

AGENDA

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING



Date: Wednesday 6 July 2016

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,
Maidstone

Membership:

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

Page No.

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

Continued Over/:

Issued on Tuesday 28 June 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 Tessa Ware on 01622 602621**. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk

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

4. Notification of Visiting Members
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers
6. Disclosures of Lobbying
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information
8. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2016 1 - 10
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)
10. Questions and answer session for members of the public
11. Committee Work Programme 11 - 13
For noting.
12. Report of the Head of Planning and Development - Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy and Maidstone Walking and Cycling Strategy 14 - 154

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14 JUNE 2016

Present: Councillor D Burton (Chairman), and Councillors English, Mrs Grigg, D Mortimer, Munford, Prendergast, Springett, de Wiggondene and Wilby

Also Present: Councillors Adkinson, Burton, Clark, Garten and Harper

7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

8. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members.

9. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that, in his opinion, an Urgent Update on the Committee's Work Programme should be taken as an urgent item as it contained information relating to the Committee's commitments for the coming months.

He also stated that it had been requested by Councillor Springett that the Committee receive a report on Planning Enforcement and another report on Retrospective Planning Applications. Scoping work with Officers will take place and dates for receiving these reports will be arranged and notified to the Committee.

There is also an update report on the Brunswick Street Car Park to come to the Committee at a date in the future to be arranged.

This was noted by the Committee.

10. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted the following Visiting Members were in attendance:

Councillor Adkinson to speak on Item 12
Councillor M Burton – observing
Councillor Clark to speak on Item 12
Councillor Garten to speak on Item 15
Councillor Harper to speak on Item 12.

11. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Garten declared he used to be a Parish Councillor of Broomfield and Kingswood and that he was also a resident in this parish.

Councillor Prendergast declared she had in the past been a member of the Maidstone Campaign for the Protection of Rural England but had not taken part in its discussions on the Integrated Transport Strategy.

Councillor English declared he was the Secretary of Hayle Place Nature Reserve and had made comments on the Integrated Transport Strategy but had not take part in any discussions.

Councillor Harper declared he was Chairman of the Maidstone Cycling Campaign Forum.

Councillor Clark declared he lived in Boughton Lane.

All Councillors declaring an interest considered their interests were not Other Significant Interests and would remain in the meeting and take part in the discussions or address the Committee, whichever was relevant.

12. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

It was noted that all Councillors declared they had been lobbied on the Land South of Cripple Street, Maidstone as an issue in the Integrated Transport Strategy.

Councillor English declared he had been lobbied on issues regarding the Walking and Cycling Strategy and the responses to Kent County Council's Active Travel Strategy.

Councillor Prendergast declared she had been lobbied on the Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan.

13. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED:

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

14. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 18 APRIL 2016

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 MAY 2016

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

17. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Sean Carter Chairman of the North Loose Residents Association, Planning Committee addressed the Committee to ask his question:

"Following the article in the Kent Messenger of 10 June showing traffic in Boughton Lane has increased by 53% in the last five years and 11% in the last year, which confirms Kent Highways view that the junction with the Loose Road is over capacity. Does Maidstone Borough Council now accept that allocating housing on the New Line Learning school site and playing fields in Boughton Lane is a mistake and should be withdrawn?"

The Chairman responded as follows:

"I can't comment specifically upon the statistics that you quote, I've not seen those. But what I would say to you is that any individual planning application that may come forward for that site would be considered on its own merits and it would also be considered upon what transport congestion mitigation measures are offered against that individual application, and if a suitable scheme of mitigation was brought forward it may well be considered favourably or it may well not and that will be a matter for the Planning Committee or future inspector to decide."

Mr Carter asked the following supplementary question:

"It should be noted that this junction was never included in the original Integrated Transport Strategy. At the request of Maidstone Borough Council, Mott MacDonald have now produced a report to try to find a solution for this junction. Maidstone Borough Council instructed Mott MacDonald to allow for new developments, mainly in the Sutton Road area, but made no mention of two allocated sites in Boughton Lane or development in Coxheath, Marden, Staplehurst or Boughton Monchelsea, all of which impact on this junction. This report was based on traffic figures provided by developers for the New Line Learning site. Can we be assured, that in the future, all instructions from Maidstone Borough Council planners to contractors, will take account of all factors concerning new developments, including neighbourhood planning groups, in the process?"

The Chairman responded as follows:

"I think there's two aspects to this. There's the inclusion of neighbourhood plan groups and I believe it would be our policy to furnish any consultants with a full suite of information, which would include neighbourhood planning documents as they are emerging. All of those documents and similar are published on our website and available, and I believe that consultants would have access to all of our information."

18. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT -
CONSIDERATION OF RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT
INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report. The Committee was informed, that as a result of consultation carried out on the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS), in conjunction with the Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation, between 5 February and 18 March 2016, a total of 84 representations were made from various interested parties. A schedule of representations was included in the report.

The main recommended change, agreed with Kent County Council (KCC), was that the Walking and Cycling Strategy be published and adopted as a standalone strategy separate from the ITS. It was reported that, if agreed, the amendments would be made to both documents and the revised documents presented to the Maidstone Joint Transport Board (JTB) at their next meeting in July. If agreed by JTB, the documents would then come back to this committee for final approval for adoption and published later in 2016.

It was confirmed that the ITS and the Walking and Cycling Strategy were in support of the allocations in the Maidstone Local Plan.

Councillors Harper, Adkinson and Clark addressed the Committee as Visiting Members.

The Committee was informed that the separation of the two documents related to reaching an agreement with Kent County Council (KCC) and to produce a joint ITS, which was an important document providing evidence for the Local Plan. The Committee was advised that it was common practice throughout the country for the two documents to be separate.

The Committee heard that references to the Walking and Cycling Strategy would remain in the ITS, with more detail included in the Walking and Cycling Strategy. The Committee was assured that the two documents would remain synergised.

The Committee was informed KCC undertook strategic VISUM modelling. In order to assess the likely impact of development and suggest mitigation it was necessary to carry out micro simulation modelling. KCC did not do this, leaving a gap in the data that Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) filled as it was faced with planning applications to consider which needed detailed highways mitigation. These studies were available to all Councillors on the MBC website.

It was confirmed that there was ongoing dialogue with the Maidstone Cycling Campaign Forum with officers from both KCC and MBC attending meetings of the forum.

In response to questions the Committee heard that:

- In the Local Plan, set out on pages 245-246, there was a detailed list of junction improvements. The gap in transport improvements at a detailed local level, as opposed to the VISUM modelling, which was a strategic level model, was dealt with through detailed junction capacity assessment work carried out for the Council by Mott MacDonald and Transport Assessments submitted by developers with planning applications. These addressed the cumulative impact of development on the local highway network. Where appropriate mitigation was justified and required, this was secured through Section 106 agreements with developers. MBC's strategy was focussed on junction improvements, which also helped public transport operators.
- The VISUM modelling carried out picked up transport movements between the RSCs and Maidstone town centre but did not pick up on journeys to other destinations outside the borough. At planning application stage developers were asked for s106 contributions for transport improvements such as increasing the frequency and ease of use of bus services serving the RSCs and improvements to train stations, for example, where this was proven necessary as mitigation.
- KCC's objections to the Local Plan and planning applications on transport reasons have been based on their VISUM modelling. MBC's research had involved more detailed research on the impact of developments on junctions. In response to KCC MBC had assembled micro modelling and established potential mitigation to congestion.
- MBC and KCC have secured £8.9m of Local Growth Fund 1 money for the improvement of 5 priority junctions which was approved by JTB in November 2015.
- Each transport assessment carried out by developers should take into account all development in the area when suggesting transport mitigation.

The Committee were reminded that the Inspector would decide if the Local Plan provided sufficient transport mitigation.

The Committee agreed to note the schedule of issues and responses to the ITS consultation and agreed the revised ITS and Walking and Cycling Strategy should come back to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee before going to JTB.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee note the schedule of issues and responses to the consultation on the Integrated Transport Strategy as set out in Appendix One.
2. That the Committee agree that revised versions of the Integrated Transport Strategy and separate Walking and Cycling Strategy be prepared and reported to a future meeting of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee, and then, if approved by this Committee, presented to the Maidstone Joint Transport Board recommending that the relevant Kent County Council Cabinet Member approve the Integrated Transport Strategy and separate Walking and Cycling Strategy.
3. That following the meeting of the Maidstone Joint Transport Board the 'final' versions of the documents will then be reported to this Committee for approval for publication.

Voting: For – 8 Against – 0 Abstentions – 1

19. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - RESPONSE TO KCC'S ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY CONSULTATION DRAFT

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report.

Members raised concerns regarding the translation of the aspirations into actions and delivery.

Concern was also raised regarding the promotion of active travel to the benefit of all sections of the community equally. The Committee agreed that solutions for accessibility to active travel should be provided.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee agree to the proposed response to the consultation set out in paragraphs 4.2.1 to 4.2.6 of the report and that it be forwarded to Kent County Council prior to the close of the consultation period on 13 July 2016, provided the following comments are included:

"Maidstone Borough Council consider Kent County Council's Active Travel Strategy to generally be a good document in terms of its aspirations. However, the Council would like to see more commitment to the actual delivery of Active Travel.

Furthermore, Maidstone Borough Council are pleased Kent County Council have, through its Equality Impact Assessment, identified shortfalls in its Active Travel Strategy. The Council strongly recommends that implementation measures in this strategy should actively seek to address the issues of inequality that have been identified."

Voting: For – 9 Against – 0 Abstentions – 0

20. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION BY KENT COUNTY COUNCIL ON FINAL REVIEW OF FUNDED BUS SERVICES

The Principal Planning Officer presented the report and pointed out the report was for the Committee to note as the consultation period had closed. MBC's response was attached to the report.

The Committee heard that a report had been printed in the Kent Messenger giving the wrong impression that all the proposals in the KCC document came from MBC. The Kent Messenger had been contacted and would be printing a correction in their next edition.

RESOLVED:

That the Maidstone Borough Council response to Kent County Council's Review of Funded Bus Services be noted.

21. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - BROOMFIELD AND KINGSWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Project Manager, Local Plan presented the report explaining the reason for the delay.

The Committee heard the examiner stated the plan did not meet the basic requirements and was contrary to adopted local plan policies ENV28 and H27, and there was a lack of evidence for the development proposals.

Councillor Garten addressed the Committee as a Visiting Member.

The Committee heard that the Broomfield and Kingswood neighbourhood plan did not accord with the adopted local plan. The Broomfield and Kingswood parish council were advised to make representations during the draft Local Plan consultation process for a change to the parish boundary. The parish council did not do this. The Committee were informed that the Inspector for the Maidstone Borough Local Plan may allow the parish council to make representations during the inspection hearings, but this was not definite.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee note the report of the Examiner of the Broomfield and Kingswood Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Voting: For – 9 Against – 0 Abstentions - 0

2. That the Committee agree not to move the Broomfield and Kingswood Neighbourhood Development Plan to referendum.

Voting: For – 8 Against – 0 Abstentions – 1

22. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - EXAMINATION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS FOR STAPLEHURST AND HEADCORN

The Project Manager, Local Plan, presented the report and explained the issues experienced with the Staplehurst and Headcorn neighbourhood plans.

Subsequent to the publication of the report Staplehurst parish council had appointed an alternative examiner for their neighbourhood plan, Mr D Stebbing. Mr Stebbing would commence the examination of the Staplehurst neighbourhood plan on 15 June 2016.

The Committee heard that Headcorn parish council were still to confirm their preferred examiner. Indications were that the parish council would prefer Mr Lockhart-Mummery, who had been advising KCC on transport issues in respect of the Local Plan. The parish council had been informed that MBC would object to Mr Lockhart-Mummery's appointment as examiner as it was considered by officers to be a conflict of interest on Mr Lockhart-Mummery's part. Planning Practice Guidance was clear that the appointment of an examiner should be made by the local authority, but with the parish council's agreement.

The Committee requested a further update on the situation regarding the Headcorn neighbourhood plan at their next meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the update on the Staplehurst and Headcorn neighbourhood plan be noted.
2. That a further update on the Headcorn neighbourhood plan be provided at the next meeting of the Committee.

23. ORAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - UPDATE ON THE MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN

The Head of Planning and Development provided the Committee with an oral update of the position of the local plan.

The Maidstone Borough Local Plan and accompanying documents were submitted on 20 May 2016. All documents were available to view on the MBC website under Planning.

An inspector had been appointed, Mr Robert Mellor. Mr Mellor was currently reading through all the documents and officers were awaiting his views on the topics to be examined. Mr Mellor may hold a pre-examination meeting to discuss the start and finish dates of the examination. Officers hoped to hear from him on this in the near future.

The two main outstanding documents were the Integrated Transport Strategy and the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, both of which were due to be reported to this Committee at their meeting in July 2016.

The Committee were informed that the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan was due to be adopted in July 2016. The repercussions of this on the local plan would be the requirement for mineral assessments to be carried out for development sites lying in identified mineral safeguarding areas and the mineral safeguarding areas detailed in the local plan.

The inspector had been informed and a joint position statement with KCC would be produced for the examination in public.

It was noted that once the local plan had been adopted policy documents on evolving landscape issues around the borough would be developed and presented to this Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee note the update on the local plan.

24. OUTSIDE BODIES UPDATES - VERBAL REPORTS

Councillor Burton provided an update on the Quality Bus Partnership and informed the Committee there were concerns raised by bus operators regarding the work on the Maidstone bridges gyratory system. However, since the work began they felt the issues were not as severe as they had envisaged.

Councillor Burton also reported that regular meetings had been arranged with Highways England however the meetings had focussed on operational and strategic issues and the purpose of these meetings needed to be clarified. He went on to report that the Bridges Gyratory and Tow Path Schemes had nothing to report.

Councillor English provided the Committee with an update on the Community Rail Partnership and the Medway Valley Line Liaison Group. He informed the Committee the two groups had focussed on the representations on the South Eastern Rail Franchise consultation. Councillor English confirmed that their representations were fully in accordance with the views of MBC.

Councillor English went on to inform the Committee that the Medway Valley Line Liaison Group had been working to secure the adoption of stations along the line. It was confirmed that Councillor Pickett, with the community in the Bridge Ward, had been investigating the adoption of the Maidstone Barracks station.

