian crossings at specific points (i.e. Railway Tavern, Village Centre and Pinnock Lane) will be required to provide safer and more convenient access between where people live and where people want to get to.

9.21 In line with the aims of other policies in the plan, these interventions will help encourage more local trips to be made on foot. With limited space for car parking within the historic part of the village, especially around the parade of shops, the school, health centre, library and Village Centre, an increase in the numbers of people walking will go some way to ease the pressure on giving more land over to car parking. Being able to cross the main road safely and more conveniently will support this.

9.22 There is also a need for new dedicated crossing points along the Marden Road and the Headcorn Road, the precise sites to be identified.



**There is a generously wide pedestrian crossing point adjacent to the parade of shops but similar provision is lacking elsewhere.**

## Neighbourhood Plan Objective 06

### **Improvements to the Marden Road – Headcorn Road – Station Road – High Street crossroads, to ease traffic flow and improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists while retaining the village character that is special to Staplehurst.**

9.23 The crossroads marks a historic location within the village and provides a distinct rural identity to Staplehurst. The magnificent row of horse chestnut trees, the small green space, the Martyr’s Monument, the right angled turns in the street and the handsome residences all combine to provide an attractive village scene.

9.24 However, the levels of traffic currently using the crossroads, combined with the relative narrowness of the carriageway and the turning lanes can lead to congestion and tailbacks during peak hours. Relatively minor and affordable interventions are therefore sought at the crossroads area to help ease traffic flows and remove the likelihood of tailbacks and long waiting queues during peak hours.

9.25 These interventions could include widening and or realignment of the footpaths and footways; realignment and/or remarking of the right turn lanes to provide more generous passing room for through traffic; a better setting for the monument (that is currently on the north west corner of the crossroads and can remain there); thinning of hedge rows to make more of the village green open space on the south west corner of the junction; tree maintenance to lift the crowns and provide a more visible location for village welcome signs and directional arrows.

9.26 The crossroads is about more than just moving cars across and through the village; it marks an historic place and is part of the rural fabric of Staplehurst. This special character will be maintained. Careful and considerate design must deliver both a better village scene, an enhanced sense of place and also help ease movement and travel patterns.



**Could a new footway to the west of the chestnut trees release land to help deliver a more generous right turn lane to help avoid tailbacks?**

## Neighbourhood Plan Objective 07

### Improvements to bus services and bus waiting facilities.

9.27 With more people living and working in the village, investment in the bus services and bus waiting facilities (e.g. shelters, stops, real time information systems, a dedicated bus stop for the railway station etc.) will be required. Existing shelters must to be upgraded where appropriate, new stops and shelters installed along new routes and support for more frequent services to the most popular destinations will be sought.

9.28 The design and layout of new areas of housing must be able to accommodate new bus routes so that future residents will not be too far away from a bus stop. If the bus service is to offer a viable alternative to the private car, then it needs to be accessible, reliable and affordable to all that live and work in Staplehurst.

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**Better bus shelters should be installed across the village.**

## VILLAGE HEART THEME (Policy Code VH)

***“Strengthen the focal heart of the village around the Village Centre, Library, Health Centre, Primary School and Parade of Shops”***

### Policy Theme Background

10.1 The historic heart of Staplehurst contains the cluster of uses and activities that make the village a special place to live and work. There are the community activities at the Village Centre (that includes the parish office) the library and the churches. There is also the commercial activity at the parade of shops, a variety of shops on the opposite side of the road, a cafe and the pub. Together, all these uses give life and vitality to the village. The central area of the village also has Conservation Area status, awarded by Maidstone Borough Council and contains many high quality buildings

10.2 The three day design forum revealed a widespread desire to strengthen and enhance this cluster of uses rather than locate new community facilities elsewhere. Investment must aim to expand the facilities where necessary and deliver better connections between each of the uses to make them easier to access. Several of the buildings can also be made more attractive and visible to passers-by especially the Village Centre and the Parade. Options for the redevelopment or demolition and rebuild of the Village Centre remain under consideration.

10.3 The cluster of facilities at Jubilee Field, on the eastern edge of the village, will also be maintained and enhanced. This location is considered less accessible than the village heart and so will have a greater emphasis on outdoor recreation, sports facilities and uses that need large areas of open space. The result will be an area that complements the uses in the village heart.

POLICY VH1

**SUPPORT THE RETENTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE EXISTING RETAIL AND ANCILLARY FACILITIES IN THE VILLAGE HEART, INCLUDING IMPROVEMENTS WHERE NECESSARY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF USERS OF THOSE FACILITIES.**

**Policy Supporting Text**

10.4 With a growing village and with new housing sites identified on the outer edges of the current village, some distance from the existing retail offer, it will be necessary to provide a greater range of shops and services in closer proximity to its resident population if the village is to have a sustainable future. Without this, many residents will choose to leave the village, often by car, in order to obtain groceries and other regular items of shopping.

10.5 Existing parade of shops on the High Street, and other retail facilities in the village heart, are to be protected and enhanced. As the historic heart of the village, this area has been identified by residents as an important commercial area for both now and into the future. This plan supports continued investment in local retail and associated services in this location. As this site is well-connected to existing residential areas, it must provide high quality and convenient shops and services to a local catchment that can arrive on foot and by bicycle, as well as to a wider catchment from further afield.

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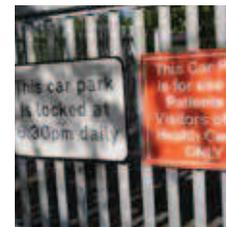


**Policy VH1** Location of the existing retail and ancillary facilities to be maintained and enhanced.

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The existing retail cluster around the parade of shops needs to be retained and enhanced.



Parking in and around the parade of shops needs to be rationalised with a better management regime and more appropriate waiting times.

Neighbourhood Plan Objective 08

**Ensure better and more connected routes between the library, primary school, health centre, village centre, youth club and church through safe, comfortable and convenient walking routes.**

10.6 The library, primary school, Village Centre, youth club, health centre and churches provide many of the essential services integral to the quality of life in Staplehurst. The close proximity of these services can be further enhanced through better connections between them. There is potential to be sought for an increased number of “linked trips” in which the car is parked once followed by a series of different short journeys on foot between the different areas of activity.

10.7 The existing footpaths between these focal areas are not always suitable for all residents in the village, in particular for those that use wheelchairs or those that find walking on uneven surfaces difficult. Footpaths must be widened where possible and more pedestrian crossings at particular points will allow greater movement in an east-west direction across the village, connecting up the cluster of facilities in the village heart. See also Objective 05.

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Neighbourhood Plan Objective 09

**Rationalisation of parking provision at the health centre, parade of shops and library area to ensure convenient and appropriate levels of car parking.**

10.8 The library, primary school, Village Centre, parade of shops, health centre, youth club and church all have their own car parking and drop-off arrangements to different degrees. Space is at a premium in this part of the village and it is unlikely that any significant amount of new land will come forward for additional car parking, if indeed that is desirable. Instead, a review of the waiting time restrictions, the opportunity for shared spaces, joint management and for the realignment of existing car parks to make them more efficient must be explored.

## The Village Heart Policy VH1

10.9 There is widespread support from within the community for creating a stronger village heart. The cluster of uses in and around the High Street that support the social and community life of Staplehurst is vital for a growing village.

10.10 Policy DM20.1(vii) of the Maidstone local plan seeks to retain and enhance these facilities but the neighbourhood plan policies need to go further by explaining how these facilities work together and what is needed to support them into the future.

10.11 Policy VH1 required a series of actions and individual projects, each linked to other policies within the neighbourhood plan. Fragile and delicate parts of a village, such as the historic heart of Staplehurst, need to be nurtured and cared for. They have survived for many years and are very flexible but need to be looked after.

1. Improvements to the crossroads to make walking and cycling easier. These measures should also reveal the potential of the village green, provide a better setting to the monument and ease traffic flows.

3. Continued support and investment for the primary school. There is a need to identify room for expansion.

5. Investment in the library, health centre and parade of shops, especially in the public realm. Rationalisation of the parking spaces and parking regime is also required.

2. Redevelop the site of the Village Centre (by demolition, rebuild, conversion or refurbishment; to be decided) to create a community hall fit for purpose and a "shop window" for village life and activities.

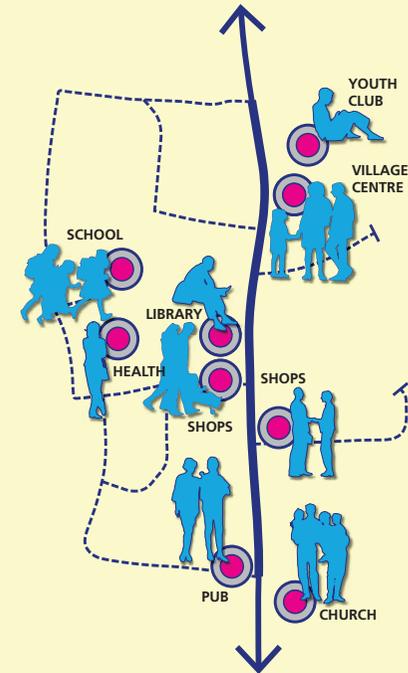
4. Make the street easier to cross to help support shops on both sides of the street.



## WHY IS THE VILLAGE HEART SO SPECIAL?

10.12 All ages and all activities can be found in this one part of Staplehurst. Primary school children and their parents, the elderly and teenagers. Football games, book reading, grocery shopping, pub meals and local Kentish beer.

10.13 Taken together, these "people, places and activities" are what makes village life special. This diagram (below) tries to capture all these activities and the physical links that bind them. How can these links be made stronger for the future? And what new activities for the 21st Century can be added to the village heart mix?



## GATEWAYS THEME (Policy Code GW)

***“Improve the function and visual qualities of the land around the station; ensure other approaches to the village are visually appealing”***

### Policy Theme Background

11.1 There are many parts of Staplehurst that have a strong visual identity and are attractive places to be. For example, in the southern half of the village, there is a positive relationship between the buildings and the wider countryside, with strong visual connections between the two. Also, there is an attractive cluster of heritage buildings around the Conservation Area. However, the approach from the railway station is dominated by surface car parks and areas of scrappy under-utilised land. The area lacks a positive identity and fails to create a welcoming gateway to Staplehurst for those arriving by train.

11.2 As first impressions go, it could be much better, yet the station is a prize asset and one of the criteria required for Staplehurst being given Rural Service Centre status by the Maidstone Borough Council.

11.3 Yet the area has great potential. The railway station is a daily destination for regular commuters and this to and fro movement can add life to the area if utilised in the right way. Rationalisation of the car parking, from all being surface level to a multi-deck arrangement, can maintain car parking availability but free up land for more productive uses.

11.4 New commercial activity around the station, like small business units, shops or services and cafés all focused around a new market square could provide the positive new welcome that Staplehurst deserves. The scale of development here will be constrained to ensure the protection and on-going viability of the existing retail centre in the village heart (see Policy VH1).

## POLICY GW1

**THE REDEVELOPMENT OF SITES IN THE RAILWAY STATION AREA WILL BE SUPPORTED, WHERE SUCH PROPOSALS CAN DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY WOULD LEAD TO IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PUBLIC REALM IN THE AREA AND ENHANCE THE VISUAL APPROACH TO THE VILLAGE FROM THE NORTH. PROPOSALS FOR NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING ANY RETAIL FLOOR SPACE, WILL BE ASSESSED IN TERMS OF ANY POTENTIAL IMPACT UPON EXISTING RETAIL PROVISION IN THE HIGH STREET LOCAL CENTRE.**

### Policy Supporting Text

11.5 The plan-making process identified a clear need to improve the space around the station area. As a whole, the under-utilised nature of the area, dominated by surface car parking, leaves a poor impression on both first time visitors and regular users of this part of the village. However, the presence of the station and the recently constructed new factory for DK Holdings shows the area has good commercial and economic opportunities and these can be leveraged to deliver a better public realm.