25. DURATION OF MEETING

6:30pm to 8:43pm



⇒ **Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee Work Programme**

Democratic Services Team
E: democraticservices@maidstone.gov.uk

Publication Date:

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the decisions to be taken by the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee of Maidstone Borough Council on a rolling basis. This document will be published as updated with new decisions required to be made.

DECISIONS WHICH COMMITTEES INTEND TO MAKE IN PRIVATE

The Committee hereby gives notice that it intends to meet in private after its public meeting to consider reports and/or appendices which contain exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The private meeting of any Committee is open only to Committee Members, other Councillors and Council officers.

Reports and/or appendices to decisions which Committee will take at their private meetings are indicated in the list below, with the reasons for the decision being made in private. Any person is able to make representations to the Committee if he/she believes the decision should instead be made in the public part of that Committee meeting. If you want to make such representations, please email committeeservices@maidstone.gov.uk. You will then be sent a response in reply to your representations. Both your representations and the Committee's response will be published on the Council's website at least 5 working days before the Committee meeting.

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ACCESS TO COMMITTEE REPORTS

Reports to be considered at any of the Committee's public meetings will be available on the Council's website (www.maidstone.gov.uk) a minimum of 5 working days before the meeting.

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?

The Council actively encourages people to express their views on decisions it plans to make. This can be done by writing directly to the appropriate Officer or to the relevant Chairman of a Committee.

Alternatively, you can submit a question or make a statement to the Committee by emailing tessaware@maidstone.gov.uk, provided it is relevant to their terms of reference. All questions or requests to make a statement at a Committee meeting must be received by 5pm one clear working day prior to the meeting.

Date of Meeting	Title of Report and Brief Summary:	Contact Officer:	Public or Private (if Private the reason why)	Content
6 July	Integrated Transport Strategy – before it goes to JTP	TBC	Public	Approval of the two strategies
12 July	Green and blue Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Framework	Chris Smith	Public	Adoption of GBIS and approval of Delivery Framework
12 July	CIL Draft Charging Schedule and Reg 123 List	Andrew Thompson	Public	Approval for consultation
12 July	Oral update on Staplehurst and Headcorn Neighbourhood Plans	Cheryl Parks	Public	
13 September	Integrated Transport Strategy and Walking and Cycling Strategy	TBC	Public	Adoption of the two strategies
13 September	Changes to National policy relating to Plan Making	TBC	Public	Summary update of Policy and Legislative changes and the impact on plan making
11 October	CIL Draft Charging Schedule and Reg 123 List	Andrew Thompson	Public	Responses to consultation; proposed changes ; recommendation to Council re submission of CIL for examination
11 October	Finance and Resources	Tay Arnold	Public	Summary update report on the wider Planning Department finance and resource position (deferred from 15/16)
8 November	CIL Governance structure	Andrew Thompson	Public	Approval of a governance structure and management arrangements
8 November	Local Plan examination update	TBA	Public	Verbal update on the examination
TBC	Update on Housing and Planning Act			
TBC	Planning Service Review			
TBC	Planning Support Service options			
Ad hoc	Neighbourhood Plans	Cheryl Parks	Public	Consultation responses; examiner reports; referendum approvals; all as required.

Agenda Item 12

Strategic Planning Sustainability & Transportation Committee		06/07/2016
Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?		Yes

Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy and Maidstone Walking and Cycling Strategy

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning Sustainability & Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Steve Clarke: Principal Planning Officer Spatial Policy
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. Councillors agree the revised draft of the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy and Maidstone Walking and Cycling Strategy documents for consideration by the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board at its meeting on 13 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 -

The Integrated Transport Strategy and the Walking and Cycling Strategy play a key role in delivering a package of sustainable transport measures in support of the allocations set out in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and the need to mitigate the transport impact of planned development and deliver modal shift away from reliance on the use of the private car with other potential benefits such as improved public transport networks and improved air quality.

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning Sustainability & Transportation Committee	06/07/2016

Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy and Maidstone Walking and Cycling Strategy

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers revised versions of the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) 2011-2031 and the Maidstone Walking and Cycling Strategy (WCS) 2011-2031. Copies of the documents are attached to this report at appendices One and Two respectively.
 - 1.2 Members are recommended to approve the documents for consideration by the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board at its meeting on 13 July 2016.
-

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Section 80 of the Local Transport Act 2008 gives local authorities, acting jointly, the power to review the effectiveness and efficiency of transport within their area and to propose their own arrangements to support more coherent planning and delivery of local transport. Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council cooperated to prepare a document for public consultation for local transport provision in 2012.
- 2.2 The Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy was first published for public consultation in August 2012. It aimed to set out the future for transport in Maidstone until 2026 and described the policy context, the existing transport networks and the challenges they face. Objectives for transport provision were identified and an action plan proposed to address the requirements for the new development proposed by the Maidstone Core Strategy at that stage.
- 2.3 Following public consultation and as a result of the publication of the NPPF in March 2012, the Borough Council decided to proceed with the preparation of a Local Plan to replace the Core Strategy and this necessitated a major review of supporting documents and policies.
- 2.4 A revised draft ITS was prepared to inform and guide transport policies and proposals in the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan which was submitted for examination on 20 May 2016. The Strategy was considered by the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board (JTB) and Maidstone Borough Council's SPS&T Committee prior to public consultation which as indicated above took place between 5 February 2016 and 18 March 2016.
- 2.5 Some 83 representations were received during the consultation period together with one late representation from the British Horse Society following confusion over the appropriate e-mail address to which responses should be sent. These representations were reported to and considered by the Maidstone Borough Council's SPS&T Committee on 14 June 2016.

- 2.6 Kent County Council, in its capacity as local Highway Authority, raised objections to the draft ITS as part of its response to the Regulation 19 consultation. The objections highlighted how the ITS should accord with the resolution made by this Board on 7th December 2015 regarding the initial implementation of a strategy covering the period to 2022, as part of ensuring that it is founded on a package of transport improvements that have been agreed by the County Council.
- 2.7 There has also been continuing engagement between Maidstone and KCC over the Strategy as well as with Highways England and other key stakeholders.
- 2.8 As a result of these continuing discussions, in particular with KCC, the principal change is that the draft ITS and the draft Walking and Cycling Strategy have been split into two separate documents. Appropriate amendments have been made to each document. These reflect the consultation responses and the other discussions that have taken place. The revised documents are attached at Appendices One and Two to this report respectively.
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3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The ITS and the WCS have been revised following consideration and assessment of the representations and continued engagement with stakeholders notably KCC and Highways England. A key outcome is the agreement between the County Council and the Borough Council that the ITS and the Walking and Cycling Strategy (which for the consultation was appended to the main ITS) would be separated to form two documents. This is how they are presented to this meeting.
- 3.2 The ITS and the Walking and Cycling Strategy have been produced as part of the evidence base of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and will assist in the delivery of appropriate mitigation and sustainable transport measures and improvements in support of the allocations in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.
- 3.3 The ITS sets-out all the highway and sustainable transport interventions previously agreed by Committee and the Maidstone JTB. It is again confirmed that these have been incorporated into the submitted Maidstone Borough Local Plan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 3.4 The WCS contains a number of actions to improve walking and cycling infrastructure and the measures are intended to support the delivery of the ITS.
-

4. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 4.1 Both the ITS and the WCS are scheduled to be reported to the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board that is to meet on 13 July 2016. Subject to the

decision of this Committee, the Board will be asked to recommend to this Committee and the KCC Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation that both documents are approved and adopted.

- 4.2 If approved by the Board, the final version of both documents would be reported to a future meeting of this Committee to seek approval for formal adoption and publication.

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Integrated Transport Strategy and the Walking & Cycling Strategy play a key role in delivering a package of sustainable transport measures in support of the allocations set out in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and the need to mitigate the transport impact of planned development and deliver modal shift away from reliance on the use of the private car with other potential benefits such as improved public transport networks and improved air quality.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Risk Management	The ITS and Walking and Cycling Strategy are part of the evidence base supporting the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, showing a package of sustainable transport alongside other infrastructure interventions in support of the allocations in the Local Plan and to support planned growth.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Financial	No specific financial implications arise from the consideration of this report	Head of Finance and Resources & Finance Team
Staffing	Specialist transport consultants have been engaged to assist in the delivery of the strategies, funded though the existing agreed budget.	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Legal	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report. The ITS and Walking	Kate Jardine Team Leader Planning Mid

	and Cycling Strategy have been produced as part of the robust evidence base for the Local Plan	Kent Legal Services
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	An ITS and Walking and Cycling Strategy that tackle transport challenges through a combination of modes will take into account the needs of all groups including those without access to a car. An alternative strategy reliant on highway improvements will not promote equal access to employment, services and social opportunities and is likely to lead to increased social exclusion amongst lower income groups in particular.	Anna Collier Policy & Information Manager
Environmental/Sustainable Development	The promotion of the ITS and the Walking and Cycling Strategy to promote sustainable travel where possible will encourage a reduction in single occupancy car travel and in turn a reduction in congestion and carbon emissions relative to a 'do minimum' situation. An alternative strategy reliant solely on highway interventions is likely to generate more traffic than the additional capacity provided increasing carbon congestion	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Community Safety	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Human Rights Act	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this report	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Procurement	Consultants are used to prepare specialist or technical evidence to support the Local Plan and are appointed in accordance with the Council's procurement procedures	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development & Head of Finance and Resources
Asset Management	No specific implications arise from the consideration of this	Rob Jarman: Head of

	report	Planning & Development
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6 REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy 2011-2031
 - Appendix 2: Maidstone Walking & Cycling Strategy 2011-2031
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**Maidstone Integrated Transport
Strategy
2011-2031**

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Introduction

1.1 The Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) assesses the principal existing and future challenges affecting the transport network, including taking account of jobs and housing growth, and recognises that the populations of the urban area and dispersed villages bring different challenges and solutions. It sets out a vision and objectives, and identifies a detailed programme of interventions to support the measures and interventions set out in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan for all modes of transport consistent with national and local planning policies including the Kent County Council Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) 2011-2016.

1.2 The ITS has been updated to take into account the comments and suggestions received on the draft strategy as part of the public consultation held during February and March 2016. It has also been updated to summarise the findings of the most recent modelling undertaken using the Maidstone VISUM strategic highway network model.

1.3 The ITS comprises five main sections:

- Transport challenges
- Policy context
- Vision and objectives,
- Strategic priorities
- Action plans

1.4 The ITS is inter-alia, an integral component of the Local Plan evidence base and is a key Local Plan document. Both documents need to be aligned. As with the Local Plan itself, to ensure an up-to-date ITS is maintained, a review of the ITS will commence by 2022.

Transport challenges

1.5 Maidstone's transport network has come under increasing strain in recent years, principally on account of the growing demand for travel generally. A deliverable transport strategy should seek to address these challenges and should have an emphasis on the promotion of sustainable transport in line with national and local priorities. It should contain, a balanced package of appropriate highway and sustainable transport interventions that provide mitigation in support of the allocated housing and employment growth envisaged by the Local Plan.

1.6 Sustainable modes should be encouraged where feasible and the benefits of shifting trips from single occupancy car use to sustainable modes are manifold and recognised and promoted by the Government. Examples of these include improved air quality, a healthier population, attractive, safe and secure public spaces, and reduced environmental impacts.

1.7 Challenges are identified for highways, including congestion caused by increased car usage, and public transport provision, which is inadequate and under-used. Impediments to increased walking and cycling are identified, and the role of parking is seen as essential to provide the context for transport policies.

Policy context

1.8 The policy context for the ITS is provided by Department for Transport and Kent County Council policies that include LTP3 2011-2016 as well as local Borough Council policies such as the adopted Maidstone Borough-wide Local Plan 2000 and the submitted Maidstone Borough Local Plan and other initiatives. Increasingly, joint initiatives with neighbouring authorities on issues like air quality, countryside and rail access and neighbourhood plans will influence transport policy.

Vision and objectives

1.9 The transport vision for the borough is 'Realising Maidstone's sustainable future; connecting communities and supporting a growing economy' and this leads to the formulation of five objectives for the Strategy:

- Enhancing and encouraging sustainable travel choices
- Enhancement of strategic transport links to, from and within Maidstone town.
- Ensure the transport system supports the growth projected by Maidstone's Local Plan.
- Reducing the air quality impacts of transport.
- Ensure the transport network considers the needs of all users, providing equal accessibility by removing barriers to use.

Strategic priorities

1.10 To achieve the strategic objectives, the ITS seeks to:

- Reduce demand for travel
- Change travel behaviour
- Promote modal shift
- Improve network efficiency

1.11 Examples from best-practice experience elsewhere are identified, indicating what has been achieved in local authorities throughout the country.

Action plans

1.12 Action plans for each mode of travel are summarised initially, and further more detailed treatment of interventions describes the range of policy actions which may be implemented. A separate Walking and Cycling Strategy has been the result of joint work with Kent County Council (KCC), and priority highways improvement schemes are identified which are subject to ongoing negotiation with developers and the highway authority.

1.13 The ITS identifies targets to monitor the progress of actions so that it is a 'living strategy' which is flexible and able to adapt to changing circumstances. It will form the basis of continuing discussions and negotiations with the full range of stakeholders involved in the provision of transport throughout the borough.

2.1 The ITS covers the area of Maidstone Borough which includes the urban area of Maidstone; Rural Service Centres and villages. It provides the overview and justification for the detailed transport infrastructure requirements and interventions set out in the submitted Maidstone Borough Local Plan and which are also identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

2.2 Maidstone Borough faces a number of transport challenges and the ITS is needed to provide a framework for transport planning and decision making in the Borough which places an emphasis on addressing these issues through long term sustainable development of the transport network. This should ensure that future development can be accommodated without significant detriment to existing conditions whilst seeking to enhance economic, social and environmental well-being.

2.3 The ITS assesses the principal existing and future challenges affecting the transport network, including taking account of jobs and housing growth, and recognises that the populations of the urban area and dispersed villages bring different challenges and solutions. The ITS provides a framework and programme of schemes and interventions to support the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, taking account of the committed and predicted levels of growth in homes and jobs and detailing the transport infrastructure and services necessary to support and deliver this growth. It considers all modes of transport used for trips on main routes and the rail network. It sets out a vision and identifies a detailed programme of interventions consistent with national and local transport and planning policies to help achieve the vision by 2031.

Transport Challenges

3.1 Maidstone is a dynamic borough, set within both an urban and a rural context, which has a vital role to play in the significant growth expected in the South East over the next two decades. The borough currently has a population of 155,143⁽¹⁾, which is evenly split between the County Town and its rural hinterland, including the five Rural Service Centres (RSCs) of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst. Whilst the town's main function is as a centre for business, retail and administration; the rural economy is characterised by pockets of manufacturing, horticulture and farming. The Maidstone Borough Local Plan seeks to meet in full the identified objectively assessed need of 18,560 dwellings and the creation of almost 14,500 jobs in the plan period from 2011 -2031.

3.2 Maidstone's transport network has come under increasing strain in recent years, principally on account of the configuration of its road and rail networks and the growing demand for travel generally. In order for the borough to have an emphasis on sustainable transport access in line with national priorities and to accommodate the level of housing and employment growth envisaged by the Local Plan, a comprehensive and deliverable transport strategy must be in place to address these challenges.

3.3 The geography of the borough means that sustainable modes are a more feasible option in some locations and for some journeys than for others. The benefits of shifting trips from single occupancy car use to sustainable modes are manifold and recognised and promoted by Central Government. Examples of these include improved air quality; a healthier population and attractive, safe and secure public spaces.

3.4 Specific issues for action are identified for each mode below.

Highways

Overview

3.5 Maidstone has an extensive highway network which provides direct links both within the borough and to neighbouring areas including Ashford, the Medway Towns, Tunbridge Wells and London. Four north-south and east-west 'A' roads pass through the town centre and numerous 'B' roads run in concentric rings around the town, providing local links to the rural parts of the borough. Maidstone also enjoys good connections to the motorway network, including direct access to four junctions of the M20, (junctions 5, 6, 7 & 8).

3.6 In peak periods, parts of the road network operate at or near capacity⁽²⁾ and, especially to the south of the borough, people find it difficult to access the services they need due to the lack of transport options available to

1 Usual resident population as per 2011 Census

2 A20 / Coldharbour Lane junction; A249 / Bearsted Road junction; Bearsted Road / New Cut Road junction; Dual Carriageway between A249 and New Cut Road junctions; A20 Ashford Road / Willington Street; A229/A274 Wharfedale junction; A274 / Wallis Avenue junction; A26 Fountain Lane junction

them. Congestion is caused by road traffic outgrowing capacity. The amount of road traffic is a consequence of the reliance placed on the private car and population and job growth (and their relative locations).

3.7 In terms of the reliance placed on the private car, a summary of Journey to Work Census data is shown below:

Mode	Count	%
Work at home	4,705	4.2%
Underground / Tram	120	0.1%
Train	5,257	4.6%
Bus / Coach	2,945	2.6%
Taxi	222	0.2%
Motorcycle / Scooter	538	0.5%
Car Driver	50,131	44.3%
Car Passenger	3,819	3.4%
Bicycle	935	0.8%
On Foot	9,023	8.0%
Other	395	0.3%
Not in Work	35,141	31.0%

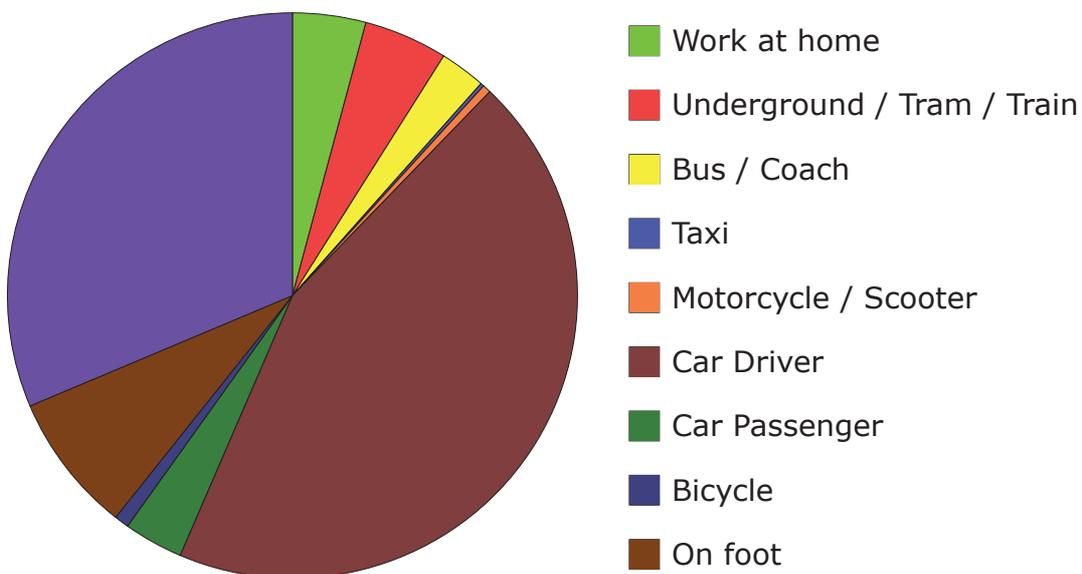


Table 3.1

3.8 In terms of growth in the period from 2011-2031, the Maidstone Borough Local Plan provides for 18,560 new homes together with employment growth of almost 14,500 jobs within the borough. The impact on the transport network of these developments needs careful and considered management ensuring the transport systems in place are appropriate, and additional mitigation measures are implemented where required.

3.9 The implications of growth and the ITS on the borough's highway network have been tested by using the Maidstone VISUM strategic highway network model to assess alternative transport infrastructure scenarios and their impacts in terms of travel time and distance. The VISUM model is a strategic highways model in which increases in walking and cycling are reflected in an estimation of the number of car trips which may be removed from the road network due to changes in modal share across these areas. Although VISUM can model bus service changes, in assessing the attractiveness of these services it does not take into account bus capacity issues, nor can it model bus priority measures.

3.10 As a strategic model VISUM is unsuited to assessing individual junction capacity, or to assess the impacts of proposed infrastructure improvements at those junctions and more detailed modelling is required for such junctions. Therefore, to provide the necessary detailed assessment of impact on specific junctions, the Council has commissioned a series of detailed junction capacity assessments within the urban area and at the Rural Service Centres and in addition, transport assessments submitted alongside planning applications, which have assessed cumulative impact of proposals and identified appropriate and justified mitigation measures as required have also been taken-into account.

3.11 It should also be noted that the impact of junction improvements outside the Maidstone urban area cordoned for the VISUM model are not included in the above scenarios.

3.12 Furthermore, M20 Junctions 5 to 8 are not modelled in detail within the VISUM model. Localised junction modelling is being undertaken during summer 2016 to assess the capacity of these junctions and potential impacts on the Strategic Road Network (SRN).

3.13 Through the development of the Local Plan a number of VISUM modelling scenarios and transport interventions have been evolved and tested (see Chapter 10).

3.14 Congestion presents a cost to the economy in terms of lost time and environmental degradation and associated health costs resulting from poor air quality and inactivity. However it is widely acknowledged across the industry

that this problem cannot be solved by simply providing more road capacity as in the absence of alternative choices and demand restricting measures, traffic is expected to outgrow capacity.⁽³⁾

3.15 High traffic levels and congestion are also associated with poor air quality. Maidstone Borough Council operates two automatic monitoring stations, one situated at a roadside site, and one at a rural background location. The station at Miller House adjacent at the junction of Mote Road/Knightrider Street and Upper and Lower Stone Street has recently been relocated from the A229 Bridges Gyratory area and measures NO₂ and PM₁₀ and is next to a main road, within the Air Quality Management Area. The rural background site in Detling is outside the AQMA and also measures NO₂ and PM₁₀. Maidstone Borough Council also monitors annual mean NO₂ concentrations through some 54 passive diffusion tubes located across the borough. The most recent 2014 data shows the Bridge Gyratory town centre automatic monitoring site exceeding the annual objectives for NO₂ but not the hourly NO₂ objective. The 2014 results from the passive diffusion tubes also show fifteen sites exceeding the annual mean objective of 40µg/m³. There are three sites in Upper Stone Street exceeding 60µg/m³, which is an indication of a potential exceedence of the 1-hour mean NO₂ objective. The Maidstone urban area is designated as an Air Quality Management Area. Both the Air Quality Management Area and Air Quality Action Plan will be reviewed in 2016.

3.16 There are points on the highways network where there are safety issues and a poor record of crashes/collisions. Plans identifying collisions involving pedestrians and/or cyclists in Maidstone town and the borough as a whole are included in the separate Walking and Cycling Strategy.

The Issues:

- Maidstone has very high levels of car ownership and usage. 84% of households in the borough have at least 1 car, compared with 80% across Kent and 74% in England
- Low average vehicle occupancy figures
- Heavy reliance on a small number of key junctions; in particular the singular river crossing point in Maidstone's town centre where the A20, A26 and A229 all meet
- Congestion on the network, particularly at peak periods
- Accident blackspots
- Poor air quality in particular areas
- The vulnerability of the M20 Motorway during cross-Channel disruption ("Operation Stack")

3 Goodwin, P (2004) The Economic Costs of Road Traffic Congestion. A Discussion Paper Published by the Rail Freight Group. ESRC Transport Studies Unit, University College London

3 . Transport Challenges



- High-demand schools with very large catchment areas resulting in high car use for the 'school-run'

Walking

Overview

3.17 The benefits of walking are numerous, but often under-appreciated – increased physical activity, improved health, livelier town centres, a more vibrant economy are just some of the varied benefits active lifestyles can bring. Above all a shift to walking has the potential of addressing (peak hour) congestion in the borough.

3.18 The 2011 Census shows that 15% of trips to work in Maidstone are 2km or less in distance, and yet walking as a mode share is less than 8%, which offers great potential for increasing walking, provided the infrastructure and environment is right. Similarly, walking trips to school at peak times offer opportunities to reduce car travel.

The Issues:

- Relatively low levels of walking trips to work and school
- Busy roads act as barriers around the town centre, segregating the residential areas from the core (known as severance). The current gyratory system to cross the River Medway is complicated for pedestrians to navigate, acting as a barrier for walking trips. Furthermore, the subways provided are unpleasant and poorly maintained.
- Provision of safe, convenient, pleasant pedestrian routes is not universally available given the dominance of the car in most of the built up parts of the borough.

Cycling

Overview

3.19 Undertaking a four mile commute to and from work by bicycle rather than by car reduces congestion, brings numerous health benefits and saves half a tonne of Carbon Dioxide a year <http://bikeweek.org.uk/save-cash-burn-calories-cut-carbon/>.

3.20 The borough currently has a number of cycle routes that link the town centre to the suburban areas including National Cycle Network route (NCR17) which provides an 11 mile commuter link between Maidstone and the Medway towns; however connections within the town and further afield are incomplete and limited and there is a lack of cycle parking at key destinations.

The Issues:

- Low cycle mode share - 0.8% of Maidstone residents cycle to work according to the Office for National Statistics

- Limited and disjointed cycle routes into the town centre, with very few off-road options
- Limited cycle parking at key locations
- Provision of safe cycle routes to schools, colleges, employment and retail areas.

Public Transport

Overview

3.21 Experience across the UK has shown that bus services of sufficient quality and frequency have the potential to capture a significant proportion of short- and medium-distance trips and to make a strong contribution to the alleviation of peak-time congestion in urban areas. Maidstone has a well-established bus network provided principally by Arriva, together with a number of smaller independent operators. The network is centred on Maidstone town centre and combines high frequency routes serving the suburban estates and longer distance services providing connections to many of the outlying villages and neighbouring towns.

3.22 Three railway lines cross Maidstone Borough, serving a total of 14 stations. The operator of the vast majority of rail services in the area is the South Eastern Franchise holder, Southeastern. The franchise was let by the Department for Transport in 2006 for an initial six year period, which has subsequently been extended to 2018. The principal rail route serving Maidstone town is the London Victoria to Ashford International line (also referred to as the Maidstone East Line), which includes stations at Maidstone East, Bearsted, Hollingbourne, Harrietsham and Lenham, with an average journey time to London of an hour. Headcorn, Staplehurst and Marden have frequent services to London with similar journey times. There is a limited three morning and three return evening limited-stop service on the Medway Valley Line that connects with HS1 to St Pancras International. Thameslink Services are due to be extended to serve Maidstone East from 2018 with a daytime frequency of two trains per hour currently planned.

The Issues:

- Maidstone has three town centre rail stations, but poor inter-urban connections, especially compared with nearby towns in Kent.
- The town's rail stations and bus station are not generally well connected to each other, making for a poor interchange experience.
- Very few bus priority measures – such as bus lanes – exist within the borough, providing no advantage for bus journeys.
- Lack of payment options. Most buses only accept cash payment, and in some cases it is not possible to buy a return before 9am.

- Lack of live departure board information at most bus stops, and limited use of effective smartphone applications including ticket purchasing.
- Service frequencies beyond the urban core are not convenient for most users.
- The town's main bus interchange located at The Mall Chequers Shopping Centre is neither fit for purpose nor user-friendly. It is not well lit or ventilated and is threatening in character being essentially a tunnel under the Centre linking King Street and Romney Place.

Parking

Overview

3.23 The provision of an adequate supply of well-located and reasonably priced car parking is essential to support the borough's retail economy, to provide a means of access to areas where alternative travel modes are limited or unavailable, and to ensure that mobility impaired persons are able to access key education, employment and leisure opportunities. The supply of car parking also drives demand for limited road space and can therefore contribute to traffic congestion and poor air quality, as well as making more sustainable modes of travel less attractive. Therefore it is crucial that an over-provision of parking is avoided, particularly in and around Maidstone town centre.

The Issues:

- Only a very small portion of parking available in Maidstone is under direct council control. As a consequence, it is difficult to apply a uniform parking policy when the vast majority of spaces are under private ownership.
- Parking is relatively cheap and plentiful compared with similar sized towns elsewhere.
- Lots of the town's parking consists of small allocations of spaces (50 or less), meaning that they fill up quickly and create additional circulatory traffic of vehicles searching for alternative spaces.

4.1 This section briefly outlines the current policy context within which the ITS has been developed and identifies how it can contribute to the delivery of their key objectives.