### *Better Public Realm*

11.6 The existing entrance area around the station building is currently in a neglected condition and required improvements to the layout, including a rationalisation of the surface car parking, landscape works, materials, lighting and seating could deliver significant enhancements in the form of a civic space (a high quality “market square”) marking a key gateway to the village. A well-designed civic space of this type could provide better car parking facilities, as well as a shared space that on weekends could accommodate social activities for the community, such as markets or festival events.

11.7 To deliver the new civic space, a certain proportion of the existing surface car parking could be decked on a new multi-level car park structure. This decked car

park will release land adjacent to the station to allow for more creative uses that will socially and culturally enrich the village experience. This decked structure could maintain a net neutral level of car parking (if desired) but could also allow for extra car parking spaces to be delivered on site.

*Retail Investment*

11.8 Economic activity could be enhanced through the creation of small-scale retail and commercial units around the edge of the new civic space that could trade off the regular footfall in the area. The station area is close to the two large areas of land to the east and the west of the village identified as being able to accommodate the majority of the new housing growth. This makes it an accessible location by walking and cycling to new residents and therefore a sustainable location for new retail and associated services.

11.9 The southern part of the site is already has planning permission for a new food store and other parts of the station environs could provide further retail units or associated services. The site's proximity to the railway station means there are excellent opportunities for retail and business spaces to trade off the footfall generated by the station.

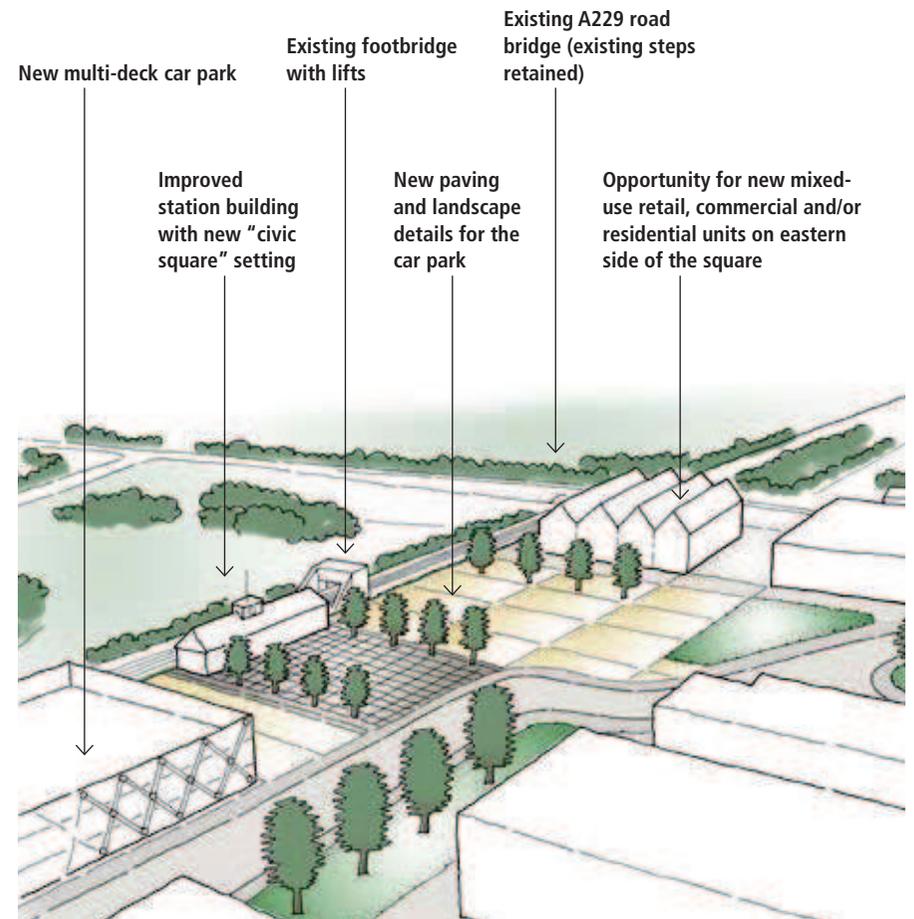
11.10 Maidstone Borough Council granted planning permission for the food store in March 2013 and therefore this neighbourhood plan has been prepared on the basis that additional retail provision in the area identified around the station will be in conformity with Maidstone Borough Local Plan policies designed to protect existing retail areas.

*Conclusions*

11.11 This area has the potential to provide a new civic space (e.g. a village "market square") together with small-scale retail and other commercial opportunities. The station area is an important gateway entrance to the village through which a large number of people pass every day. This plan policy has a very high level of support from the local community and implementation will be a key part of the delivery of the Rural Service Centre concept.

### Illustrative Sketch Policy GW1

11.12 The area around the railway station has the potential to provide a new civic space (e.g. a village "market square"). Small-scale retail and commercial units could locate around the edge of the space, trading off the regular footfall in the area. To deliver the new civic space, a certain proportion of the existing surface car parking could be decked on a new multi-level car park structure. This decked car park will release land adjacent to the station to allow for more creative uses, such as markets or festivals, to enrich the village experience.



## Illustrative Layout Policy GW1

11.13 Policy DM13 of the draft Maidstone local plan sets out a strategy for sustainable transport that includes rail travel. Furthermore, one of the criteria for Staplehurst being designated a RSC was the presence of a mainline railway station so it does not seem unreasonable to seek greater investment in the station in return for the housing numbers being allocated in Staplehurst.

11.14 Policy GW1 of this neighbourhood plan expands on the relevant Local Plan policies by requiring a redevelopment that creates a positive new approach to the village; including a new landscaped civic space and small-scale retail and commercial opportunities around the station.

11.15 Set out here is a concept for the station area based on the sketch scheme generated at the three day design forum in October 2013. Relocating a proportion of the existing surface car park into a decked structure will release land that can be landscaped into a small-scale, attractive market square.

11.16 This space will still be able to accommodate parked cars but will also be able to host events and other activities, especially at weekends when demand for parking spaces at the station is often lower than during the working week.

11.17 While the village has excellent green open spaces, such as Surrenden Field and Jubilee Field, it currently lacks a purpose built market square or other similar dedicated hard space that can be used for markets or other small temporary events. Such places can go a long way to giving a village a positive sense of identity as well as being a venue for functions and events that can bring the community together.

11.18 For the formal red line boundary drawing of this site, please see the diagram on page 45.



*This diagram has been prepared to provide guidance to potential developers. It represents many of the comments received through the consultation process. It is a preliminary design sketch only and is subject to information available at the time. It is not subject to measured survey, legal, structural, soil investigation, utilities survey, daylight/sunlight, topographical, mechanical and electrical, highways and access rights surveys, or planning permissions.*



Location of the station area to be redeveloped (Policy GW1).

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## Neighbourhood Plan Objective 10

### **Safeguard the green and rural feel to the approach to Staplehurst from the south.**

11.19 The approach to the village from the south is important as it helps to define and identify Staplehurst as a village set within countryside. The close proximity of the village's built elements with the surrounding countryside gives this approach a distinctive rural feel.

11.20 This neighbourhood plan aims to protect this by supporting the larger development allocations in the northern part of the village; any small-scale infill development in the southern part of Staplehurst must be sensitive to its environment. The density, size and design of any small-scale infill development must be appropriate to the context and help safeguard the rural nature of the southerly approach.



**The approach to the village from the south is characterised by strong green edges. This needs to be maintained and enhanced.**

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## Neighbourhood Plan Objective 11

### **Create defined and welcoming gateways to the village when approached from the west, via the Marden Road and from the east, via the Headcorn Road.**

11.21 The gateways in and out of the village along the Marden Road and Headcorn Road are very important in helping to define the extent of the village. They require distinctive features to mark the entrance to the village and to define the village as separate from the surrounding countryside. New junctions along these east and west routes to allow access to new areas of housing must be sensitive and small-scale in keeping with the village qualities and characteristics.

11.22 Large traffic-engineering solutions (e.g. roundabouts with visually intrusive traffic management paraphernalia such as chevron boards and white paint) must be avoided and more sensitive junction designs introduced instead. This approach does not necessarily exclude roundabouts, but their design needs to be responsive to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and also be aesthetically appropriate to a village setting.

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**Positive new gateways to the village need to be introduced as part of new developments to the east and the west.**

## EDGES THEME (Policy Code E)

*“Identify and strengthen specific green edges to deliver a long-term edge to the village; and improve public access to the countryside beyond”*

### **Policy Theme Background**

12.1 An understandable concern of many residents in Staplehurst is where and when will expansion stop? What will prevent the village growing even more than already planned? In response to this, the neighbourhood plan is looking to define new edges to Staplehurst that will become permanent boundaries to the village.

12.2 The village edges need to be designed in a way that will provide a sense of enclosure to the village, prevent unchecked sprawl and ensure that new areas of homes can positively respond to the landscape. New housing clusters also need to be the right scale and in the right location and not be large anonymous housing estates.

12.3 The new village edges must also encourage public access to the countryside beyond. Many residents value living close to some of the most attractive countryside in England, but easy access can be frustrated through blocked footpaths or private ownerships. Opening up more land around the new edges of Staplehurst to create highly-valued recreational routes will be one way to ensure the new village edges have a sense of permanence and will reassure village residents that growth will not continue ever outwards.

## POLICY E1

### **ALL NEW DEVELOPMENT SITES ON THE EDGE SHOULD INTEGRATE POSITIVE PLANTING AND RECREATIONAL ROUTES ALONG THEIR BOUNDARIES AND WITHIN THEIR LAYOUTS TO HELP DEFINE A LONG TERM EDGE TO THE VILLAGE AND RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS ON THE EXISTING VILLAGE EDGE.**

#### Policy Supporting Text

12.4 In order to prevent planned housing developments from unchecked further expansion, the integration of green spaces and recreational routes along the boundaries of development sites should seek to provide clearly defined edges. The integration of green spaces immediately to the east and west of the new developments, using new public rights of way and recreational spaces, must be incorporated into any new designs. These will help connect the new housing layouts to the countryside beyond and connected layouts will allow existing residents better access too. The formation of clearly defined edges will provide natural boundaries to help fix housing growth over the long term. The questionnaires returned as part of the consultation events suggested what could be incorporated into the village edges and these include:

- agriculture
- circular footpaths
- woodland
- cycleways
- allotments
- fitness trails
- wetlands
- sports
- low density villas

12.5 Developers working up more detailed designs for housing allocations are directed to this list of ideas to help inform the edge conditions of new areas of housing. Furthermore, new developments must be designed in a sensitive way to respond to the needs and requirements of existing village residents who live on what is currently the outer edge of Staplehurst.

12.6 On pages 48 — 49 there are a series of illustrative sketches that help demonstrate some of the different ways of appropriately implementing Policy E1. These illustrative examples have been included to help developers and landowners understand the type of positive edge conditions that are sought by the neighbourhood plan.

12.7 The inclusion of these edge examples was recommended by the examiner. Each example is supported by an illustrative sketch and design principle diagram together with some supporting text. These examples help to make clear the ideas discussed in relation to new housing development, how green edges can be identified and ways in which they can be strengthened.

12.8 When done in a positive and thoughtful way, such designs can help address the need for Staplehurst to develop a sense of enclosure, help prevent unchecked sprawl, help ensure that new housing development complements the rural surroundings and will encourage public access to the countryside beyond.