National Policy Context

4.2 The Department for Transport (DfT)'s stated vision is for: "A transport system that is an engine for economic growth, but one that is also greener and safer and improves quality of life in our communities."⁽⁴⁾

4.3 The DfT is working towards delivering a number of priorities in line with this vision, which includes the following; "Encourage sustainable local travel: - Encourage sustainable local travel and economic growth by making public transport (including light rail) and cycling and walking more attractive and effective, promoting lower carbon transport and tackling local road congestion."

4.4 This vision has been carried forward into the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in 2012, which replaced the previous suite of Planning Policy Statements, Planning Policy Guidance notes and certain Circular Guidance. The NPPF emphasises the importance of rebalancing the transport system in favour of sustainable transport modes, whilst encouraging local authorities to plan proactively for the transport infrastructure necessary to support the growth of ports, airports and other major generators of travel demand.

4.5 The NPPF recommends that Transport Assessments and Travel Plans should accompany applications for developments that generate significant amounts of movement, although it recognises that the opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.

4.6 This advice is reinforced in the National Planning Practice Guidance published in 2014, which gives more detailed guidance on how to approach the assessment of the transport implications in the preparation of new local plans.

How the ITS contributes:

- Implementing strategies to rebalance the transport system in favour of sustainable transport modes
- Clear transport requirements to be considered to support growth

4 <http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/networks/gov/assistant/what-we-do/dft> (accessed 16th Oct 2015)

Kent County Council

Vision for Kent 2012-2022 (5)

4.7 The Vision for Kent is a countywide strategy for the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of Kent’s communities. It has been written around three major ambitions, which are to:-

1. Grow the economy by supporting businesses to be successful, including improvements to the transport network and the provision of high-speed broadband;
2. Tackle disadvantage by fostering aspiration rather than dependency, including the provision of comprehensive, reliable and affordable public transport services providing access to education and employment opportunities; and
3. Put the citizen in control by involving people in making decisions and working with them to design services that meet their needs and suit them, including the continued provision of KCC’s Member Highway Fund and support for community bus and rail schemes.

How the ITS contributes:

- Implementing strategies to rebalance the transport system in favour of sustainable transport modes
- Clear transport requirements to be considered to support growth

Growth without Gridlock: a Transport Delivery Plan for Kent⁽⁶⁾

4.8 Growth without Gridlock outlines KCC’s high level vision for the transport network needed in Kent to support planned growth in housing and employment over the next 20 years. It responds to the economic and regeneration pressures outlined in the County Council’s Framework for Regeneration and identifies how transport interventions can contribute to their alleviation. The strategy requests greater transport funding and delivery powers for local transport authorities and calls upon the Government to progress those schemes of regional and national importance, including a Lower Thames Crossing, a long-term solution to Operation Stack and a scheme of Foreign Lorry Road User Charging.

How the ITS contributes:

- Implementing strategies to address congestion on the network
- Supporting the need for to find a long term solution to Operation Stack

Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for Kent 2011-2016⁽⁷⁾

5 Kent Forum (2012), Vision for Kent 2012-2022

6 KCC (2010), Growth without Gridlock – A Transport Delivery Plan for Kent

7 KCC (2011), Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-16

4.9 KCC's strategic approach for Kent's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3), covering the period 2011 to 2016, was to develop five LTP3 themes aligned to the previous government's national transport goals. These themes are:-

- a. Growth Without Gridlock
- b. A Safer and Healthier County
- c. Supporting Independence
- d. Tackling a Changing Climate
- e. Enjoying Life in Kent

4.10 The LTP3 makes specific reference to Maidstone (Chapter 8 – The Implementation Plan for Growth without Gridlock): "The Maidstone Transport Strategy, and hence the County Council's Integrated Transport Programme for 2011 – 2016, will be driven by the desire to preserve and enhance the accessibility of Maidstone town centre by sustainable means. The proposed level of development will be underlined by a package containing a number of traffic measures including the enhanced provision and priority of bus services through the Maidstone Quality Bus Partnership involving the County and Borough Councils along with the town's principal bus operator."

How the ITS contributes:

- Implementing strategies to address congestion on the network, improve safety, improve air quality and encourage sustainable transport; all of which can contribute to better, healthier, lifestyles for the borough's population.

Active Travel Strategy

4.11 In conjunction with stakeholders across the County, KCC has been developing an Active Travel Strategy for the promotion of physically active means of transport as part of its 'vision for making cycling and walking the preferred option for residents taking short journeys or as part of longer journeys that include public transport'⁽⁸⁾

4.12 The draft strategy defines Active Travel as walking or cycling as a means of transport in order to get to a particular destination such as work, the shops or to visit friends. It does not cover walking and cycling done purely for pleasure, for health reasons, or simply walking the dog. Active Travel can apply to a complete journey or part of a journey.

4.13 The draft strategy seeks to demonstrate how KCC will build on the existing network of cycle and walking routes in the County to maximise their use and to promote increased walking and cycling in a population with a growing reliance on cars. The aim is to promote a range of infrastructure and behaviour change projects via an implementation plan that will be finalised once the Strategy has been adopted.

4.14 How the ITS contributes:

- Implementing strategies to encourage sustainable transport, including the Active Travel modes of walking and cycling

Maidstone Borough Council

Maidstone Borough-wide Local Plan 2000⁽⁹⁾

4.15 This is the adopted Local Plan for Maidstone. The saved policies within it contain inter-alia, policy T2, which seeks to secure measures to aid bus and hackney carriage access on identified bus and hackney carriage corridors (the main radial routes into Maidstone Town Centre). Such measures to include dedicated bus lanes, bus priority at junctions, priority within traffic management schemes and enhanced waiting and access facilities and information systems for passengers including people with disabilities.

Maidstone Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2020⁽¹⁰⁾

4.16 MBC's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) sets the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for Maidstone in a way which respects the need for sustainable development. The SCS acknowledges that congestion in the borough has become an increasing problem and that the overriding aim of an integrated transport strategy must be to provide genuine transport choice to the area's residents, businesses and visitors. These driving principles are reflected in the three priorities for Maidstone outlined in the SCS:-

- For Maidstone to have a growing economy;
- For Maidstone to be a decent place to live; and
- Corporate and customer excellence.

Strategic Plan 2015-2020

4.17 The Strategic Plan updates the Sustainable Community Strategy and restates "Our Vision" as "That our residents live in decent houses, enjoy good health and a pleasant environment with a successful economy that is supported by reliable transport networks": and "Our Mission" as "Putting People First". This leads to two priorities as follows:

- PRIORITY 1 - Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all
- PRIORITY 2 - Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

How the ITS contributes:

- All the actions of the ITS support the priorities outlined above through improvements to the transport network

Maidstone Borough Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan

4.18 The Local Plan was submitted for examination on 20 May 2016. It outlines and contains proposals for detailed junction mitigation measures and other sustainable transport interventions in support of the allocated development sites included in the Local Plan. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) submitted as

⁹ [Maidstone Borough-wide Local Plan 2000 saved policies](#)

¹⁰ [Maidstone Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2020](#)

part of the evidence base for the Local Plan sets out the funding sources and delivery timescales for the transport and highway interventions outlined in the Local Plan.

How the ITS contributes:

- All the actions of the ITS support the allocated sites in the Local Plan through the proposed improvements to the transport network through specific highway or sustainable transport interventions.

Other Plans and Policies

4.19 The ITS is also aligned to a number of other local plans and policies including:

KCC's Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan⁽¹¹⁾

4.20 The Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan sets a number of objectives especially for sustainable transport:

Priority walking objectives include:

- Make promoted routes as accessible as possible and promote them to a wide audience.
- Ensure new developments encourage and provide for walking and cycling, including links to the wider countryside.
- Widen the audience for walking, including under-represented groups.
- Officers will proactively seek opportunities to improve the accessibility of the network, following consultation with local landowners and parishes.

Priority cycling objectives include:

- Support increasing cycling for everyday journeys, including seeking improvements to routes serving transport hubs, large employers and schools, and connecting cycling networks.
- Deliver a continued increase of traffic-free routes and a better connected network to support the development of tourism, family and recreational cycling.

Priority equestrian objectives include:

- Continue to improve equestrian infrastructure and develop new routes in target areas identified by riders.

Rail Action Plan for Kent KCC (2011), Rail Action Plan for Kent⁽¹²⁾

11 KCC (2007), Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan 2013-2017

12 KCC (2011), Rail Action Plan for Kent

4.21 The Rail Action Plan for Kent (RAPK) formed the basis of KCC's response to the DfT's consultation on the new Integrated Kent Franchise (IKF) in 2014.

MBC's Air Quality Action Plan⁽¹³⁾

4.22 Initially the Council considered declaring AQMAs at the Fountain Lane/Tonbridge Road junction, the Well Road/Boxley Road junction and at the Loose Road/Sutton Road junction in Maidstone town based on the potential exceedances. Following extensive consultation, the Council decided to declare an urban area wide AQMA. The Council adopted the Maidstone Air Quality Action Plan in December 2010 setting out the measures it intends to put in place in pursuit of the objectives. The Borough Council regularly reviews and assesses air quality in the borough to determine whether or not the air quality objectives are likely to be achieved. It is anticipated that both the AQMA and the Air Quality Action Plan will be reviewed in 2016.

Low Emissions Strategy

4.23 The Borough Council has also commenced preparation of a Low Emissions Strategy (LES). It has been subject to initial public consultation.⁽¹⁴⁾ The responses to the consultation and the next steps to be taken in its preparation and adoption are currently being considered.

4.24 Air quality is a key issue in the Maidstone urban area and by promoting the use of sustainable transport modes the ITS will contribute towards reducing pollution and emissions. Similarly the future LES is likely to propose the possible introduction of emission control standards for public transport vehicles and taxis and the promotion of low emission vehicles and infrastructure and identify the increasing potential for electrically powered vehicles for possible inclusion in Council policy.

Neighbourhood Plans

4.25 Neighbourhood Plans are developed by parish councils and neighbourhood forums working in partnership with MBC. These set out planning policies for development and the use of land in a local area. Once adopted, a neighbourhood plan becomes part of the development plan for the area. This means that the plan has weight when decisions are made on planning applications. Transport matters can form part of these plans.

Transport Strategies for Adjoining Authorities

4.26 A number of adjoining authorities have prepared transport strategies to address existing transport issues and support future development. Some of the proposals identified in these strategies potentially affect Maidstone Borough.

4.27 The Tunbridge Wells Transport Strategy⁽¹⁵⁾ identifies the following in its Implementation Plan:

13 MBC (2010), Maidstone Town Air Quality Action Plan

14 [MBC \(2015\) Low Emissions Strategy](#)

15 TWBC (2015), Tunbridge Wells Borough Development Plan - Transport Strategy 2015-2016.

- Work with all operators and KCC to improve the timing and interaction of buses with train services, including Service 5 at Staplehurst Station;
- Lobby for improved service frequency on the Medway Valley Line.

4.28 The Swale Transportation Strategy⁽¹⁶⁾ is currently in draft but identifies existing peak period congestion at M20 Junction 5, for which a short term improvement has been identified but a more comprehensive solution will be required in the longer term. This will affect traffic flows on the A249 corridor linking with M20 Junction 7.

4.29 The Ashford Cycling Strategy⁽¹⁷⁾ contributes to the objectives of the older Transport Strategy for Ashford⁽¹⁸⁾ i.e. to achieve a significant shift away from car use by maximising use of public transport, walking and cycling. Both documents are focused on the town of Ashford itself, but the Cycling Strategy states that the extension of cycle routes into rural areas will be considered in future revisions of the Strategy. The Borough Council will support the development of cross-boundary transport proposals as part of its duty to cooperate.

4.30 The Tonbridge and Malling Cycling Strategy 2014-2019⁽¹⁹⁾ identifies a number of cycle route improvements which would improve access to Maidstone. These include a link from Aylesford; the filling in gaps on the A20 London Road to form a continuous route from West Malling; and a link from Kings Hill via Canon Lane, Teston Lane and North Pole Road.

4.31 One of the key transport objectives in the Medway Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2026⁽²⁰⁾ is to improve public transport and a number of the actions require partnership working with neighbouring authorities as well as operators. These include the development of sub-regional bus services and improved ticketing and fares initiatives, such as investigating the introduction of Smartcard technology.

4.32 Another of Medway's Local Transport Plan objectives is encouraging active travel and improving health. Paragraph 5.21 of the Medway Cycling Action Plan⁽²¹⁾ states that Medway Council will work with KCC to develop routes that cross local authority boundaries, such as along the Medway Valley to Maidstone.

16 KCC (2014), Swale Transportation Strategy Draft 2014-2031.

17 ABC (2010), Ashford Cycling Strategy 2011-2016

18 KCC/Ashford's Future (2006), The Transport Strategy for Ashford

19 KCC (2014), Tonbridge and Malling Cycling Strategy 2014-2019

20 Medway Council (2011), Local Transport Plan 2011 - 2016

21 Medway Council (2016), Medway's Cycling Action Plan 2016/18

5.1 In the context of the transport challenges for Maidstone Borough and national and local transport policies, the following vision has been developed.

5.2 In brief the vision is *Realising Maidstone's sustainable future; connecting communities and supporting a growing economy.*

By 2031, Maidstone town and its surrounding area will be well known for its efficient, sustainable and accessible transport system which will support a thriving and attractive county town, and provide efficient and effective links with the surrounding villages, countryside and beyond. More and more people will walk, cycle and use public transport and this will help reduce car traffic on radial routes from the town and support the continued growth of the area while protecting its distinctive character and environment.

New routes will be developed for walking, cycling and public transport which will link up communities, employment, services and facilities and alternatives to the private car will be promoted. Information about sustainable transport options will be readily available and new technology will make this easy to access.

New and improved high quality bus routes will link Maidstone town centre with community and local transport hubs which will become the location for local enterprise centres where services will be supplemented with high speed broadband. Enhanced railway services will link the borough with the capital and surrounding urban areas, offering a wide range of employment, commercial and leisure opportunities for residents, businesses and visitors.

Strategic Objectives

5.3 In order to achieve this vision, five key objectives have been developed which may be summarised as:

Objective 1: Enhancing and encouraging sustainable travel choices including:

- A. The development, maintenance and enhancement of walking and cycling provision, through network improvements and encouraging uptake amongst the population;
- B. The development, maintenance and enhancement of public transport provision, including Park and Ride, encouraging uptake amongst the population;
- C. Promotion and education regarding walking, cycling and public transport travel options;
- D. Ensuring that the provision of parking is fair and proportionate, considering the needs of all users, whilst also encouraging sustainable travel choices; and
- E. Place sustainable travel options at the heart of all new developments within Maidstone, to ensure a fully integrated network that puts pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users at the centre of any transport proposals.