### EDGE EXAMPLE 01



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12.9 The sketch above demonstrates how new development can promote the recreational use of the adjacent landscapes through layout and orientation. These houses face outwards across an open playing field and provide natural surveillance by overlooking the space. This encourages new and existing residents to enjoy the green space, promoting social integration. The supporting diagram below shows how this creates a defensible edge to the development over the longer term, with built form on one side and open countryside on the other, mutually supportive of one another.

Furthermore, such outward-facing homes are likely to encourage high quality design, due to their relatively high profile visibility.

**Design principle 01**  
Development edge formed from outward-looking homes overlooking open space.



### EDGE EXAMPLE 02



12.10 The sketch above highlights a street on the edge lined with new tree-planting. The new planting can help further define a single-sided street. Introducing a shared access route, primarily for use by pedestrians and cyclists, will create an appealing place and therefore help encourage access into the adjacent countryside. Routes like these could become part of a wider cycling and walking scheme for Staplehurst, with this path connecting to a network across the parish. The supporting diagram below shows the countryside edge further defined by new tree planting. This helps maintain a strong rural feel to the new built edges where they meet the countryside beyond.

**Design principle 02**  
Countryside edge strengthened with new tree planting.

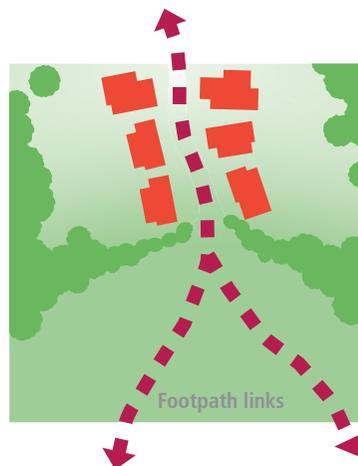


EDGE EXAMPLE 03



12.11 This third sketch above visualises a “gateway” development that helps to frame access between the built areas and the wider landscape. This type of development form could be introduced at certain points along the edge, helping to define clear and legible routes. The well-designed development edges overlook the footpath, providing a sense of natural surveillance that will enhance the experience of using the route, in particular after dark.

The supporting diagram below shows how specific access and movement points between new development and the open countryside can be better emphasised through gateway forms of this type, with the housing providing a sense of arrival from the rural to the residential.



**Design principle 03**  
Gateway development forms help frame specific access points.

HOUSING THEME (Policy Code H)

*“Ensure the mix of new housing responds to local needs and local demands in terms of prices, sizes and tenures; ensure that new housing designs are high quality and respond appropriately to the Kentish context”*

**Policy Theme Background**

13.1 It is inevitable that Staplehurst will be required to accommodate new homes over the coming years. Therefore, the neighbourhood plan is being prepared on the basis that a substantial number of new houses will be built. The Maidstone Borough Council (Regulation 18) Local Plan suggests 650 new homes could be built in Staplehurst between now and 2031.

13.2 Policy SP3 in the draft Maidstone Borough Council local plan designates Staplehurst a Rural Service Centre — that is a large settlement suitable for additional houses. Policy H1(36) is a housing allocation to the west of the village. This is for 250 new homes on land known as Hen and Duckhurst Farm. Policy H1(37) is a housing allocation to the east of the village and this is for 400 new homes on land known as Fishers Farm. Although the draft housing numbers have now been published, best practice in planning for an expanding village advises that a plan created by “designing to numbers” does not always deliver the right quality of environment.

13.3 Instead, the plans must be “place-led” – that is, the plan must respond in a positive manner to the local landscape, the local context and the existing village setting. Although no final decisions have been taken about the sites, the results of the three day design forum in October 2013 suggested that much of the new housing will be situated on the eastern and western flanks of the village and almost all of it north of the crossroads. The Maidstone Borough Council housing allocations reflect these broad locations.

13.4 How can housing in these locations be designed in a way that best responds to local factors? New areas of housing need to create special places that are architecturally distinctive and will become cherished by those that live there and the wider village residents. All developers will be required to use the village character assessment (page 22) and the Staplehurst Village Design Statement (2005) to inform the design of all house types and site layouts. It is not the role of the neighbourhood plan to provide detailed design guidance for how sites should be developed but it does provide clear advice on the design principles that must underpin any future proposals.

13.5 All future planning applications must be developed through consultation with the communities that live immediately adjacent to the site and with the wider community too. A variety of drawings and reports need to be produced that will give confidence that development can be achieved in the most effective and successful way possible.

13.6 The precise mix of housing must respond to local needs in terms of size of each property, the price, the amount of land around it and the mix of tenure (i.e. whether houses are for sale or for rent). Regard for the findings of the Staplehurst Housing Survey 2010 (report by Tessa O’Sullivan, Rural Housing Enabler with support from Staplehurst Parish Council, Staplehurst Rural Settlement Group and Maidstone Borough Council) will be essential.

13.7 Finally, Maidstone Borough Council has made a commitment to renew efforts to engage with foul water utility providers and other organisations with responsibility for managing water, including surface water, in the borough concerning future infrastructure provision both to respond to the current concerns and issues arising from consideration of the housing needs in the future, particularly for Headcorn and Staplehurst.

**POLICY H1**

**THE DESIGN OF NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD BE PRINCIPALLY INFORMED BY THE TRADITIONAL FORM, LAYOUT, CHARACTER AND STYLE OF THE VILLAGE’S VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE.**

**Policy Supporting Text**

13.8 Any new housing development must be shaped and influenced by the traditional character and style of the village. The Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan requires all new developments to reference the local context and demonstrate the use of high quality materials and styles appropriate to the place. See village character assessment on pages 22 — 23.

13.9 For example, any small-scale in-fill developments that may come forward in the south of the village must be sensitive to the rural and more historic nature of the village, by reflecting the character of housing in proximity to countryside. New housing within the larger allocations to the east and west of the village may be required to develop their own distinctive characters, to add to the overall variety and mix to be found within the village. The aim for all new developments must be for them to leave a positive architectural legacy, to be sensitive to their local context and environment and add to the positive character of the village.

13.10 Policy H1 does not exclude innovation or modern and contemporary architecture. Such designs are encouraged across the parish. Where appropriate, architects and designers are encouraged to create new designs that reflect both the local context and the current technology and materials of the era within which they will be built.



The variety and quality of architecture in the village, both the modern and the more established, are to be celebrated and new development should leave a positive legacy.

POLICY H2

**NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD INCORPORATE, WHERE POSSIBLE, DESIGN FEATURES TO PROMOTE ENERGY AND WATER EFFICIENCY, ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE ELDERLY AND THOSE WITH RESTRICTED MOBILITY AND FLEXIBLE SPACES THAT WOULD SUPPORT WORKING FROM HOME.**

**Policy Supporting Text**

13.11 The neighbourhood plan encourages future housing development to support modern lifestyles through innovative design. These will include reducing energy costs through meeting high design standards as well as internal space standards and layouts that will encourage working from home. Design details, such as the ability to receive parcels securely when not at home, storage of several bicycles, flexible use of garage and garden spaces and the effective storage of waste and recycling bins will be encouraged.

13.12 New housing should seek to promote the efficient use of water and energy, as well as accessibility for the elderly and those with restricted mobility. Other features, including flexible internal space to support working from home, will be encouraged.

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**Are the house types most recently constructed in Staplehurst still suitable for modern lifestyles? What innovations should be included for the future?**

POLICY H3

**A RANGE OF APPROPRIATE TENURES AND SIZES OF NEW PROPERTIES TO MEET LOCAL NEEDS AND DEMANDS WILL BE DELIVERED.**

**Policy Supporting Text**

13.13 The type, tenure and size of future housing must reflect the local needs and demands of Staplehurst.

**13.14 Affordable Housing** Staplehurst Parish Council has carried out a housing needs survey (2010) which identifies a modest local demand for affordable housing. This plan therefore supports some key worker and shared ownership housing to allow children of local families to remain in the area. Developers and local housing associations must therefore provide affordable housing that prioritises local residents' needs and ensures a distribution of units across both individual developments and the whole village and parish. Affordable housing delivery during the plan period needs to be in conformity with the adopted Affordable Housing Development Plan Document (2006) prepared by Maidstone Borough Council.

**13.15 Responsive Housing** Future homes should be designed for a changing population. This may involve family homes and homes for an ageing population to provide a good social mix, supporting social cohesion and independent living. The size of new developments should also be reflective of local needs. The station in Staplehurst is an important feature of the village, which already attracts working-age adults with families to the village. Therefore an adequate amount of family-sized houses must be built as well as providing for smaller units and innovative hybrid housing that can respond to modern lifestyles. For example, small-size private-rented apartments, perhaps designed in the form of a courtyard development sympathetic to the rural context, could be built within walking distance of the station. Such housing types may be suitable for young professionals who have grown up in Staplehurst, now need regular access to London but wish to live in affordable accommodation within their home village.

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POLICY H4\*

**DEVELOP LAND AT HEN AND DUCKHURST FARM FOR UP TO 250 HOUSING UNITS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING PLANNING AND DESIGN CRITERIA:**

- 1) Developers must provide an overall site master plan that shows a robust long term plan demonstrating how the land within the red line allocation can eventually be linked to the Lodge Road employment land to the north and east of the site.**
- 2) Design details of a through-route, or “spine street”, that will be capable of safely taking two-way traffic between the Marden Road and Lodge Road are required. This street needs to be fronted by high quality architecture and be planted with appropriate tree species to create a beautiful and verdant boulevard street that helps establish a distinctive sense of place. The street needs to be accessible and safe for all modes of travel.**
- 3) The overall site master plan must also safeguard access point(s) to a future railway bridge crossing. The precise design and location of the new crossing to be determined through further design and feasibility work.**

- 4) Proposals must demonstrate how new developments can be successfully integrated with the existing village while respecting the privacy, well-being and quality of life of residents currently living on the western edge of Staplehurst. Specific attention is needed with regard to points of access and existing views of open countryside.**
- 5) The masterplan should incorporate a green infrastructure strategy, which designates sufficient space within the site to meet obligations linked to ecological requirements, such as the retention of mature hedgerows and trees and the creation of wetland habitats, linked to a SuDS implementation plan.**
- 6) The site master plan needs to integrate positive planting and recreational routes along the boundaries to help define a long term edge to the village.**
- 7) The inclusion of high quality play spaces and recreational areas to be integrated into the development.**
- 8) The development makes provision for an adequate sewerage connection and for the protection of existing sewers on the site or their diversion, in accordance with the requirements of Southern Water.**

*\* Link to Maidstone Borough Local Plan Preparation (Regulation 18) 2014 Appendix A Housing Allocations H1(36) - Hen and Duckhurst Farm.*

**Policy Supporting Text**

13.16 Future development to the west of the village must be complementary to the adjacent existing housing. It needs to be sensitive of the current situation while also successfully integrating with the wider village. New housing layouts should sensitively include the provision for a street network that will provide a choice of movements, both from the Marden Road to the south and from Lodge Road from the north. Which of these two connections is opened up first needs to be subject to a detailed phasing plan but both access points will be needed over the longer term. A new street capable of successfully accommodating through traffic needs to link the northern and southern access points.

13.17 The new layout should also successfully connect with the adjacent area of housing, with details of the nature of these links (e.g. vehicular, pedestrian, cyclist etc) to be the subject of detailed studies to be undertaken by the developer in cooperation with the local community and the parish council.

13.18 A feasible overall concept plan for the entire housing and employment areas will be required from developers prior to any implementation of early phases. Proposed housing and employment layouts must also ensure a new street to the north can be achieved over the longer term, connecting to a new railway bridge crossing. The timing and funding of this bridge link is still to be decided but in the first instance, the layout must not prejudice its future delivery.

13.19 New housing in this area should include strong, green landscape features along the future street network. Developers will be required to use the village character assessment (page 22) and the Staplehurst Village Design Statement (2005) to inform the design of all house types and site layouts.

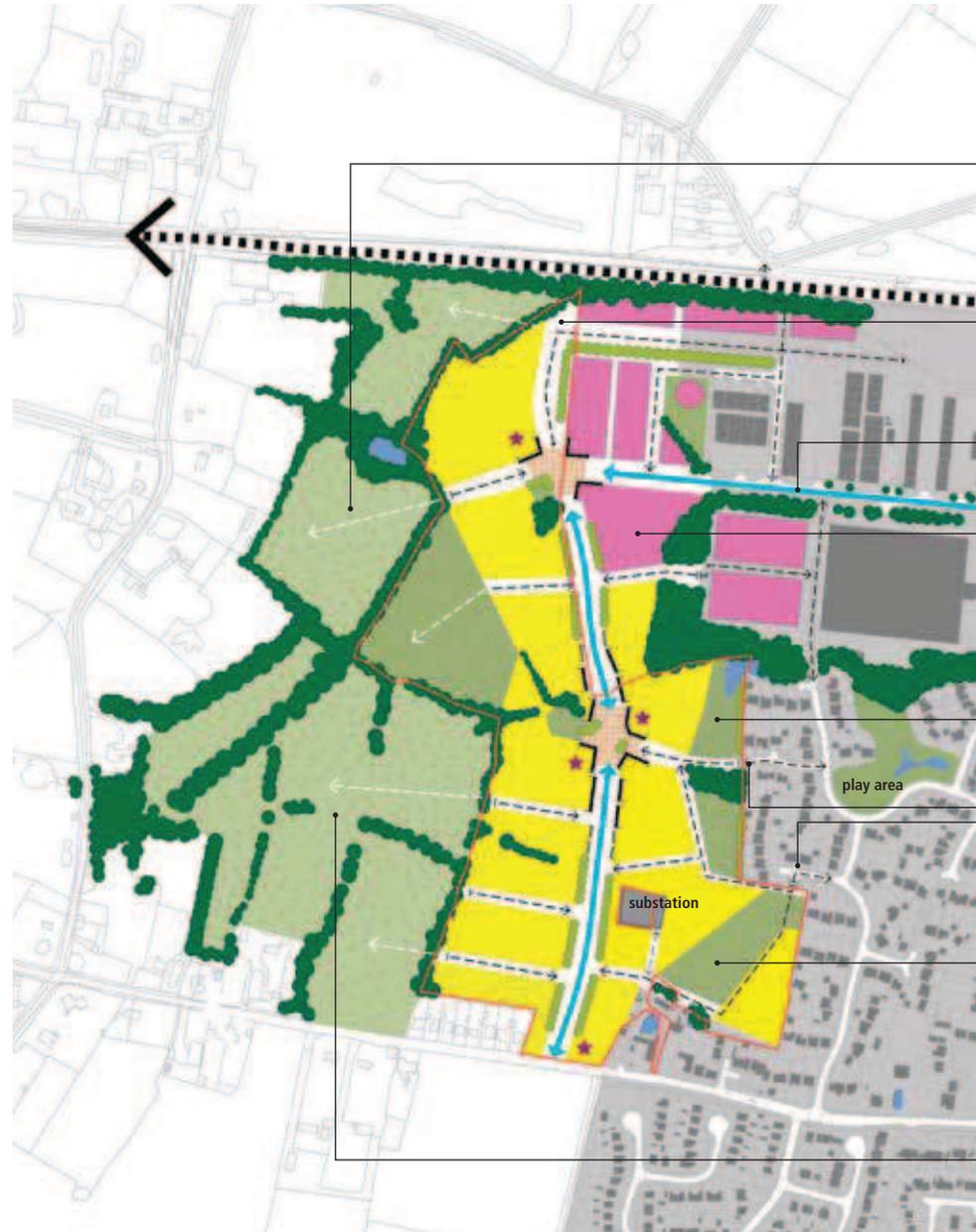
13.20 Dwellings on the western edge should be afforded views across open countryside. The integration of existing public rights of way and the planting of a green edge will add a strong and natural edge to the village. See Policy E1. To mitigate the impacts of flooding in the village, a further investigation is needed into how an attenuation pond system could be established. This could be integrated into an attractive green space for community use with an essential role in flood mitigation.

13.21 It is not the role of the neighbourhood plan to provide detailed design guidance for how this site should be developed but Policy H4 provides clear advice on the design principles that must underpin any future proposals. Future planning applications must be developed through consultation with the communities that live immediately adjacent to the site and with the wider community too. A variety of drawings and reports need to be produced that will give confidence that development can be achieved in the most effective and successful way possible.

13.22 There is a need for a historic landscape survey and historic landscape character assessment to inform the layout and master plan design and ensure important historic landscape features and heritage assets are suitably preserved and integrated into the new development. Prior to detailed designs, an appropriate archaeological assessment should be undertaken to identify any archaeological constraints or enhancements and to ensure suitable archaeological mitigation.



**Some existing residents have views of the Oast Houses near to the Marden Road (far left) Can these views be retained? The site needs to be connected to Lodge Road (left).**



## Illustrative Layout Policy H4

### KEY

- Potential new residential areas
  - Potential new employment areas
  - Open green space
  - New proposed planting
  - Existing planting to be maintained and strengthened
  - Accessible countryside beyond the site development
  - Existing development
  - Potential new civic spaces to provide positive character at street junctions
  - Strong built edges to define the street
  - Opportunity to introduce a new landmark architectural feature
  - Local links
  - Strategic links
- NORTH

Ensure good access to open countryside beyond the development site to the west.

Safeguard opportunity for new bridge crossing of the railway. Precise location and nature of the bridge to be determined.

Link between new development and Lodge Road required to provide access to the station and the wider network.

Integrate new employment land effectively through the creation of a transition zone

Edge design to respond to the needs and requirements of existing village residents

Pedestrian and cycle links needed here between existing development and new areas of housing to integrate communities. Width of links to be suitable for emergency vehicles.

Opportunity to keep land open to maintain existing view from existing development to Oast Houses at farm complex.

Ensure good access to open countryside beyond the development site to the west.

**Policy H4** Illustrative design and planning principles for development of land west of the village.

*This diagram has been prepared to provide guidance to potential developers. It represents many of the comments received through the consultation process. It is a preliminary design sketch only and is subject to information available at the time. It is not subject to measured survey, legal, structural, soil investigation, utilities survey, daylight/sunlight, topographical, mechanical and electrical, highways and access rights surveys, or planning permissions.*



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**Policy H4** Location of the land for housing at Hen and Duckhurst Farm.

**POLICY H5\***

**DEVELOP LAND AT FISHERS FARM FOR UP TO 400 HOUSING UNITS SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING PLANNING AND DESIGN CRITERIA:**

- 1) Developers must provide an overall site master plan that shows a robust long term plan demonstrating how the land within the red line allocation can be linked to Sweetlands/Pile Lane and the wider countryside to the east of Staplehurst.**
- 2) Design details of a connected series of streets across the development will be required, showing how the whole site can be successfully connected to the existing network at Headcorn Road and Sweetlands/Pile Lane.**
- 3) Proposals must demonstrate how new developments can be successfully integrated with the existing village while respecting the privacy, well-being and quality of life of residents currently living on the eastern edge of Staplehurst. Specific attention is needed with regard to points of access and existing views of open countryside.**

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*\* Link to Maidstone Borough Local Plan Preparation (Regulation 18) 2014 Appendix A Housing Allocations H1(37) - Fishers Farm, Fishers Road, Staplehurst.*

- 4) **The masterplan should include a green infrastructure strategy, which designates sufficient space within the site to meet obligations linked to ecological requirements, such as retention of mature hedgerows and trees and the creation of wetland habitats, linked to a SuDS implementation plan. Space should also be designated for informal recreation and children’s play as part of the green infrastructure strategy.**
- 5) **The site master plan needs to integrate positive planting and recreational routes along the boundaries to help define a long term edge to the village.**
- 6) **The inclusion of high quality play spaces and recreational areas to be integrated into the development.**
- 7) **The development makes provision for an adequate sewerage connection and for the protection of existing sewers on the site or their diversion, in accordance with the requirements of Southern Water.**
- 8) **The layout of the proposed development should be designated to take into account the proximity of the Staplehurst Wastewater Treatment works to the north of the site, in order to safeguard residential amenities from potential smell and pollution.**

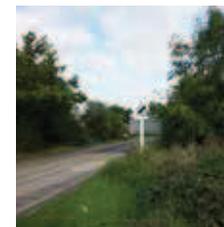
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### Policy Supporting Text

13.23 This is the larger of the two housing allocations. As with the smaller allocation to the west, development here must be complementary to the adjacent existing housing. It needs to be sensitive of the current situation while also successfully integrating with the wider village.

13.24 Access from the south via the Headcorn Road is likely to be a main entry and exit point but due to the very restricted access opportunities via Fishers Road and Newlyn Drive/Hurst Close, a link is required to the east to connect with Sweetlands/Pile Lane. Without such a link, there is a risk that the site will be developed as a cul-de-sac, with a single point of access from the Headcorn Road, placing unnecessary pressure on the Headcorn Road and the Cuckold’s Corner crossroads. A feasible and tested overall concept plan for the entire housing allocation is required from the developers prior to any planning permission for the implementation of early phases.

13.25 Given the relatively large size of this allocation, an overall concept plan will be required showing how different areas of character could be developed, using different densities and building types. For example, higher density developments could be located along the strategic routes while lower density forms could be located towards the outer edges. Higher density areas within the centre of the site can be offset by careful integration of green open spaces to create greens, play spaces and important social and community spaces for new and existing residents. The relatively close proximity to nearby facilities, including Jubilee Field to the south east and the railway station to the west, should be capitalised on with good walking and cycling routes to encourage easy and safe access by non-car modes.



How can potential negative impacts on existing adjacent residents (far left) be designed out? The edge locations mark the transition between the village and open countryside (left) and development proposals needs to acknowledge this.

13.26 The design must creatively incorporate much of the existing ecology and landscape and should maintain well-developed green edge adjacent to Pile Lane, the dog track and the Jubilee Field.

13.27 Development in the southern part of the allocation, adjacent to the Headcorn Road should have a strong edge built, set back behind a landscape belt. This will provide a positive new edge to the village approach, combining built form with natural features. The design of this southern edge needs to create a welcoming edge to Staplehurst to those arriving from the east. Development of the northern part of the allocation should look to integrate existing farm buildings and built structures at Fishers Farm. The incorporation of older building into a new development can add character and value if delivered in an appropriate way.

13.28 It is not the role of the neighbourhood plan to provide detailed design guidance for how this site should be developed but Policy H5 provides clear advice on the design principles that must underpin any future proposals. Future planning applications must be developed through consultation with the communities that live immediately adjacent to the site and with the wider community too. A variety of drawings and reports needs to be produced that will give confidence that development can be achieved in the most effective and successful way possible.

13.29 There is a need for a historic landscape survey and historic landscape character assessment to inform the layout and master plan design and ensure important historic landscape features and heritage assets are suitably preserved and integrated into the new development. Prior to detailed designs, an appropriate archaeological assessment should be undertaken to identify any archaeological constraints or enhancements and to ensure suitable archaeological mitigation.

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The development sites to both the east and west of the village should use good architecture and design to positively mark the transition between the built-up area of Staplehurst and open countryside beyond.