Objective 2: The enhancement of strategic transport links to, from and within Maidstone town.

Objective 3: Ensure the transport system supports the growth projected by the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

Objective 4: Reducing the air quality impacts of transport.

Objective 5: Ensure the transport network considers the needs of all users, providing equal accessibility by removing barriers to use.

6.1 In order to achieve these objectives, it will be necessary to focus on a number of key inter-related strategic priorities which will lead to specific interventions in all modes of transport.

Reduce demand for travel

6.2 In order to allow an improved transport network to accommodate existing and proposed development, and play its part in seeking to reduce the air quality impacts, a key priority for the strategy is to reduce the need to travel where possible, especially by private vehicle. The creation of sustainable communities, where people can live, work and access facilities without needing to travel long distances, is an overarching aim of the strategy and this will be pursued through the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and land use planning policies.

6.3 Significant advances in technology mean that the opportunities to work from home are increasing so that people may not need to travel to a workplace on a regular basis in the future with benefits in reducing congestion. This may be encouraged by the provision of superfast broadband, especially to rural communities and this should be a priority for partnerships between public agencies, providers and local businesses. This provision may be supplemented by the establishment of local enterprise hubs which offer the opportunity for local small businesses to support each other and provide complementary activities and services.

Changing travel behaviour

6.4 The objective of enhancing and encouraging sustainable travel choices will assist in changing travel behaviour. The inexorable increase in car usage leading to congestion and the further deterioration in environmental conditions are not sustainable and require changes in behaviour by individuals and institutions. A holistic approach is needed to promote alternatives to private car usage and the encouragement of walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

6.5 'Door to Door: A strategy for improving sustainable transport integration' ⁽²²⁾ was published by the DfT in March 2013. It seeks to promote the use of sustainable transport for the entire 'door-to-door' journey, with the aim of making it as convenient and straightforward to make a door-to-door journey by public transport, by cycle or on foot or by a combination of these different means as by private transport.

6.6 This ITS is in accordance with this strategy in that appropriate interventions are set-out that seek overall to improve the sustainable journey experience, through e.g. improved information about journey options to enable proper planning, improved and integrated connections at all stages of the journey, a convenient and affordable ticketing framework for an entire journey and safe and comfortable transport facilities to encourage users.

22 [DfT 2013 Door-to Door: A strategy for improving sustainable transport integration](#)

Promote modal shift

6.7 The implications of changing behaviour are that people shift from using the private car for the majority of journeys towards using more sustainable modes of transport where possible and appropriate. The private car continues to be the primary means of transport in the rural areas but relatively minor shifts in mode can make a significant difference in terms of congestion particularly with regard to trips to the urban area for work and leisure.

6.8 Experience elsewhere has demonstrated that significant changes to behaviour can be achieved where bus and rail services are enhanced by additional routes, real time information and new and improved interchange facilities.

6.9 In Poole, the number of journeys by bus has almost doubled from 5.3 million in 2004/2005 to 10.2 million in 2014/2015⁽²³⁾. The key to this success has been the Quality Bus Partnership comprising the major operators and the authorities of Poole, Bournemouth and Dorset. The authorities have, with Department for Transport funding, invested in infrastructure (high quality shelters, real-time passenger information and bus priority) whilst the bus operators have increased frequencies and invested £2.7 million in new low floor buses with luxury seating, CCTV and smartcard ticketing. These improvements have attracted new passengers for whom the bus is a mode of choice, and has led to a flourishing commercial bus network.

6.10 Similar changes to travel behaviour have been seen in Brighton & Hove, where a package of measures including flexible multi-trip ticketing, network simplification/branding, extensive bus priority, increased frequencies on busy routes and improvements to passenger facilities saw bus patronage increase from 30.2 million journeys in 2001 to 41.1million in 2009/10.

6.11 Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester were designated by the Department for Transport as Sustainable Travel Towns where a programme of measures was implemented between 2004 and 2009, intended to reduce car use. These are medium-sized (all with populations of 140,000 or smaller) free-standing towns, comparable with Maidstone. Detailed before/after travel surveys of over 4,000 residents in each town gave the following key results.⁽²⁴⁾

- Car driver trips fell by 9% per person, and car driver distance by 5-7%, compared with a fall of about 1% in medium-sized urban areas nationally during the same period;
- Bus trips per person grew by between 10% and 22% in the three towns, compared with a national fall of 0.5% in medium-sized towns;

23 Eurotransport Magazine, Volume 13, Issue 5 (2015), Increasing bus patronage through partnership working and RTPI

24 Sloman, L. et al (2010), The Effects of Smart Choice Programmes in the Sustainable Travel Towns: Summary Report for Department for Transport.

- Cycling trips per person grew by between 26% and 30% in the three towns, compared to a decline elsewhere; and
- Walking trips per person grew by between 10% and 13% in the three towns compared to a national decline.

6.12 During the same period, six Cycling Demonstration Towns were also designated (Aylesbury, Brighton & Hove, Darlington, Derby, Exeter and Lancaster with Morecambe). Evaluation indicated a 27% increase in cycling across all six towns between 2005 and 2009, with the proportion of adults undertaking any cycling increasing by 14%. In schools involved in the 'Bike It' programme, the proportion of pupils cycling to school on a regular basis increased by 126%.⁽²⁵⁾

Improve network efficiency

6.13 In order to achieve the objectives of enhancing strategic transport links to, from and within Maidstone town and ensuring the transport system supports the growth projected by the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, improvements should also be made to the existing transport network, including major new investment on links where appropriate. The strategy incorporates a programme of road and junction improvements.

7.1 Key to improving transport conditions in Maidstone Borough is the full involvement of all the stakeholders in providing and utilising transport modes and services. As well as the highway authority (KCC) and the Borough Council, key players are the bus operators, the rail company, interest groups promoting walking and cycling, Parish Councils and community groups.

Roles and Responsibilities

Highways England

7.2 Motorways and trunk roads in England are the responsibility of Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency). The M20 Motorway passes through the borough connecting the Channel Ports to the M25 London Orbital Motorway and beyond. There are four motorway junctions (5-8) on the M20 within the borough. The M2 Motorway also passes through the north of the borough area and three junctions (3-5) are situated just outside the borough boundary but are readily accessible from within the borough.

Kent County Council

7.3 Kent County Council (KCC) is the local highway authority for Kent and is responsible for the management and maintenance of all adopted roads in the county other than motorways and trunk roads. KCC is also the local transport authority for Kent and actively promotes alternatives to car-based travel to improve the accessibility, sustainability and efficiency of the highway network.

7.4 KCC's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) covers the period 2011 to 2016 and further Local Transport Plans will be produced over the period of the ITS. It is the intention that the Local Transport Plan will assist the implementation of the Integrated Transport Strategy.

Maidstone Borough Council

7.5 The Borough Council also has delegated responsibility for Civil Parking Enforcement under the Traffic Management Act 2004, Park and Ride services, street cleaning, the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles, the provision of bus shelters and the monitoring of air quality and implementation of an Air Quality Action Plan.

Bus Operators

7.6 Approximately 80% of bus services in Kent are operated on a wholly commercial basis by local operators and neither the Borough Council nor the County Council plays a direct role in their provision. However, MBC and KCC have signed a Quality Bus Partnership Agreement with the borough's principal commercial bus operator, Arriva, which commits all parties to invest jointly in local bus services and supporting infrastructure. The remaining 20% of services are classified as 'socially necessary' and are procured by KCC to provide access to essential services.

7.7 Discussions with the significant bus operators in Maidstone are identifying future service enhancements, new routes and operating improvements which will increase the attractiveness of bus travel in both the urban and rural areas.

The strategy anticipates the rail service improvements which are planned for Maidstone, including Thameslink, and the introduction of policies in the submitted Maidstone Borough Local Plan to promote walking and cycling and alternatives to the use of the private car.

Rail Operator

7.8 Maidstone's rail services are operated as part of the Integrated Kent Franchise, which is specified and led by the Department for Transport (DfT). The franchise is currently held by Southeastern, and this was recently extended until 2018. The process for awarding a new franchise from 2018 onwards commences in late 2016.

Funding Sources

7.9 A key challenge for the ITS will be to ensure that its actions are achievable within the funding that is likely to be available over time. Anticipated funding sources include:

- **Funding from development** – the ITS supports committed and planned growth and so funding from development will be critically important to help deliver the strategy. Section 106 funding will be used to deliver site specific infrastructure and to improve and mitigate the impacts of growth proposals. In the medium to longer term, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be used to fund the key infrastructure related to growth.
- **Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF)** – established in 2015/16, transport funding for the SLGF has been top sliced from central government Local Transport Plan funding for small schemes and for local major scheme funding. Local Enterprise Partnerships are required to submit bids for SLGF funding for schemes across all areas related to growth, including education and skills, community infrastructure and drainage, in addition to transport.
- **Local Transport Plan (LTP) funding** – KCC receives LTP funding for small scale transport improvements. However, the level of funding has reduced as money has been top sliced into the SLGF. For 2015/16 to 2017/18, the available Integrated Transport block funding will total £6.8 million per annum for the entire county.

Prioritisation and Delivery

7.10 The Maidstone Borough Local Plan seeks to deliver 18,560 homes and a quantum of employment and retail development in the period 2011 to 2031. The ITS seeks to support the Local Plan with appropriate interventions to mitigate the planned growth. The impact of the growth has been modelled using VISUM, which as indicated previously provides a strategic level overview, supported by detailed junction capacity modelling and specific modelling in transport assessments accompanying planning applications within which the cumulative impact of planned growth has been assessed.

7.11 This modelling has identified key mitigation and interventions, be it junction capacity improvements or improvements to public transport and its infrastructure. This mitigation is clearly set out in this ITS, the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and the IDP. Current work on junction improvements serves to evidence that with some 9,000 homes delivered or in the pipeline, the impacts can and will be mitigated. The Borough Council and KCC are already working together and delivering schemes.

7.12 Coupled with some 3,790 units planned for broad locations in the borough at the end of the plan period, and potentially 1,600 units as 'windfalls', this leaves a total of approximately 4,250 remaining units requiring infrastructure in the short to medium term. Further junction capacity modelling work has been undertaken in respect of the broad locations to demonstrate again, that appropriate mitigation can be provided to offset the impact of planned development in the latter part of the plan period to 2031.

7.13 It will be necessary to ensure an up-to-date ITS is maintained, therefore, a review will commence by 2022 alongside that of the Local Plan.

8 . Action Plans and Phasing

8.1 The ITS leads to action plans for all modes of transport which will be reviewed and rolled forward on a regular basis. It is important that the interventions are aligned with the sequence of development proposed in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

8.2 The Action Plans to achieve the strategic objectives and priorities are set out below.

8.3 The proposed delivery of the necessary transport infrastructure to support the Local Plan in line with this strategy is indicated in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The IDP also indicates the sources of funding which will include S106, CIL when it is introduced, and other funding sources such as the LEP Growth Fund.

8.4 S106 funds are triggered at various stages of the development process and are largely controlled by the proposed developers' construction schedules, within the time constraints of the planning permission granted. Specific infrastructure provision may be financed in advance of development from other sources and the ITS identifies local highways, walking and cycling provision and public transport actions which may attract funds from various sources.

8.5 The chart below outlines the actions to be taken in order to deliver the objectives of this strategy. These actions have been categorised by mode, but an integrated approach is required to tackle Maidstone's transport issues with success reliant on the actions being implemented in conjunction with each other.

8.6 Actions will be phased so that they will be implemented over the short, medium or long term. These actions will be crucial to ensuring that Maidstone functions effectively both as the County Town of Kent and as a regionally important transport hub.

8.7 The ITS actions are summarised below, followed by full details of each action:

Number	Area	Action Description
H1	Highways	Targeted implementation of highway improvements at key strategic locations to relieve congestion and to aid public transport.
H2	Highways	Maintain and develop Maidstone's Intelligent Transport Systems and the proactive sharing of real time traffic and transport information with road users to manage congestion.
H3	Highways	Facilitate and promote the expansion of the County Hall Car-Club service to meet any identified increase in demand on an annual basis.
H4	Highways	Actively promote and encourage car sharing initiatives
H5	Highways	Ensure road safety education continues to be provided for across the borough.

Number	Area	Action Description
H6	Highways	Installation of additional electric charging points and the promotion of electric car use.

Number	Area	Action Description
P1	Parking	Introduce and adhere to Parking Standards.
P2	Parking	Optimise long stay parking charges to extract maximum value from parking charges, whilst controlling demand through a 50% increase in long-stay charges by 2031.
P3	Parking	Maintain the current level of parking space provision in the town centre.
P4	Parking	Improve parking enforcement on highways to reduce the impact of obstruction on bus reliability

Number	Area	Action Description
UL/Zero Emissions 1	Ultra-Low and Zero Emissions Vehicles	Encourage the provision of suitable infrastructure for Ultra-low and Zero emissions vehicles throughout the borough

Number	Area	Action Description
PT1	Public Transport	Provide bus priority measures on strategic routes linking the town centre to residential developments and key local amenities.
PT2	Public Transport	Facilitate an improvement of bus services to ensure a good frequency of service is provided on all radial routes to the town centre within the Maidstone Urban Area.
PT3	Public Transport	Increase the proportion of school children using the bus to get to school.
PT4	Public Transport	Continue to engage with and facilitate Statutory Quality Bus Partnership schemes in Maidstone.