**KEY**

- Potential new residential areas
- Potential new employment areas
- Open green space
- New proposed planting
- Existing planting to be maintained and strengthened
- Accessible countryside beyond the site development
- Existing development
- Potential new civic spaces to provide positive character at street junctions
- Strong built edges to define the street
- Opportunity to introduce a new landmark architectural feature
- Local links
- Strategic links

**Illustrative Layout Policy H5**

- Access to east via Couchman Green Lane to allow movement to and from the site without travelling through the village
- Ensure good access to open countryside beyond the development site to the east.
- Pedestrian and cycle links needed here between existing development and new areas of housing to integrate communities. Width of links to be suitable for emergency vehicles.
- Edge design to respond to the needs and requirements of existing village residents
- Links needed to land beyond the village via Pile Lane and out towards the east
- Access from south via Headcorn Road, with welcoming gateway feature



**Policy H5** Illustrative design and planning principles for development of land east of the village.

*This diagram has been prepared to provide guidance to potential developers. It represents many of the comments received through the consultation process. It is a preliminary design sketch only and is subject to information available at the time. It is not subject to measured survey, legal, structural, soil investigation, utilities survey, daylight/sunlight, topographical, mechanical and electrical, highways and access rights surveys, or planning permissions.*



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**Policy H5** Location of the land for housing at Fishers Farm.

**POLICY H6**

**PROTECT THE EXISTING EMPLOYMENT FACILITIES AT LODGE ROAD AND ENHANCE AND EXPAND THE AREA AS A MIXED-USE RESIDENTIAL AND EMPLOYMENT AREA SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:**

- 1) Protection of existing businesses and operations.**
- 2) No net loss of employment floor space site.**
- 3) Developers must provide an overall site master plan to demonstrate how mixed-use residential and employment land within the red line allocation can be linked to residential land to the west and south west of the site allocation.**

**Policy Supporting Text**

13.30 There is an opportunity to expand the existing employment cluster at Lodge Road through new development immediately to the west and north of the existing industrial and employment units. New buildings here need not necessarily reflect the current building typologies but instead could be smaller-scale and more rural in their design (e.g. two or three storey courtyard schemes). These new units could also include a significant amount of residential use, such as small apartments in the upper floors. Development of this type could help form a “transition zone” between the existing employment buildings to the east and the new residential area to the west at Hen and Duckhurst Farm.

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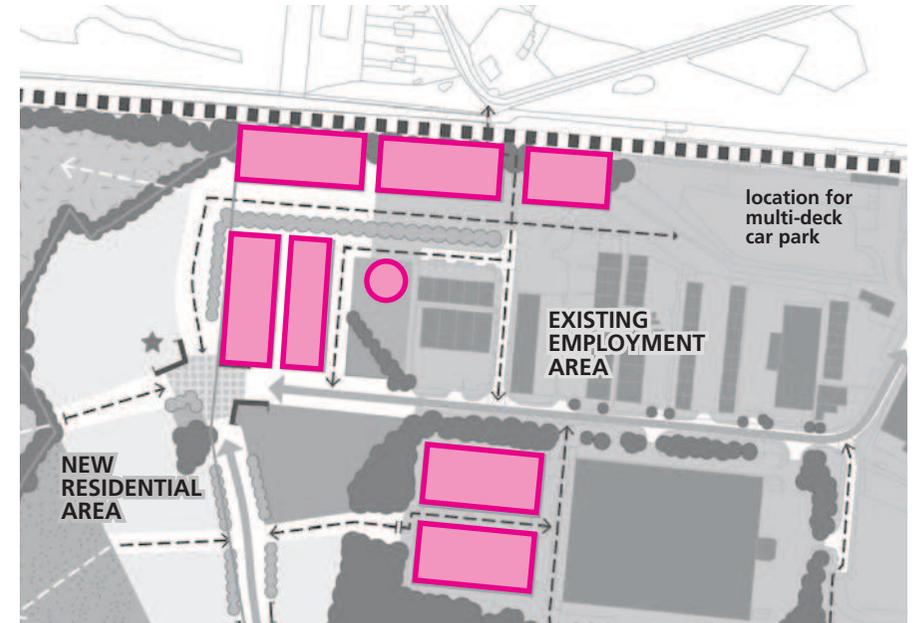


**The Lodge Road employment area is a vital asset to the parish.**



**Policy H6** Location of the land for employment and housing.

## Illustrative Layout Policy H6



This plan shows an illustrative layout for the land that lies between the existing employment area and the new allocated residential area. The blocks shown in pink could be developed as rural courtyard employment areas, similar to those shown in the photographs (page 61).

*This diagram has been prepared to provide guidance to potential developers. It represents many of the comments received through the consultation process. It is a preliminary design sketch only and is subject to information available at the time. It is not subject to measured survey, legal, structural, soil investigation, utilities survey, daylight/sunlight, topographical, mechanical and electrical, highways and access rights surveys, or planning permissions.*

Clockwise from top left:

- Ashford, Kent
- Moulton St Mary, Norfolk
- Parkway Farm, Dorset
- Poundbury, Dorset
- Hallastson, Herefordshire
- Cuckfield, Sussex
- Priston, Somerset
- Parkway Farm, Dorset



## Neighbourhood Plan Objective 12

### Support for a strong local economy with good access to jobs and employment opportunities.

13.31 While it is recognised that Staplehurst is an important village for rail commuters travelling to London there is also a need to strengthen and support a local economy that is not reliant on people leaving the village to work. The village already accommodates many local firms and employers in the Lodge Road industrial area and this is of great value to the local economy.

13.32 Other employment opportunities can be found in the village heart, comprising the library, primary school, Village Centre, parade of shops, youth club, health centre and church. Further investment in the parade could create more workshop or small office spaces, either above the shops or immediately behind in new courtyard-style developments. The neighbourhood plan will also support farm diversification in outlying areas of the parish, such as small-scale sensitive employment developments (e.g. courtyard schemes) and tourist accommodation.

13.33 Further new employment uses could be generated adjacent to the station as part of the investment in new public realm. It is encouraged that land to the east of the station is safeguarded for small workshop, small-scale retail or office uses. These spaces could be flexible units to help support small and emerging business, as well as existing home-workers in the parish.



The station and its immediate surroundings have been identified for future investment.

# PLAN MONITORING

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**14.1 Monitoring is an essential and continuous part of the plan-making process. The Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan will be monitored by Maidstone Borough Council to assess whether it is supporting and delivering the aims of the Local Plan strategy.**

14.2 The monitoring indicators identified are a mix of relevant indicators drawn from a number of sources including the National Planning Policy Framework, indicators identified in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and local indicators identified in respect of key policies of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

14.3 The key indicators for the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan will be on delivery of community infrastructure, employment, housing and positive environmental change.

## 14.4 General Delivery Indicators

- Development on allocated land and sites with planning permission.
- Percentage of completions on previously developed land, including planning permissions implemented involving planning condition(s) for remediation.

## 14.5 Employment Indicators

- Changes (up or down) in the number of companies/businesses (no. of VAT registered) located in the area
- Employment land lost or gained compared to other uses

## 14.6 Housing Indicators

- The number of dwelling completions that are provided relative to the Council's estimated provision
- Change in the total number of households
- Average densities on permitted housing sites
- Affordable housing completions

## 14.7 Environmental Indicators

- Levels of new open space provided, especially natural/semi-natural green space.
- Change to number of buildings on national and local lists of buildings at risk.
- The amount of open space/facility established by type relative to the standard.
- The number of permissions granted and implemented for renewable and low-carbon schemes and their expected levels of generation.
- The number of planning permissions granted for residential development in flood risk areas contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency.
- The number of developments which use sustainable drainage systems.
- The number of applications which do not receive approval for water supply and wastewater connection from the appropriate water company.
- Waste water treatment capacity.
- The amount of new habitat created, especially natural/semi-natural green space.
- Any monitoring undertaken of Kent Biodiversity Action Plan, including habitats created.

# NEXT STEPS

**15.1 This referendum version of the neighbourhood plan will be subject to referendum on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016, to be voted upon by the registered electors living within the Staplehurst Parish boundary.**

15.2 An earlier version of this neighbourhood plan was submitted to Maidstone Borough Council in August 2015 and was subsequently approved by an independent examiner on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2016, subject to various modifications. These modifications have since been enabled in this version of the plan.

15.3 Parish contacts for further information:

- **Mr. Mick Westwood, Clerk to the Parish Council**
- **Mr. Rory Silkin, Chairman of Staplehurst Parish Council**

The Parish Office, Village Centre, High Street, Staplehurst, Kent, TN12 0BJ.

## SUPPORTING REPORTS

**Submission Plan**  
July 2015

**Basic Conditions Statement**  
July 2015

**Consultation Statement**  
July 2015

**Exhibition Posters**  
November 2014

**Regulation 14 Plan**  
June 2014

**Exhibition Posters**  
June 2014

**Exhibition Slide Show**  
June 2014

**Results of the Questionnaire**  
March 2014

**Exhibition Posters**  
January 2014

**Results of the Three Day Design Forum**  
October 2013

**Results of the Village Visioning Event**  
September 2013

## RELEVANT WEBLINKS

**Staplehurst Parish Council**  
<http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk/default.aspx>

**The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012**  
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents/made>

**Maidstone Strategic Policy Framework 2015**  
[http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/60907/Strategic-Policy-Framework.pdf](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/60907/Strategic-Policy-Framework.pdf)

**Maidstone Strategic Housing Market Assessment Final Report January 2014**  
[http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/44656/Strategic-Housing-Market-Assessment-2014.pdf](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/44656/Strategic-Housing-Market-Assessment-2014.pdf)

**Maidstone Borough Local Plan (Regulation 18) Consultation 2014**  
<http://dynamic.maidstone.gov.uk/pdf/Local%20Plan%20Regulation%2018.pdf>

**Maidstone Borough Conservation Areas**  
<http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/business/planning/landscape,-heritage-and-design/conservation-areas>

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**STAPLEHURST NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN  
REFERENDUM PLAN**

September 2016



This plan has been prepared by:

**Staplehurst Parish Council, The Parish Office, Village  
Centre, High Street, Staplehurst, Kent, TN12 0BJ.**

Digital copies of this document can be downloaded from:

**[www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk](http://www.staplehurstvillage.org.uk)  
[www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)**



## Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

**8 November 2016**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**Yes**

### Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan Examination

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Cheryl Parks, Project Manager, Local Plan
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	Headcorn; Harrietsham & Lenham; Leeds; Sutton Valence & Langley; Staplehurst;

#### **This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. The Committee is asked to note the progress with the examination of Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan

#### **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all -
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough – a ‘made’ plan will form part of the Development Plan for Maidstone and will be used in the determining of planning applications for the plan area.

#### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	8 November 2016

# Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan Examination

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The primary purpose of this report is to update the Committee in regard to the current status of the Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan examination.
- 

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Committee will be aware of the difficult history of the examination of this Neighbourhood Plan as this has been reported on a number of occasions in recent months.
- 2.2 The Examiner appointed to restart the halted examination, Mr Jeremy Edge, was of the opinion that, given the volume of consultation responses and the diversity of issues that gave concern, it would be beneficial to hold a hearing to discuss the Neighbourhood Plan, the issues and to allow a number of different parties to respond.
- 2.3 The holding of a hearing is a relatively unusual occurrence with the majority of Neighbourhood Plan examinations being undertaken by written representations only.
- 2.4 The hearing was scheduled on Tuesday 18 October in Headcorn Village Hall, commencing at 10:00am. Three representatives from the Borough Council were in attendance along with three from the Parish Council and Steering Group, a representative from Kent County Council Education, representatives from Southern Water, and a number of developers and agents.
- 2.5 The hearing considered matters relating to a number of topics ranging from the Shared Vision, to Local Green Space, Housing, Water Management, and Gypsy and Travellers. There was also a large number of local residents in attendance throughout the day, even into the evening when the session ran late, illustrating the depth of local support for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.6 Debate throughout the day and questions posed by the Examiner (Appendix A) provided a helpful starting point for the consideration of the issues. The Parish Council and Steering Group were keen to see the Neighbourhood Plan progress, and yet also understood when the Examiner expressed concerns in relation to the submitted plan policies and conformity with national policy.
- 2.7 Toward the end of the hearing, there was a lengthy discussion in an attempt to address those areas where there were major differences between the Borough and Parish Councils, and to try to reach some common ground. In the majority of instances, this was successful, although the Gypsy and Traveller matter could not be agreed upon and was referred back to the Examiner to adjudicate in his report.