Number	Area	Action Description
PT5	Public Transport	Improve rail station access for pedestrians, cyclists and the mobility impaired.
PT6	Public Transport	Improve the frequency and quality of bus services between Maidstone town centre, M20 Junction 7 and Sittingbourne/Faversham
PT7	Public Transport	Provision of a North West Maidstone Bus Loop
PT8	Public Transport	Promote the provision of high quality bus services from the Rural Service Centres and investigate using rail stations for interchange facilities
PT9	Public Transport	Lobby Government and Train Operating Companies (TOCs) for improved rail services to Maidstone including the restoration of direct services to London Bridge and Cannon Street
PT10	Public Transport	Investigate the potential for further rail halts at Tovil, Teston and Allington
PT11	Public Transport	Improve bus facilities at Maidstone East and Maidstone West train stations to maximise interchange capabilities.
PT12	Public Transport	Improve interchange facilities at Staplehurst rail station
PT13	Public Transport	Work towards an improved bus station in Maidstone town centre.
PT14	Public Transport	Better information and marketing of public transport options including

Number	Area	Action Description
W1	Walking	Provision of accessible pedestrian routes for all users.
W2	Walking	Improve pedestrian accessibility across the River Medway in Maidstone town centre.
W3	Walking	Implement public realm improvement schemes within the town centre, such that pedestrian access is the primary mode within the central core of Maidstone.

Number	Area	Action Description
W4	Walking	Identify priority areas for implementation of safety improvements to reduce road traffic collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists.
W5	Walking	Actively encourage and promote walk-to-school initiatives.
W6	Walking	Improve street signage with better pedestrian wayfinding and a reduction in footway clutter.

Number	Area	Action Description
C1	Cycling	Maintain and further develop a strategic cycle network, connecting the town centre to key facilities and residential areas.
C2	Cycling	Maintain and further develop cycle routes in Rural Service Centres, connecting local amenities and transport hubs (rail stations and bus stops) to housing.
C3	Cycling	MBC and KCC to work with partners to ensure the regular maintenance of all cycle tracks within the borough.
C4	Cycling	(a) All Year 6 children will have access to Level 1 and 2 Bikeability training, and children in Year 7-9 will have access to Level 3 training. (b) Adult cycle training will continue to be offered, through initiatives including workplace travel planning.
C5	Cycling	Support the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum as a group to promote the cycling cause in the borough.
C6	Cycling	Improve cycle security and parking at all key transport hubs and public amenities (including schools, healthcare facilities and retail locations).
C7	Cycling	Encourage employers to incorporate cycling into Workplace Travel Plans.
C8	Cycling	Promote cycling in schools through School Travel Plans.
C9	Cycling	Ensure all cycle routes are fully advertised and signposted within the borough.

Number	Area	Action Description
C10	Cycling	Revise and update the “Explore Maidstone Walking and Cycling Map” to extend coverage to the wider borough and indicate destinations in neighbouring local authorities. Map to be available both electronically and in paper format.
C11	Cycling	Standardise and clarify the requirements of planning applications with respect to the provision of walking and cycling facilities, to promote the use of these active travel modes.
C12	Cycling	MBC, KCC and the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum to identify opportunities to establish local cycling events.
C13	Cycling	MBC and KCC to identify locations throughout the cycle network where new automatic cycle counters should be installed to enable a detailed analysis of usage. Installation to proceed as resources allow, but each new cycle infrastructure proposal will be assessed to see if an additional counter should be added to augment the data gathering process.

Highways

8.8 The Actions:

Action H1: Targeted implementation of highway improvements at key strategic locations to relieve congestion

8.9 Through the identification and enhancement of key strategic junctions, congestion on the road network can be reduced. Regardless of development a number of the town’s junctions are subject to high levels of congestion in the morning and evening peaks.

8.10 The key junctions and proposed interventions are set out in the table below. The funding sources are also referenced in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Maidstone Borough Council together with Kent County Council and Highways England will work together to secure the early delivery of these improvements within the next three years, primarily through S106 agreements and potential Growth Fund applications. The Borough Council and KCC are also actively exploring whether existing LGF1 funding can be used to 'pump-prime' and bring forward any of the planned intervention and mitigation schemes.

Area	Junction	Aim	Intervention	IDP Reference
Maidstone Town Centre	Town Centre Bridges Gytratory A229/A20/A26	Capacity improvements.	New northbound link to bypass the gytratory.	LEP Local Growth Fund and MBC Contribution (New Homes Bonus)
Maidstone Urban Area – M20 Junction 7 Strategic Area	A249 Bearsted Road roundabout and Bearsted Road/New Cut Junction	Capacity improvements.	Signalisation of New Cut roundabout. Provision of a new signal pedestrian crossing and combined foot/cycle	Provided under 13/1163.
53	Dual carriageway between A249 and New Cut Junctions	Capacity improvements.	Additional carriageway/ revised junction arrangements.	Provided in connection with Newnham Court.
53	M20/Junction7	Capacity improvements	Signalisation of roundabout, widening of coast bound off-slip and creation of new signal controlled pedestrian route through junction.	Provided under 13/1163.
	M2 Junction 5 Improvement	Capacity improvements.		13/1163 - £44.7k
Maidstone Urban Area – South East Maidstone Strategic Area	A229/A274 Wheatsheaf junction	Capacity improvements.	Works to improve capacity at the junction	14/503167 - Proportion of £108k also split between Loose Rd/Boughton Lane & approaches to TC.

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Area	Junction	Aim	Intervention	IDP Reference
	A229/Armstrong Road	Capacity improvements.	Works on the approaches to the Town Centre between the W heatsheaf junction and the bridge gyratory traffic signal junctions.	14/503167 - Proportion of £108k also split between Loose Rd/Boughton Lane & approaches to TC.
	A274 Willington Street junction	Junction capacity improvements.		13/1149 - £180k 13/1523 -£30k 13/0951 £55.8k
54	A274 Wallis Avenue junction	Junction capacity improvements.		13/1149 - £180k 13/1523 -£30k 13/0951 £55.8k
	A274 Corridor	Bus journey time reliability.	Bus priority measures: Incorporating measures from the Willington Street junction to the W heatsheaf junction, together with bus infrastructure improvements	13/1149 - £1.8m 13/1523 - £300k 13/0951 - £558k
	A229 Loose Road/Cripple Street/Boughton Lane junction	Junction capacity improvements		

Area	Junction	Aim	Intervention	IDP Reference
Maidstone Urban Area – North West Strategic Area	A20/Coldharbour Lane junction	Capacity improvements.	Junction capacity and signals/left hand turn lane off A20 to M20 junction 5 link road.	13/1702 - £338K split between A20/Coldharbour & A26/Fountain Lane. 13/1749 -£676K. 14/501209 - £189k 14/500412 - £29.4k split between A26/Fountain Lane & Coldharbour
	A20/M20 Junction 5	Junction capacity and signals		14/501209 £12k (Towards J5 improvements on the M20)
	A20/M20 Junction 5	Capacity improvements	Interim improvement to M20 J5 roundabout including white lining scheme	13/1702 - £21.5k 13/1749 - £43K
	A20/B2246 Hermitage Lane junction	Junction capacity improvements		
	A26/Fountain Lane /Hermitage Lane junctions	Capacity improvements.	Changes to accommodate right turn vehicles within the junction introduction of MOVA and pedestrian sensing.	13/1702 - £338K split between A20/Coldharbour & A26/Fountain Lane.

8 . Action Plans and Phasing

Area	Junction	Aim	Intervention	IDP Reference
				13/1702 - £96.2k 13/1749 - £200k 14/500412 - £29.4k split between A26/Fountain Lane & Coldharbour
Invicta Park Broad Location	Improvements to Royal Engineers Road/Springfield/Invicta Park roundabout	Capacity improvements	Partial signalisation	
Rural Areas	A229 Linton Crossroads	Capacity improvements.	Works on junction approaches.	14/0566 - £108k
	A20 Harrietsham	Works to improve safety and pedestrian/cycle access		14/0828 - £399k
	A274 North Street/Kings Road Headcorn	Capacity improvements.	Signalisation	
	Oak Lane and junction of Oak Lane and Wheeler Street Headcorn	Safety improvements.	Junction improvements and new footway	S278 under 13/1943

Area	Junction	Aim	Intervention	IDP Reference
	Highway schemes associated with Lenham area	Capacity/safety improvements.	Improvements to junctions at A20/Ham Lane, A20/Old Ashford Road and Maidstone Road/HighStreet/Faversham Road/Old Ashford Road	
	A229 Station Road/High St/Headcorn Rd and Marden Rd Staplehurst	Junction capacity improvements		
	Hampstead Lane/Maidstone Rd Junction	Capacity improvements.	Provision of right turn lane on Hampstead Lane	

Action H2: Maintain and develop Maidstone’s Intelligent Transport Systems and the proactive sharing of real time traffic and transport information with road users to manage congestion

8.11 KCC is committed to building on the success of the Maidstone Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) system to continue enabling the County and Borough Councils to maximise the capacity of the existing road network and to respond proactively to incidents. In doing so, both Councils will seek to make use of new and emerging technology to share real-time traffic and travel information with road users and facilitate informed journey choices. KCC will also continue to work closely with Highways England to ensure that the management of the strategic and local road networks is fully integrated.

Action H3: Facilitate and promote the expansion of the County Hall Car Club service to encourage an increase in demand on an annual basis

8.12 MBC currently includes two pool cars and two pool bikes – which can be reserved for use by any member of staff. Usage of these vehicles is low relative to similar schemes elsewhere in the UK. However, utilisation of Zipcar amongst KCC staff is encouraging, and recent acquisition of electric vehicles has proven popular. KCC are looking to procure additional contract services to enhance this scheme in due course.

Action H4: Actively promote and encourage car sharing initiatives

8.13 Maidstone has one of the highest rates of single occupancy car use in the county with 52% of vehicle trips having only single occupants. In order to lower this rate and to incentivise higher car occupancy KCC manages ‘kentjourneyshare’; a free web-based service which links drivers, passengers, walkers, cyclists and taxi users who make similar journeys and encourages them to share their trip.

8.14 Additionally, KCC manages the ‘New Ways 2 Work’ scheme (of which MBC is a founding member) which is a collaborative partnership of Kent businesses, local authorities, transport providers and other organisations for encouraging sustainable travel choices. This scheme essentially promotes sensible and efficient use of vehicles and road space to enable traffic to keep moving. This will be maintained indefinitely and can be accessed at <http://newways2work.org.uk>

Action H5: Ensure road safety education continues to be provided for across the borough

8.15 Improving road user behaviour continues to be the main priority within KCC's approach to further reducing road casualties. The priority concerns and challenges that have been identified through the analysis of crash and casualty data and wider research findings are: speed, road user impairment, and anti-social values. KCC published a Road Casualty Reduction Strategy in 2014 for the period 2014-2020.⁽²⁶⁾

8.16 For the period 2014-2020, KCC has therefore committed to preparing a three-year rolling programme of activities that uses the individual and combined effects of education, training and publicity in an intelligence-led manner. Crash data and research findings will be used to guide priorities, to identify key target groups and to determine the most effective ways of communicating with them.

8.17 Kent County Council will lead collective partnership working through the Kent and Medway Casualty Reduction Group (CaRe Group) to improve road user behaviour through public education activities including publicity campaigns, public engagement projects and public relations strategies.

Action H6: Installation of additional electric charging points and the promotion of electric car use

8.18 There are 2 units currently installed outside Sessions House (one is serving the car club, one is available for public use), 2 units in Invicta House car park available to the public at weekends, one unit at Maidstone Leisure Centre and two units have been installed in the MBC car park. In addition, there is also one charging point installed at the KCC Aylesford Highway Depot, although this is mainly for use by KCC employees.

8.19 There are also several additional points on or close to the motorway network (including a model specific fast-charge facility at Eclipse Park close to M20 Junction 7) and at some local hotels, but KCC/MBC have not been involved in these installations. MBC will work closely with KCC to expand the number of electric charging points across the borough through the life of this Strategy.

Future Strategic Interventions

8.20 As part of the review of the ITS and the Maidstone Borough Local Plan that will commence by 2022 the Council will in conjunction with KCC examine the evidence and justification for future strategic interventions on the highway network.

Parking

8.21 The Actions:

Action P1: Introduce Parking Standards to ensure a means by which development can ensure an appropriate amount of parking is provided and reduce the overall demand for car parking

8.22 The new Parking Standards will ensure that the needs of car users are adequately met but also that the agreed level of provision does not undermine more sustainable modes of travel where these are readily available. However, where there is no alternative to use of the private car, the Standards will enable a fair and appropriate amount of parking to be provided. The Standards will also provide for developments' cycle and powered two wheeler (PTW) parking requirements, as well as ensuring that they incorporate electric vehicle charging infrastructure where appropriate.

Action P2: Optimise long stay parking charges to extract maximum value from parking charges, whilst controlling demand through a 50% increase in long-stay charges by 2031

8.23 This action will look to review the pricing structure for car-parks in Maidstone town centre through the introduction of dynamic car-park charging and the use of improved information to assist drivers with the overall aim of raising long-stay car parking charges by 50% by 2031.

8.24 A key problem with the current situation is that the town centre has a number of relatively small car parks in the inner town centre core and relatively little information (other than the King Street car-park which is just identified as open or closed) as to whether they are at capacity. This is in contrast to the Fremlin Walk car-park, the two Mall car-parks and Lockmeadow car-park which are included on electronic boards on key radial routes into the town centre and their remaining capacity displayed.

8.25 This leads to traffic circulating the town centre in the search for parking spaces adding to overall congestion and general issues with air quality.

8.26 The town centre parking and pricing strategy moving forward will therefore, seek to encourage long-stay parking into the larger car-parks on the edge of the town centre (e.g. Sittingbourne Road/Vinters Road and Mote Road) and to improve the provision and reliability of roadside driver information (including routing) showing available capacity in all publicly accessible off-street town centre car-parks. This will require additional technology in each of the car-parks to more closely monitor patronage to enable roadside information to be updated.

8.27 A review of existing parking provision in the town centre will take place to establish what measures might be introduced to encourage long-stay parking into the larger edge-of-centre car parks and to establish whether there is any scope for rationalisation of existing provision. This is linked to action P3 below.

8.28 As part of this overall strategy the impact of the closure of the Sittingbourne Road Park & Ride site that occurred in early 2016 will need to be monitored closely.

8.29 The pricing strategy should be flexible enough to promote and support a corresponding increase in bus service frequencies to respond and to assist in encouraging modal shift towards public transport, cycling and walking to further reduce reliance on the use of the private car by 2031.

Action P3: Optimise the level of parking space provision in the town centre.

39

8.30 There is currently a very high level of parking provision within Maidstone town centre. It is proposed that there should be no net increase in the quantum of parking available in the town over the period of this strategy as a means of discouraging car use from current and new developments. The town centre parking supply will be kept under review to make the best use of available land and associated income streams.

Action P4: Improve parking enforcement on highways to reduce the impact of obstruction on bus reliability

8.31 Recent discussions with Arriva the largest bus operator in the borough have highlighted the significant impact of highway obstruction on bus operations and reliability. This applies to the other operating companies as well. Enhanced enforcement of existing parking restrictions on bus routes by MBC will assist all bus operators to maintain timetable schedules.

8.32 The situation will be kept under review and if enhanced enforcement of the existing parking restrictions proves to be insufficient to maintain reliable bus operations, the feasibility of other interventions, for example 'Red Routes' which are already used in large cities elsewhere in the UK, will be investigated.

Ultra-Low/Zero Emissions Vehicles

8.33 The Actions

Action UL/Zero Emissions1: Encourage the provision of suitable infrastructure for ultra-low and zero emissions vehicles throughout the borough.

8.34 In relation to the encouragement of the use of vehicles with zero or ultra-low emissions a two pronged process will be required. Firstly adopted Parking Standards for new development will require appropriate charging points to be made available or for pre-wiring to be put in place to enable easier and less costly retro-fitting. Secondly, incentives such as discounted or free parking can be introduced to encourage the use of ultra-low or zero emissions vehicles for journeys into the town centre.

8.35 On 17 December 2015, the Government announced an extension to the existing plug-in car-grant beyond the existing notified February 2016 date, to at least the end of March 2018. The maximum subsidy has been lowered from £5000 to £4500 and two grant rates will be introduced from 1 March 2016 to focus financial support on the 'greenest' vehicles:

- Category 1 vehicles with a zero emission range of over 70 miles will benefit from the maximum £4500 grant.
- Category 2 and 3 vehicles with a shorter zero emission range (petrol/diesel hybrid vehicles) will benefit from a grant of £2500.
- A price-cap of £60,000 has also been introduced for category 2 and 3 vehicles; vehicles priced above this level will not receive a grant whereas Category 1 vehicles above this level will remain eligible for the full £4500 grant.

8.36 Importantly, the Government has also announced it will continue to provide a £500 grant to Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) users towards having a charging point installed at their home (estimated to be approximately 50% of the cost).

8.37 During the life of the ITS and Local Plan the technology surrounding vehicles will change, for example, the current limited use of Hydrogen fuel-cell powered vehicles is likely to increase as more models come to the market.

8.38 Technology already exists to enable the manufacture of hydrogen through electrolysis (and power can be provided by renewable sources) to service fuel-cell cars for a reduced cost compared to a conventional hydrogen filling station to which fuel is delivered. An example of this approach constructed by Honda in Swindon opened in 2014 and is also used to fuel some of Swindon Council's vehicles.

8.39 The Council should seek to accommodate, in an appropriate location, the provision of a publicly accessible hydrogen filling station within the borough.

Public Transport

8.40 The Actions:

Action PT1: Provide bus priority measures on strategic routes linking the town centre to residential developments and key local amenities

8.41 Bus priority measures are vital to delivering a network that encourages public transport use, through ensuring journey times can compete with private car use. Allowing buses to bypass key areas of congestion through the use of junction priority measures, provides passengers with a clear advantage, while also contributing to improved air quality through less congested bus journey times. Key areas identified for bus priority measures include:

- Sutton Road, Northbound, between Willington Street and Wheatsheaf Junction: This would make a significant contribution to improving the speed and reliability of buses operating on this busy corridor and would directly serve the South East Maidstone strategic housing allocation proposed in the Local Plan. Proposals include:

- i. The incorporation of bus priority measures into the capacity improvement schemes for the junction of Willington Street/Wallis Avenue and the A274 Sutton Road.
 - ii. Limited widening at the St Saviours Road junction by lengthening the left turn flare lane and a relocation of the bus stop and making it left turn only with an exception for buses going straight ahead.
 - iii. Relocation of the bus stops at the end of Mangravet Avenue as these are not well related to pedestrian crossing movements or the existing population at Grove/Road Mangravet Avenue.
 - iv. Bus pre-signal on the in-bound approach to the Wheatsheaf junction on Sutton Road.
- Bus only link between the proposed Langley Park Farm and Rumwood Green developments (Local Plan sites H1(5) and H1(10)) to maximise bus service penetration of new residential developments to the south of the A274.
 - Romney Place bus lane: Romney Place is not designed as a major through route and its heavy use during peak periods causes significant congestion on Lower Stone Street delaying buses seeking to access The Mall Chequers Bus Station. It also causes hazards to pedestrians seeking to cross Romney Place at its junction with Lower Stone Street. The implementation of an eastbound bus lane, in place of the existing carriageway lane, will ease congestion and improve access times for buses routing along this road to the bus station, while also positively impacting on air quality.
 - Installation of bus activated traffic signals at junctions to significantly improve bus journey times with little or no impact on general traffic. Key locations are:
 1. Earl Street/Fairmeadow.
 2. Fairmeadow/St Faith's Street.
 3. A229 Royal Engineers Way/Chatham Road - reintroduction of bus activation at the southbound bus only right turn signals from the A229.

Action PT2: Facilitate an improvement of bus services to ensure a good frequency of service provided by high quality buses is provided on all radial routes to the town centre within the Maidstone Urban Area

8.42 Ensuring a frequent bus service encourages public transport use, improving passenger perceptions of the convenience and robustness of using buses, through essentially allowing more flexibility in their use of the service. The frequency needs to be regular enough to prevent the timetabling acting as a deterrent to passenger use. The improvements in passenger numbers driven through frequency improvements has been seen on existing bus routes in Maidstone which have seen patronage increase with frequency enhancements. The following routes and frequencies should be provided (at a minimum in the peak hours):

- A20 London Road – 7-8 minute frequency (Currently at this frequency).

- A274 Sutton Road – 6-7 minute frequency; Currently 8 minutes on part; to be expanded when housing schemes progress and to be combined with the bus priority measures outlined in PT1.
- A229 Royal Engineers Way (to and from the Medway Towns) - 10 minute frequency (currently Service 101 (Sapphire standard) is on a 12 minute frequency).
- A26 Tonbridge Road – 7-8 minute frequency (currently 10 minutes. Work with service providers to upgrade service to Sapphire standard (or equivalent) and explore the possibility of extending the 6X service (Maidstone-Pembury Hospital Route) into Maidstone Town Centre.
- A229 Loose Road – 10 minute frequency. Potential to increase frequency of 89 service from Coxheath from every 20 to every 15 mins. Potential to increase service 5 from Staplehurst to a half-hour frequency.
- A249 Sittingbourne Road (to and from Sittingbourne/Faversham) – 15 minute frequency coupled with the promotion and an increase in frequency of services 333 and 334 from Sittingbourne and Faversham. Work with the service providers to upgrade service to Sapphire standard (or equivalent).
- A20 Ashford Road – 20 minute frequency

Action PT3: Increase the proportion of school children using the bus to get to school

8.43 Travel to and from schools creates significant pressure on the highway network, which requires intervention to encourage alternative travel arrangements to car drop-off and pick-up. KCC currently provides the following bus passes, to encourage and promote bus travel among young people:

- Young Persons Travel Pass - provides travel on almost all public bus services in Kent for an annual fee of £270 (from September 2016) for young people living in the county who are in academic years 7 to 11. Families with more than two children can get a third or fourth pass free on application.
- 16+ Travel Card - provides subsidised bus travel for 16-19 year olds continuing with education or vocational training. The card costs up to £400 per annum.

8.44 These need to remain in place to continue to manage school travel patterns, reducing the congestion caused by travel to and from schools.

Action PT4: Continue to engage with and facilitate statutory Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) schemes in Maidstone

8.45 The QBP was set up to improve and facilitate communication and decision making regarding bus service provision in the Maidstone area. Attendance by representatives from KCC, HE, MBC and bus operators allows collaborative discussion of any bus related matters and MBC will continue to engage with this group. The promotion of the use of S106 agreements for bus service improvements, including subsidisation of services, improvements to signage and the provision of bus shelters will be a key input into this group as will ensuring that operators continue to upgrade fleets to less polluting and fuel efficient models. The scope to promote and further develop flexible ticketing products, including integrated bus/rail ticketing, will be also be investigated through the QBP.

8.46 Via the QBP bus operators will also be encouraged to engage with existing Transport User Groups from across the Borough to discuss issues.

Action PT5: Improve rail station access for pedestrians, cyclists and the mobility impaired

8.47 Rail stations need to be accessible by all modes of transport, including by the mobility impaired. Suitable walking and cycling routes between local housing and the stations are required. The stations themselves require sufficient car parking to meet demand without actively encouraging car access over more sustainable modes. Basic cycle parking should be provided as a minimum, with significant secure provision at key strategic rail stations. The following locations have been identified as priorities for station access improvements:

- Barming Station – Enhanced pedestrian and cycle access required to link the station with existing and proposed development in the local area and hospital. In particular the provision of the pedestrian crossing near the station is required to ensure a safe pedestrian route across the busy Hermitage Lane to the station and a direct pedestrian and cycle access from Hermitage Land and Allington to the London-bound platform.
- Staplehurst - A new pedestrian and cycle link between the railway station and the residential area to the south of the Lodge Road Industrial Estate, with improvements to the ease and quality of bus/rail interchange within the vicinity of the railway station.
- Harrietsham Station - New pedestrian and cycle link between Harrietsham Primary School and Harrietsham railway station.
- Marden Station - Provision of a new shelter, additional seats, CCTV, lighting and cycle parking.
- East Farleigh, Harrietsham, Hollingbourne, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden, Maidstone Barracks, Maidstone West and Yalding Stations do not have step-free access to each platform. The Council will work with Network Rail and the Train Operating Company to secure such access to enable all passengers to be able to 'turn-up and-go' without the need for prior appointment.

Action PT6: Improve the frequency and quality of bus services between Maidstone town centre, M20 Junction 7 and Sittingbourne/Faversham

8.48 The Council will seek through appropriate s106 obligations to secure the improved frequency and quality of bus services between Maidstone town centre and the M20 Junction 7 area and onwards to Sittingbourne/Faversham, and vice versa. This will require the provision of three additional buses/drivers to ensure a minimum 15 minute daytime service frequency between the M20 Junction 7 area and the town centre, thus increasing daytime frequencies to Faversham and Sittingbourne to every 30 minutes respectively. The increased frequency of evening and weekend bus services will also be sought.

8.49 Funding for the enhancement should be provided for five years. The Council will work with and encourage the bus operator to upgrade the service between Sittingbourne and Faversham to a 'Sapphire' standard of service or equivalent (which should include dedicated drivers, upgraded seating, the availability of free Wi-Fi and at-seat charging facilities). Improvement to the existing signalised junctions at New Cut Road/A20 Ashford Road and A20 Ashford Road/Square Hill by upgrading signals and/or their control systems will also be secured.

Action PT7: Provision of a North West Maidstone Bus Loop

8.50 The Council will seek through appropriate s106 obligations to secure funding for five years for the operation of a 'bus-loop' service in north west Maidstone connecting Maidstone Hospital and the new housing sites on or adjacent to Hermitage Lane and London Road to Maidstone town centre along London Road via a bus gate on Howard Drive Allington. This is likely to be achieved by the extension of existing hourly service 19 westwards beyond the town centre to Palace Wood and Maidstone Hospital and the re-routing of service 60 which currently runs along London Road to Hermitage Lane via Coldharbour Roundabout.

Action PT8: Promote the provision of high quality bus services from the Rural Service Centres including interchange facilities at rail stations

8.51 A key objective for the strategy is the promotion of alternatives to private vehicle commuting into Maidstone through the provision of high quality fast bus services from the Rural Service Centres and major villages.

8.52 Opportunities for bus facilities should be provided at village railway stations to increase interchange capability and the attractiveness of using public transport as part of the 'door-to-door' integrated approach envisaged by the DfT. It is acknowledged that some of the southern rail stations in the borough are used as railheads serving a wider area to which people travel to for onward commuting. The ITS will seek to ensure that travel to the rail stations is less reliant on private means of transport

8.53 Opportunities will also be sought through appropriate s106 obligations for increases to the frequency and extent of bus services from the RSC's to enable improvements to such services to be initially established with the aim of ensuring longer-term viability after the support period finishes and as planned development is delivered. Such measures will also seek to ensure that there are viable and sustainable alternatives to reliance on private means of transport.

Action PT9: Lobby Government and Train Operating Companies (TOCs) for improved rail services to the Maidstone urban area

8.54 Southeastern operates train services in the Kent region including Maidstone. At the end of 2014 Southeastern had their existing rail franchise extended to June 2018. This extension included the provision of better services to Maidstone by the addition of direct Maidstone East to London Blackfriars services. Whilst a small improvement, previous connections to Cannon Street and London Bridge have still been lost, and the frequency of service to Blackfriars is poor.

8.55 High Speed 1, by which Southeastern serves many Kent towns into and out of St Pancras International via Ebbsfleet, in most cases does not benefit Maidstone. It is now possible to travel from Ashford to London in less than 40 minutes, whereas Maidstone East to Victoria still generally takes more than 1 hour, even though Ashford is many miles further from London than Maidstone. A limited three AM peak journeys to London from Maidstone West along the Medway Valley Line to HS1 via Strood with three return PM peak journeys from London has however, been operating successfully and has increased patronage of the Medway Valley Line significantly.

8.56 To correct this imbalance, in the run up to the re-franchising, MBC will review rail services and in conjunction with KCC, passenger groups and the Kent Community Rail Partnership, lobby the government for enhancements to Maidstone services in the new franchise timetable.

- MBC will seek the restoration of direct AM and PM Peak weekday Charing Cross, Cannon Street and London Bridge services
- MBC will seek the expansion of the current limited Medway Valley Line HS1 service to an all day service.
- The extensive upgrade work, as part of the Thameslink programme, also provides an opportunity to lobby for the new franchise to require the continuation of planned improved connections to the capital via Blackfriars from the Thameslink Services that will commence serving Maidstone East with a two train per hour AM and PM peak service and a more limited off-peak service from 2018.
- MBC will also lobby for a reduced service time from Maidstone East to Victoria as part of the new franchise agreement.

8.57 Headcorn, Staplehurst and Marden are served by half hourly services to Charing Cross and due to the speed of these services, some commuters from the Maidstone urban area use these stations in preference to those located in

the town. The Council will lobby the DfT and Train Operating Company to ensure that there is no reduction in the speed or frequency of services from these stations as an integral requirement of the new franchise when awarded.