- 2.8 Following the conclusion of the hearing, the Examiner advised that he will need approximately three to four weeks to reach his conclusions on whether the Neighbourhood Plan is suitable to go to referendum as it is, or whether further modifications are required. Given the significant changes suggested and agreed during the hearing, it is highly likely that a further round of consultation will need to take place before any referendum can be held.
- 2.9 Once the Examiner’s findings are published, a further report will be brought to the Committee for consideration, outlining the Examiner’s findings.

### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The Committee is requested to note the contents of the report and to note that a future report will be brought to the Committee once the Examiner publishes his findings.

### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Committee is requested to note the report as set out at 3.1.

### **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been reported to the Committee on a number of previous occasions. Any discussion or recommendations have been noted and taken on board.

### **6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 6.1 Subject to the Examiner’s findings, a further report will be brought making recommendations about the next steps. This could be seeking approval for a further consultation, modifications or referendum, depending on the outcomes of the examination.

### **7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	A Neighbourhood Development Plan, once made will be part of the Development Plan for Maidstone, directly impacting the Corporate	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

	Priorities through its consideration when determining planning applications in the plan area.	
<b>Risk Management</b>	There have been considerable concerns raised in relation to the content and policies in the Plan. The Examiner will consider whether the plan is appropriate and legally compliant.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Financial</b>	The cost of the Examination can be covered within the existing funds available.	Mark Green, Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	The Examination Hearing was covered by existing staff and has no wider implications.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Legal</b>	There are no legal implications arising from this report.	Kate Jardine, Team Leader (Planning) Mid Kent Legal Services
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	The needs of different groups should be considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Parish Council during the evolution of the plan. Any issues in relation to this will be considered by the Examiner.	Anna Collier, Policy & Information Manager
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	The plan should have regard to sustainability and the natural environment as part of its evolution. The approach will be tested as part of the examination of the plan.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Community Safety</b>	N/A	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	The Plan's consideration of the Gypsy & Traveller Community and restriction on allocation of sites to meet need is a potentially difficult issue which the Examiner will need to consider. If the Plan is not considered to be legally compliant it will not be	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

	successful at Examination.	
<b>Procurement</b>	There are no further procurement considerations at this time.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development & Mark Green, Section 151 Officer
<b>Asset Management</b>	N/A	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

**8. REPORT APPENDICES**

Appendix A: Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan Hearing Agenda and Questions.

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**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There are none

**Agenda**

**Headcorn Neighbourhood Development Plan – Examination**

**Hearing**

**Commencing 18<sup>th</sup> October 2016 at 10:00am**

**At  
The Village Hall  
Church Lane  
Headcorn  
Kent  
TN27 9NR**

**Independent Examiner  
Jeremy J Edge BSc FRICS MRTPI**

## Agenda

### Headcorn Neighbourhood Development Plan Examination

- 1) Introductions and welcome
- 2) Hearing Procedure
- 3) Questions

#### Shared Vision

Q1. The NPPG (at Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 41-001-20140306), advises that Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community where the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area. Does the draft HNDP represent a "shared vision" of the future of Headcorn as identified in the NPPF at paragraph 183 of the NPPF and the NPPG?

Q2. 19<sup>th</sup> March 2010, Maidstone Borough Council designated Headcorn together with certain other settlements, as Rural Service Centres (RSC). Is this designation relevant, if at all, in connection with extant planning policy? Does this designation carry any weight for development management purposes?

#### Water management and dealing with the risk of flooding.

Q3. Has there been further Flood Risk Assessment to alter or augment the advice within Maidstone BC's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, (SFRA) May 2008 in the context of Policy HNP3?

Q4. The SFRA is said to be an evolving document. When published, the guidance referred for the need for sequential testing, the use of SUDs as a mitigation measure and for proposals for development in Flood Risk Zones 2 and 3 to be accompanied by Flood Risk Assessments. To what extent is the prohibition of development in Flood Zones 2 and 3 in the HNDP compatible with the SFRA May 2008 assessment?

Q5. Should the use of flood risk mitigation by SUDs be included in Policy HDNP3 and if so might this affect the housing delivery policies?

Q6. What progress if any has been made between the authorities in seeking to develop a waste water solution to existing issues in Headcorn? If progress been made, how might this alter Southern Water's Regulation 16 representations?

Q7. To what extent should the Regulation 16 representations made by Southern Water be reflected in the draft policies HNP3, HNP11 and HNP27 of the draft neighbourhood plan?

Q8. If the policy amendments proposed by Southern Water were to be adopted, would this overcome Southern Water's contention that as drafted, the Plan fails to meet the basic conditions test?

## Local Green Spaces

Q9. Local Green Spaces (LGS) are referred to in draft policy HNPP4 and a plan identifying these is provided in Figure 18. However, there is no express LGS policy, or justification for each component of LGS, in the draft NDP. Should there be a LGS policy in the Plan?

Q10. If so, is there evidence sufficient to justify LGS designation in accordance with NPPF guidance at paragraph 77?<sup>1</sup>

## Housing Policies

**Housing Need** - The NPPG advises (at paragraph: 040 Reference ID: 3-040-20140306) that where “*..a neighbourhood plan comes forward before an up to date Local Plan is in place, the local planning authority should work constructively with a qualifying body to enable a neighbourhood plan to make timely progress and to share evidence used to prepare their plan. Neighbourhood plans should deliver against the objectively assessed evidence of needs.*”

Q11. To what extent should the Headcorn evidence of need be regarded as being an “objective assessment of need” (OAN) and why?

Q12. Is there common ground between the Borough Council and Parish Council regarding the extent to which Headcorn may have delivered a previous over-supply of housing, in relation to need in previous years? If so, has this been assessed in the draft Headcorn NDP?

## Housing Supply

Q13. In relation to draft Policy HNPP6 is there sufficient reason, related to the provision of sustainable development in Headcorn, to limit development to 30 dwellings on any one large site? How can this policy element be reconciled with the third of the core planning principles in the NPPF at paragraph 17 which states:

- *proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs. Every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth. Plans should take account of market signals, such as land prices and housing affordability, and set out a clear strategy for allocating sufficient land which is suitable for development in their area, taking account of the needs of the residential and business communities;*

Q14. Policy HNPP7 seeks to limit housing development other than micro development being development consisting of up to two dwellings, to 45 dwellings in the period up to 2026 and a further 45 dwellings between 2027 and 2031. Notwithstanding the opportunity to review the phased supply of housing in the parish, does

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<sup>1</sup> 77 The Local Green Space designation will not be appropriate for most green areas or open space. The designation should only be used:

- where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

this draft policy offer sufficient flexibility in the event that housing supply fails to be delivered in the early part of the Plan period?

Q15. How would this policy satisfy the expectations of the NPPF at paragraph 17, core planning principles, to proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes the country needs?

Q16. Is there express justification in the NPPF or adopted local planning policy to support housing policy which constrains housing delivery?

Q17. Is the density restriction in draft Policy HNDP13, no greater than 30 dpha, appropriate in the context of NPPF paragraph 47, in terms of boosting significantly the supply of housing land and ensuring choice and competition in the market for land?

### **Affordable homes**

Q18. Maidstone Borough Council's adopted affordable housing policy is contained within the Affordable Housing Development Plan Document (DPD), December 2006. Policy AH 1, states that on sites of 15 units or more, or 0.5 ha and greater, the Council will seek 40% of the dwellings to be affordable dwellings, other than in exceptional circumstances and on allocated greenfield sites, the Council may seek more than 40%. In relation to draft Policy HNP9, would a target rate of only 20% affordable housing in Larger Village Developments on sites delivering in excess of 15 dwellings, or being more than 0.5 ha in size be compatible with meeting the Basic Conditions?

### **School site expansion**

Q19. Does the draft NP adequately reflect existing planning permissions for development and related infrastructure improvements, such as for example the need for school provision associated with the development of 220 dwellings at Ulcombe Road permitted in 2015?

Q20. Draft Policy HDNP11, provides for preconditions to be met in relation to the village sewer system and school expansion. In relation to school expansion is there agreement with Kent County Council that the exiting Headcorn Primary School be expanded on its present site to meet future need? Does the education authority support the land identified in HNDP, figure 26? If so, is the land sufficient and capable of being delivered?

Q21. In other circumstances within the County, does the education authority provide temporary education facilities to meet need for primary school provision and would this be a feasible and realistic solution at Headcorn? Were this to be the case would the Education Authority expect the delivery of permanent school expansion to be a precondition before either Small Village Developments or Larger Village Developments as defined in Policy HNDP6, be granted planning permission?

### **Employment development**

Q21. Draft Policy HNP21 seeks to promote employment development at Barradale Farm during the Plan period (2011-2031) with planning permission for up to an additional 5500m<sup>2</sup> of B1; B2 and B8 development. Would it be too prescriptive to limited development of individual units to no more than 500m<sup>2</sup> each? What evidence exists that would justify this restriction? Would such a policy restriction be consistent with NPPF Core Principles contained in paragraph 17?

4) Any other business

5) Close of Hearing.

# Agenda Item 19

## **Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee**

**8 November 2016**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**Yes**

### **Local Plan Examination Update**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Cheryl Parks, Project Manager Local Plan
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards

#### **This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. This report makes no recommendations and is purely provided as information to update the Committee on progress with the examination of the Local Plan.

#### **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all -
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough – The Local Plan, once adopted will assist the Council with meeting its strategic objectives and corporate objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan, complimenting other Council strategies and plans.

#### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	8 November 2016

# Local Plan Examination Update

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report makes no recommendations and is purely provided as information to update the Committee on progress with the examination of the Local Plan.
- 1.2 Hearings commenced on 4 October 2016 and are scheduled to be completed on 1 December 2016.

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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Committee has considered the Local Plan in a number of its formative stages, including making recommendations to Council regarding its publication and submission to the Secretary of State earlier this year.
- 2.2 The Committee has been further updated regarding the organisation of the examination and the appointment of the Inspector to examine the plan.
- 2.3 Examination Hearings commenced on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2016. Prior to commencement the Inspector issued an agenda and questions for each session, to which responses were invited. The Council submitted a series of responses to aid discussion during each of the sessions, as did a number of the participants of the hearings.
- 2.4 All of the information has been uploaded to the Council's website, along with documents and other information relating to matters discussed at the hearings. The support of the web team with the uploading of documentation has been greatly appreciated. Following a few technical hiccups on days 1 and 2, the new webcasting system has also been used to allow those unable to attend the hearings to see what was discussed.
- 2.5 There has been significant media interest with journalists from both the Kent Messenger and Downs Mail in attendance as well as a television crew from Meridian News. There has also been considerable interest from the public with an audience present in every session to date.
- 2.6 The sessions completed during October have focussed primarily on strategic matters. Session one considered Legal Compliance and Duty to Cooperate before moving on to housing needs in the afternoon.
- 2.7 The debate that ensued was particularly interesting to observe with parties arguing that the figure was too high. This contrasted significantly with the arguments of the following morning (Session 2) where the development industry and the Home Builders Federation were arguing for a higher figure to accommodate both overspill from London, and also to increase affordability.

- 2.8 Later sessions considered strategic elements of housing supply including windfalls, and broad locations, as well as the strategic development underway in the south-east of Maidstone. Later sessions (in November) will consider in more detail the allocated sites as well as hearing from landowners and agents who are promoting sites not currently allocated in the submitted plan.
- 2.9 There was a helpful “workshop” session on the third morning between the Council, Kent County Council Highways and Highways England to consider all the recently completed highways and transport evidence. The Inspector will use the discussions to assist in his deliberations and in his questioning for the later transport and infrastructure sessions.
- 2.10 As a result of the hearings concluded to date the Inspector has issued a series of actions for participants to which specific parties have been asked to respond.
- 2.11 The examination is now in a period of recess with the remaining sessions commencing on Tuesday 8 November. Matters to be considered in these sessions are relating to Rural Service Centres and Larger Villages, Transport and Infrastructure and Gypsy & Traveller issues amongst others.
- 2.12 A further update is scheduled to be provided to the Committee in January 2017 by which time officers may have interim conclusions from The Inspector.

**3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress made to date with the examination hearings and the further update to be provided in January 2017.

**4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress made to date with the examination hearings and further update as set out in 3.1 above.

**5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The Local Plan is one of the key strategies that will promote delivery of the Council’s Vision, Mission, Priorities and Objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

<b>Risk Management</b>	There is a small risk relating to the outcome of the Local Plan examination, however officers are confident that the supporting evidence for the Local Plan justifies the approach. The mandate of Council was sought prior to submission.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Financial</b>	The Council will incur significant expenditure in the current financial year on the Local Plan examination and funds have been set aside to cover the likely costs. A detailed profile of projected costs has been drawn up and will be closely scrutinised and monitored. Securing the use of the Town Hall as opposed to an external venue has been helpful in keeping estimated expenditure lower than initial budget forecasts. Some additional, unplanned, expenditure will be incurred to facilitate the webcasting of all hearing sessions.	Mark Green, Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	The Spatial Policy Team is sufficiently staffed to manage the examination. A detailed plan has been prepared in relation to presenting topics at the examination, making use of officers from Development Management, and also limited use of specialist consultants to defend key pieces of work.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Legal</b>	There are no legal implications arising from this report.	Kate Jardine, Team Leader (Planning), Mid-Kent Legal Services
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	An EQIA was undertaken to support the Publication of the Local Plan, and this will be reviewed prior to the commencement of the examination. Any specific needs of those wishing to take part in	Anna Collier, Policy & Information Manager

	the process will be accommodated wherever possible. The webcasting of the sessions assists in reaching out to those unable to attend.	
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	The Local Plan is founded on the principles of sustainability and sustainable development, and this is a golden thread that runs through the plan and supporting evidence. Specific evidence relating to environmental matters supports the Local Plan and is available as part of the evidence library.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Community Safety</b>	There are no specific impacts or issues.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	There are no specific impacts or issues.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Procurement</b>	All procurement regulations have been met and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules followed in the preparatory work for the Local Plan and its evidence.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development & Mark Green, Section 151 Officer
<b>Asset Management</b>	There are no specific impacts or issues.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

## 6. REPORT APPENDICES

None

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## 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

<b>Strategic Planning, Sustainability &amp; Transportation Committee</b>	<b>8 November 2016</b>
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Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?	<b>Yes</b>
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## Maidstone Transport Operators Group

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Jennie Ward, Transport Planner, Spatial Policy
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. That the Committee instruct Maidstone Borough Council Officers to set up the first meeting of the Group, following the resolutions of the 8<sup>th</sup> March SPS&T Committee and the scope and attendance contained within this report. Members are also asked to nominate representative(s) to the Group

**This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all.
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough.

The Maidstone Transport Operators Group would seek to improve transport provision within the borough which will support the adopted Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy. The Group will focus on strategic transport issues.

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	8 November 2016

# Maidstone Transport Operators Group

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers the establishment of the Maidstone Transport Operators Group. Information is provided regarding the role of the group, as well as possible attendees. The committee is asked to agree to the setting up of the first meeting of the group per the preferred option set out in Section 4 of this report.
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the 8 March 2016 Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation (SPS&T) Committee, the establishment of a Maidstone Transport Operators Group was considered.
- 2.2 The Committee initially considered the re-establishment of the Maidstone Transport Users Group, which had regard to day to day operational issues and provided a link between the Parish Councils and the Service Operators.
- 2.3 During the March SPS&T Committee meeting the following issues were raised in regards to a potential transport group:
- That clear Terms of Reference would be needed for the Group;
  - The Group should not discuss specific service issues and should focus on strategic public transport issues;
  - The suggested membership of the Group should not be weighted in favour of parish councils;
  - That bus service operators should be included as members;
  - Clear lines of communication for the Group would be required; and
  - Duplication of work carried out by other Groups should be avoided.
- 2.4 It was therefore concluded that the group should be a Transport Operators Group as opposed to a Transport Users Group and that service users would be represented by an attendee from the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC). It was resolved that a Maidstone Transport Operators Group be established, as well as other matters regarding the operation of the group<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.5 It is apparent that the group would provide a forum for the key public transport operators in Maidstone to meet and discuss strategic issues which may impact upon all of their services. Other groups do not consider both bus and rail services together at this strategic level.
- 2.6 However, other groups consider these modes individually but primarily focus on more detailed, day to day issues. The groups are:
- Kent Community Rail Partnership;
  - Quality Bus Partnership; or
-

- South East Rail Passenger Group.
- 2.7 In respect of attendance, the Committee is asked to consider who would be represented on the Group. Invitations to establish the membership of the Maidstone Transport Operators Group would be extended to the following, in addition to appointed Maidstone Councillors:

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Initial Point of Contact</b>	<b>Interest in Group</b>
Maidstone Borough Council Officers	Andrew Thompson	To run the Group on a quarterly basis
Kent County Council Officers	Stephen Pay	Impact of decisions from the perspective of the Highway Authority
Arriva	Emma Taylor	To represent the major bus operator in Maidstone and coordinate with Southeastern
NuVenture	Norman Kemp	To represent one of the smaller bus operators in Maidstone and coordinate with Southeastern
Southeastern Rail	Nina Peak	To represent the rail operator in Maidstone and coordinate with bus operators
Highways England	Kevin Bown	Impact of strategic decisions on the motorway and trunk road network
1 representative from KALC	Geraldine Brown	Representing Service Users

- 2.8 It has also been recommended by Stephen Pay of Kent County Council that the local NHS Trust be invited to attend.
- 2.9 The Group would be set up and run by Maidstone Borough Council Officers from Planning Policy with support from Democratic Services. Quarterly reports to the SPS&T Committee from the Maidstone Transport Operators Group would be provided. The reports would be prepared by Maidstone Borough Council Officers.
- 2.10 For each meeting two days of time would be required from a Planning Policy Officer at a cost of £280 (assuming an hourly rate of £20) for preparatory work, to attend the meeting, to write up meeting minutes and to address follow up actions. Half a day's support would also be required from Democratic Services (£70). The total cost of each meeting to Maidstone Borough Council would therefore be £350.

### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 There are two options available to Members. Firstly, the Maidstone Transport Users Group could be established with clear Terms of Reference

agreed at the first meeting to include the appointment of a Maidstone Borough Councillor as Chairman of the Group. This would provide a quarterly forum where the key public transport operators in Maidstone could meet and discuss strategic issues which may impact upon all of their services. In this option, Members are also asked to nominate representative(s) to the Group

3.2 Alternatively, strategic transport issues, covering both buses and rail, could be dealt with at one of the existing groups attended by Services Operators and Maidstone Borough Council Officers / Councillors namely:

- Kent Community Rail Partnership;
- Quality Bus Partnership; or
- South East Rail Passenger Group.

3.3 There is a possibility that the membership and terms of reference of one of the above listed Groups could be altered to cover both bus and rail services.

#### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The preferred option is for Members of the Committee to instruct Maidstone Borough Council Officers to set up the first meeting of the Group, following the resolutions of the 8<sup>th</sup> March SPS&T Committee and the scope and attendance contained within this report. Members are also asked to nominate representative(s) to the Group.

4.2 This option would help to improve the provision of public transport services in the borough as well as supporting the Maidstone Borough Integrated Transport Strategy.

#### **5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

5.1 Should the Committee decide to instruct Maidstone Borough Council Officers to set up the first meeting of the Group, those organisations (via the initial point of contact) listed in this report, as well as potentially the local NHS Trust will be contacted and the first meeting will be arranged.

#### **6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The Maidstone Transport Operators Group will seek to improve transport provision within the borough which will	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development

	help to support the Integrated Transport Strategy. The Group will focus on strategic transport issues.	
<b>Risk Management</b>	The formation of the Maidstone Transport Operators Group was a recommendation for the SPS&T Committee to consider following a Scrutiny Review of Transport in Maidstone during 2014/15.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
<b>Financial</b>	The cost of each meeting of the Group will be £350 to Maidstone Borough Council. This will be met within existing resources.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	A Maidstone Borough Council Officer from the Planning Policy team will be instructed to set up and attend the Group with support from Democratic Services. Approximately 2.5 days of staff time will be required for each meeting.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
<b>Legal</b>	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Kate Jardine Team Leader Planning Mid Kent Legal Services
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	The Maidstone Transport Operators Group will take into account the needs of all user groups and will help to improve access to public transport services for all	Anna Collier Policy & Information Manager
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	The Maidstone Transport Operators Group will help to promote public transport travel	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
<b>Community Safety</b>	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
<b>Procurement</b>	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development

<b>Asset Management</b>	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
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**7. REPORT APPENDICES**

**Strategic Planning,  
Sustainability and  
Transportation Committee**

**8 November 2016**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**Yes**

**Response to Regulation 18 Consultation on the Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Mark Egerton, Planning Policy Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. That the Committee agrees the formal response to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation

**This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

This report has regard to strategic proposals by an adjoining authority that may impact on the road network, residential amenity and employment in Maidstone Borough

**Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	8 <sup>th</sup> November 2016

# Response to Regulation 18 Consultation on the Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Further to the informative report presented to the 11th October 2016 committee, this report provides a proposed response to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council ("TMBC") in respect of its Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation. The Committee is asked to approve the proposed response in order that it may be submitted by the 25th November 2016 deadline.
- 

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 TMBC is producing a new Local Plan, to replace its current suite of Local Plan documents. The new Local Plan will have a time horizon up to 2031.
- 2.2 On 30th September 2016 TMBC published the first stage of its new Local Plan "The Way Forward" for public consultation.
- 2.3 This early stage consultation sets out the issues that need to be addressed by TMBC in its forthcoming Local Plan and a potential development strategy for the way forward, as well as associated technical assessments. It follows a 'call for sites' exercise, which took place between April 2014 and 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 and received over 250 submissions. Following this consultation, TMBC's Local Plan timetable also proposes consultation in April 2017 on its 'Preferred Option'. The next formal consultation (Regulation 19) will then be on the proposed submission version of the Local Plan, which is due to take place in September 2017.
- 2.4 On 11th October 2016, an informative report was presented to the Committee to draw attention to this early stage consultation.
- 2.5 Officers have now considered TMBC's proposals. The stated purpose of the consultation is:
- "1. To identify the challenges that the Local Plan needs to address in terms of housing need, economic development, habitat protection etc.  
2. To identify a potential strategy to respond to these challenges  
3. Overall, to engage local people, groups, businesses and others in those choices"
- 2.6 The consultation document includes the following key points:
- A requirement to meet a housing need of 13,920, or 696 homes per year – an additional 6,000 homes overall once existing planning permissions and known sites are taken into consideration
  - A need to find up to 33 hectares of employment land
  - A need to work out 'a strategy for accommodating growth that could consider land adjacent to a range of settlements (including urban

areas), look at land in the least constrained parts of the borough, or land close to transport hubs, a mixed portfolio of sites both big and small, and consider a sustainable level of growth to facilitate improvements to infrastructure...'

- A map providing a potential development strategy, attached as Appendix A of this report.

2.7 The potential strategy includes a number of sites that are near to the border with Maidstone Borough, including 'South Aylesford and Ditton'. The accompanying text for this area states:

"The area, broadly from the A20, south and eastwards across Hermitage Lane to Kiln Barn Lane, is worthy of further consideration as a strategic development opportunity. It includes land currently farmed and part of the East Malling Trust land. This is an area that has historically provided some open separation between communities in the borough and Maidstone, but is otherwise relatively free of land use planning constraints. Development in Maidstone Borough has continued in a piecemeal form up to the borough boundary and along Hermitage Lane.

There is an opportunity here to consider a strategic approach to housing provision and some employment development of a scale that could provide longer term solutions to transport challenges in the vicinity. It would need a collaborative approach between landowners otherwise the essential purpose would be lost. A new road could link the south side of the South Aylesford Business Park across Hermitage Lane to the A20 and M20 to provide a highway solution that could bring significant benefit. This will need careful testing. There may also be an opportunity to improve Barming railway station and to integrate new education and health care facilities."

- 2.8 The consultation also provides final assessment of TMBC's call for sites. While this has informed the potential development strategy, TMBC have stated that this does not represent an assessment of whether sites will be allocated for future uses in the new Local Plan and that yields are a simple overall estimation at an indicative density of 30 dwellings per hectare rather than considering local policy considerations, character and the need for supporting infrastructure.
- 2.9 Excluding potential residential development at East Malling Research and excluding potential employment uses, 8 (eight) sites are located in the vicinity of Hermitage Lane, producing a yield of 2,730 residential units.
- 2.10 Having considered comments from Members, officers have produced a proposed response to the consultation expressing significant concerns regarding the proposals. This is attached as Appendix B.
- 2.11 Given the limited detail provided in the consultation, the response seeks to focus on key concerns associated with the location of new development near to Maidstone Borough. It also considers the current issues in this area, with a focus on current transport problems and the potential, additional negative impact of the proposed future development. The response also highlights concerns regarding air quality and open space as examples of matters requiring detailed consideration.

- 2.12 It is apparent that some of the concerns, particularly transport related issues, will also require Kent County Council to take ownership and responsibility to ensure appropriate resolution and mitigation. The response also highlights this issue.
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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 There are two options available to Members. Firstly, the Council could send a formal response to the consultation (with any amendments deemed necessary by this Committee).
- 3.2 Secondly, Members could choose not to make a formal response to the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation.
- 3.3 Choosing to make a response will help ensure that Maidstone Borough Council's comments and concerns are provided to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council at an early stage in order that they may be considered as its Local Plan is produced. If no formal representation is made, this would result in a missed opportunity for the Council to set out its position and concerns in respect of this important stage of Local Plan production for a neighbouring local planning authority.
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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 As set out above, the preferred option is for the Council to submit a formal response to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council consultation (with any amendments deemed necessary by this Committee) as set out in paragraph 3.1 above. This will help ensure that Maidstone Borough Council's comments and concerns are provided to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council at an early stage in order that they may be considered as its draft Local Plan is prepared.
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### **5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 5.1 If the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee agrees a proposed response, this will be submitted to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council by the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016 consultation deadline.
- 5.2 Regulation 18 is the first formal Local Plan consultation stage. Following this, the next formal consultation (Regulation 19) will be on the proposed submission version of the Local Plan, which is due to take place in September 2017. However, Tonbridge and Malling's Local Plan timetable also proposes consultation in April 2017 on its 'Preferred Option'.

5.3 Officers will use opportunities for formal and informal consultation with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to ensure this Council's views are expressed. The Committee will be informed as key proposals emerge.

## 6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	This report has regard to strategic proposals by an adjoining authority that may impact on the road network, residential amenity and employment in Maidstone Borough	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
<b>Risk Management</b>	The Council is complying with the duty to co-operate with Tonbridge and Malling Council	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
<b>Financial</b>	No financial implications arising from this report	Mark Green, Section 151 Officer and Finance Team
<b>Staffing</b>	No staffing implications. This will be managed with existing staffing resources.	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
<b>Legal</b>	Regulatory processes and statutory requirements are currently being followed in respect of this matter.	Kate Jardine, Team Leader (Planning), Mid-Kent Legal Services
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	The consultation proposals are not detailed enough to raise any concerns	Anna Collier, Policy and Information Manager
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	Regulatory processes in respect of this matter have been followed	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
<b>Community Safety</b>	No implications	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	The consultation proposals are not detailed enough to raise any concerns	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)

		Development)
<b>Procurement</b>	No implications	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)
<b>Asset Management</b>	No implications	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning and Development)

## **7. REPORT APPENDICES**

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

- Appendix A: Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan Regulation 18 Potential Development Strategy – September 2016
- Appendix B: Maidstone Borough Council response to Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation

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## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

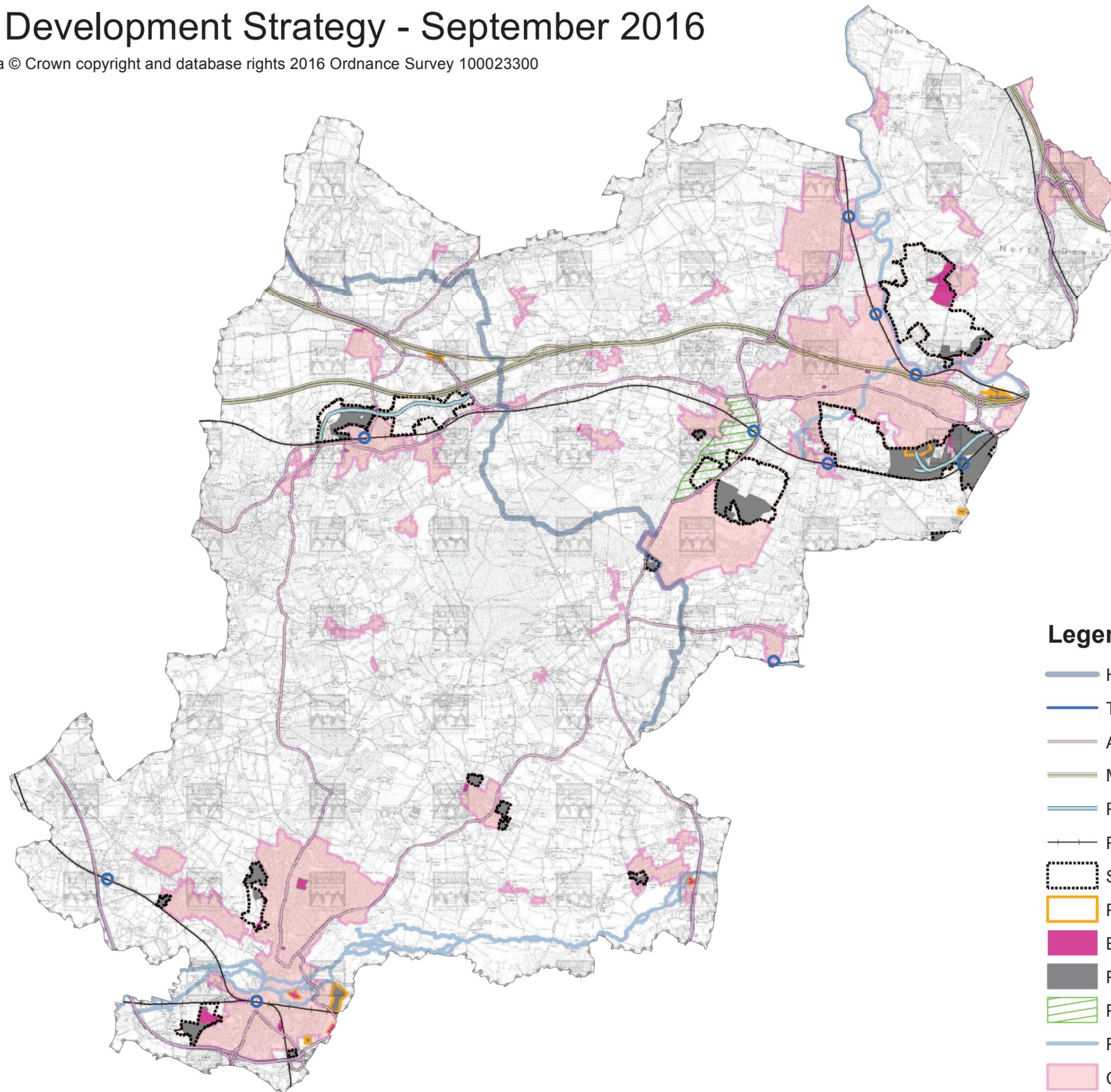
None

# Potential Development Strategy - September 2016

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## Legend

- Housing Market Area
- Train stations
- A Roads
- Motorways
- Potential new road
- Railway lines
- - - Site outlines
- Potential employment/other site outlines
- Building Blocks
- Potential developable areas
- ▨ Potential addition to Green Belt
- River Medway
- Confines of built up areas

Ian Bailey  
Planning Policy Manager  
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council  
Gibson Building  
Gibson Drive  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
Kent, ME19 4LZ

Date: **INSERT DATE**

My Ref: T&MReg18

Your Ref:

Dear Mr Bailey

**Re: Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation**

I refer to the above consultation and wish to make the following representations on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council.

Whilst it is acknowledged that Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council have a requirement to meet identified needs, it is noted that these Local Plan proposals could have a significant impact on Maidstone Borough residents and businesses. Residents in Maidstone Borough have contacted Maidstone Borough Council to express their grave concerns regarding these proposals.

Should Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council proceed with its proposed development strategy, mitigating transport impacts on already busy routes into Maidstone will be vital, including the A20, Hermitage Lane and the A26, the latter having already been subject to a significant increase in traffic following developments at Kings Hill.

It is noted that there are a number of 'potential developable areas' situated near to the border with Maidstone Borough. In particular the 'South Aylesford and Ditton' area is proposed for significant new residential and employment development. This area already suffers from severe traffic congestion at peak times and congestion in non-peak times and the proposed developments will potentially make the situation much worse. There are also significant concerns around air quality and the associated impact of new development in this regard.

In their current form, the proposals could also allow settlements to coalesce with Maidstone. Provision of open space as part of any development, in order to address this issue should therefore be a priority.

Proposals for this part of the borough should therefore include measures to deal with congestion, provision of open space and to address air quality issues. Such measures should consider the location of current and future communities and transport routes, rather than borough boundaries. In particular, the current problems around Hermitage Lane and the A20 must be addressed and the proposal to investigate a longer term solution to transport challenges in the vicinity is welcomed. Focus in this regard should be upon an

alternative transport route that draws road traffic away from this part of the A20 and Hermitage Lane in particular, whilst having regard to mitigating congestion and improving traffic flows on the wider road network in the area. Focus should also be on any potential improvements to public transport that could address this issue.

My officers look forward to working constructively with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to consider these matters in the future and establish mutually acceptable solutions, through the duty to co-operate. We also look forward to working jointly with Kent County Council given that there are clearly matters that fall within their remit and responsibility.

We also look forward to providing comments when further details of the Local Plan proposals become known.

Yours sincerely