8.58 Transport for London (TfL) has proposed to take control of rail services which operate mostly or wholly within Greater London as re-franchising takes place. The Council has made its views known to the DfT and TfL through a consultation exercise in early 2016 and will continue to lobby to ensure that the developing proposals are not to the detriment of rail services within Maidstone Borough.

8.59 The possibility of the re-introduction of a direct Maidstone to Gatwick Airport service which ceased some years ago should also be assessed.

Action PT10: Investigate the potential for further rail halts at Tovil, Teston and Allington

8.60 In line with the increase in rail traffic, the potential for the provision of extra rail halts should be investigated. Discussions with rail operators and user groups should identify how such provision may be made, and how it can be funded.

Action PT11: Improve bus facilities at Maidstone East and Maidstone West rail stations to maximise interchange capabilities

8.61 Improvements are necessary to improve the bus interchange capabilities at both Maidstone East and Maidstone West stations to provide for new or enhanced bus services from outside the Maidstone urban area to terminate. Bus facilities should be incorporated into redevelopment plans for these major town centre locations.

Action PT12: Improve interchange facilities at Staplehurst rail station

8.62 The Council is currently working with Southeastern, KCC and bus service providers to secure significant improvements to the existing interchange facilities at Staplehurst rail station to increase the number of buses directly serving the facility, as well as improved pedestrian/cycle linkages on Station Approach. Early designs and cost estimates have been produced which will be further refined and developed as funding is secured from appropriate s106 obligations.

Action PT13: Work towards an improved bus station in Maidstone town centre

8.63 The Council is currently working with Capital and Regional, the landowners of The Mall Chequers Shopping Centre, KCC and bus service providers to secure significant improvements to the existing bus station to improve the passenger experience and operational efficiency. Early designs and cost estimates have been produced which will be further refined and developed as funding is secured.

8.64 In the longer term, The Mall Chequers Shopping Centre and adjoining land, where the current bus interchange facility is located, is earmarked for potential redevelopment towards the latter end of the Local Plan period. As part of the regeneration of the site and area, the Council will work with the Centre's owners (and other land owners that may be affected) together with the public transport operators to secure the provision of a new bus interchange facility that is more accessible, user-friendly and fit-for purpose in the light of the desire for improved bus service provision and patronage across the borough.

Action PT14: Better information and marketing of public transport options and improved signage

8.65 Work with KCC, neighbouring authorities, bus/rail operators and user groups (including the Kent Community Rail Partnership) to implement an integrated, cohesive approach to the provision of public transport information and marketing, including:

- Real time bus information
- Journey planning apps
- Maintaining informative, up to date websites
- Improved signage between train stations in Maidstone
- Improving the availability and ease of use of on-line/mobile app ticket purchasing
- Promote and further develop the availability of flexible ticketing products in general, including integrated bus/rail ticketing.

Walking

The Actions:

- More detailed treatment of the walking actions are presented in the separate Walking and Cycling Strategy.

Action W1: Provision of accessible pedestrian routes for all users

8.66 The pedestrian network should provide equal access for all users. Achieving this outcome will require the removal of physical obstacles and the introduction of more accessible elements to the pedestrian environment including dropped kerbs, tactile paving and wide footways. Step free access should be provided for all key routes, making use of ramps and lifts as appropriate.

Action W2: Improve pedestrian access across the River Medway in Maidstone town centre

8.67 The provision of better pedestrian routes across the Medway would encourage walking between the different areas of the town centre and local housing developments. Enhancing the ability for pedestrians to easily traverse the river improves the connectivity of the town centre, not only encouraging walking but contributing to economic benefits through better accessibility between businesses and retail outlets on either side of the river. The Council is working with KCC on the Bridges Gyratory scheme to ensure that pedestrian (and cycle) access across the river is not compromised.

8.68 The pedestrian bridge connecting Maidstone East and Maidstone Barracks Station has recently undergone refurbishment to improve the pedestrian environment. Further areas for improvement include:

- Continuing to develop the River Medway towpath to improve both the pedestrian and cyclist experience; and
- Investigation of the benefits of building a pedestrian bridge to improve connectivity over the River Medway between Earl Street and St Peter's Street.

Action W3: Implement public realm improvement schemes within the town centre, such that pedestrian access is the primary mode within the central core of Maidstone

8.69 One of the most important ways of making streets more attractive is to reduce the dominance of vehicles. This can be achieved by restricting traffic, slowing it down and making drivers more aware of other road users by changing the carriageway/pavement distinction to a 'shared space', where no user has priority. Ideally, people should be able to walk wherever they want to, by the most direct route, with as little conflict with traffic as possible.

8.70 Accessible and attractive town centre streets not only enhance the pedestrian experience, but through encouraging pedestrian movement, public realm improvements can make a vital contribution to the regeneration of the commercial centre. MBC has recently successfully completed its High Street Public Realm Scheme, which has revitalised the High Street and now supports future growth in nearby businesses. Building on this success, MBC also has aspirations to upgrade the upper half of Week Street (further towards Maidstone East Station) and Gabriel's Hill.

Action W4: Identify priority areas for implementation of safety improvements to reduce traffic collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists

8.71 Personal injury collision data will be reviewed to identify significant clusters of collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists and to analyse the main causes of these collisions. This review will be used to develop a priority list of locations (e.g. road junctions, pedestrian crossing locations) where safety improvements are required. These could include the upgrading of pedestrian facilities and speed control measures such as the introduction of 20mph limits.

Action W5: Actively encourage and promote walk to school initiatives

8.72 MBC is a sponsor of the KM Charity Group 'Walk to School' which seeks to encourage more parents and children to walk to school. Across the County since its inception, the Charity has resulted in:

- 40,000 children and families being involved;
- 600,000 green journeys annually; and
- 250,000 school run car journeys removed.

8.73 As school induced traffic has a significant impact on the road network during peak times, schemes such as these contribute greatly to managing traffic congestion.

8.74 Since January 2013 some 62,128 cars have been removed from the road in Maidstone Borough as a result of this initiative.⁽²⁷⁾, but there is clearly more that can be done as no Maidstone schools appear in the top five.

8.75 MBC will appoint a school travel plan champion to work with schools on investigating the potential scope and functions of School Travel Plans which would seek amongst other issues to further reduce the number of car trips undertaking the "school run". The potential benefits of staggered school opening/closing times will also be investigated through the School Travel Plan process.

Action W6: Improve street signage with better pedestrian wayfinding and a reduction in footway clutter

8.76 Numerous columns for street signs and street furniture can prevent the free flow of pedestrian movement and create hazards and unnecessary barriers. There is scope to rationalise street signage and street furniture to reduce the number of columns and general street clutter to provide more footway space.

8.77 Efficient wayfinding can encourage walking and cycling through providing people with the information they need to navigate the town successfully, and understand the journey times between locations. Having clearly branded, consistent, wayfinding throughout the town not only provides information and reassurance to those less familiar with the area, but also adds to the overall experience of the public realm.

Cycling

The Actions:

8.78 More detailed treatment of the cycling actions are presented in the separate Walking and Cycling Strategy.

Action C1: Maintain and further develop a strategic cycle network, connecting the town centre to key facilities and residential areas

8.79 Maidstone should have a comprehensive, safe, cycle network in order to facilitate and encourage cycle journeys. At present the borough has a number of cycle routes focused on the urban area, however these are often disjointed with limited off road options. Delivering a strong strategic cycle network requires:

- Maintenance and enhancement of existing cycle infrastructure. Reviewing cycle routes and links already in place ensuring:
 - Existing gaps in the network are addressed, providing safe and continuous linkages to known destinations e.g. The Oakwood Park Education Campus.
 - Routes are unimpeded by street furniture, pavement parking and other obstructions
 - Routes are maintained clearing cycle ways of hazardous defects and overgrown vegetation
 - Appropriate signage is in place to clearly identify cycle routes
- Development of new strategic cycle routes to and from the town centre from key residential and employment sites encouraging cycling as a commuting option. Key strategic links required to further enhance Maidstone's cycle network include:
 - i. The South East Cycle Link, developing a route into Maidstone from Langley along the Loose Valley to connect with the Loose Greenway Scheme that is being progressed.
 - ii. The River Medway Towpath Scheme from Barming Bridge to Allington (together with links at key points along this route from either side of the River Medway)

- iii. B2246 Hermitage Lane Cycle Lane.
 - iv. A route linking Kings Hill to Maidstone Town Centre along North Pole Road, North Street, South Street Barming, through to Rectory Lane and Fant Farm to Upper Fant Road Maidstone.
 - v. Reviewing Traffic Regulation Orders to examine whether cycles can be better accommodated on parts of the existing highway network; e.g. across Barming and Tovil footbridges and along Week Street (out of shopping hours).
- Enhancement of leisure cycle facilities and routes, to further encourage cycling as a leisure pursuit. Providing appropriate cycle facilities at key recreation areas, including a Pump Track in a cycle accessible location or other recreational cycle facility including Mote Park, with a specific focus on improving the riverside paths and routes along the Medway. Longer term possibilities include:
 - i. extension of the Medway Towpath Scheme from Barming Bridge to Yalding;
 - ii. a signposted route from Lenham to Headcorn, Staplehurst, Marden, Laddingford and Yalding across the southern part of the borough;
 - iii. a signposted route across the North Downs from the Stockbury valley/Hucking to Wichling/Otterden with connections to Swale and Lenham.

Action C2: Maintain and further develop cycle routes in Rural Service Centres, connecting local amenities and transport hubs (rail stations and bus stops) to housing.

8.80 The borough has a number of Rural Service Centres, and cycling facilities within these are variable. Local communities should have the following facilities in place to encourage cycling for short localised trips;

- Cycle routes to schools
- Cycle routes to railway stations
- Cycle parking provision at schools, railway stations and bus stops (where frequent interurban services are available/planned)
- Cycle parking provision at key local amenities (e.g. health care, retail and recreation sites)

8.81 The following specific local cycle improvements have been identified to be addressed:

- Harrietsham: implementation of a cycle route between the primary school and rail station;
- Staplehurst: implementation of a cycle route connecting the rail station to the residential area to the south of the Lodge Road Industrial Estate;
- Staplehurst: provision of cycle parking at the village shops;
- Headcorn: shelter for cycle parking provided at the railway station;
- Hollingbourne: provision of cycle parking at the station;
- Marden: additional cycle parking provision at the railway station;
- Bearsted: additional cycle parking provision at the railway station;
- Maidstone Hospital: additional cycle parking;
- Maidstone West: additional cycle parking provision at the railway station.
- Cycle parking should be provided in urban shopping parades e.g. Beverley Road, Queens Road crossroads, Barming and Loose Road shopping parade.

Action C3: MBC and KCC to work with partners to ensure the regular maintenance of all cycle tracks within the borough.

Action C4:

- a. All Year 6 children will have access to Level 1 and 2 Bikeability training, and children in Years 7-9 will have access to Level 3 training.
- b. Adult cycle training will continue to be offered, through initiatives including workplace travel planning.

Action C5: Support the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum as a group to promote the cycling cause in the borough.

8.82 In January 2015 the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum was re-launched providing an arena to discuss local cycling issues. Continued support and involvement in the forum provides valuable insight into local cyclist's perspectives and issues, which can feed into making informed decisions regarding the development of Maidstone's cycle infrastructure.

8.83 The forum also actively promotes cycling through building a strong cycling community hosting regular events that encourage cycling across the borough, and raising awareness of the existing and emerging cycle facilities.

Action C6: Improved cycle security and parking at all key transport hubs and public amenities (including schools, healthcare facilities and retail locations)

8.84 Sufficient secure cycle parking is essential if people are to be motivated to cycle. The type of parking provided should be considered in relation to the user profiles; in short stay locations simple Sheffield stands can provide a convenient means for cyclist to park up, however in locations where it is likely cycles will be left for long time periods more sheltered parking or lockers can be more appropriate.

Action C7: Encourage employers to incorporate cycling into Workplace Travel Plans

8.85 Currently 0.8% of Maidstone residents cycle to work according to the Office for National Statistics. Travel plans provide an opportunity to improve levels of cycling by improving cycling facilities at employment locations. KCC currently offers advice and support to business, schools and other organisations on travel planning, advocating not just the wider transportation, but also the business benefits of implementing travel plans. Such plans are encouraged as they can include commitment to improving cycling facilities including secure parking, bike lockers and shower facilities; all of which help make cycling a realistic commuting option for employees.

Action C8: Promote cycling in schools through School Travel Plans.

8.86 Getting children involved in cycling and providing education on safe cycling is important in developing a longer term cycling culture within the borough.

8.87 The council will look to encourage and promote cycle education in schools including, Bikeability, and national standard cycle training provided at a local level by KCC and school games organisations at primary and secondary schools across Kent. Aimed at children in year 4 and above, the courses give children the skills to make safer choices when cycling and to enjoy the freedom of riding a bike. Bikeability courses are also available for adults. Nationally, over 1.7million people have benefited from the training.

8.88 The potential benefits of staggered school opening/closing times will be investigated through the School Travel Plan process, which by managing the volume of 'school run' vehicular traffic may contribute towards improved cycle safety.

Action C9: Ensure all cycle routes are fully advertised and signposted within the borough.

Action C10: Revise and update the "Explore Maidstone Walking and Cycling Map" to extend coverage to the wider borough and indicate destinations in neighbouring local authorities. Map to be available both electronically and in paper format.

Action C11: Standardise and clarify the requirements of planning applications with respect to the provision of walking and cycling facilities, to promote the use of these active travel modes.

Action C12: MBC, KCC and the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum to identify opportunities to establish local cycling events.

Action C13: MBC and KCC to identify locations throughout the cycle network where new automatic cycle counters should be installed to enable a detailed analysis of usage. Installation to proceed as resources allow, but each new cycle infrastructure proposal will be assessed to see if an additional counter should be added to augment the data gathering process.

9.1 The purpose of any strategy is to have a means of achieving desired results. However, given the complexities and scale of the issues this strategy deals with it is often difficult to identify if the desired results are being achieved.

9.2 The table below identifies targets to monitor the progress of the ITS in achieving its objective. In setting these targets, every effort has been made to ensure they are both realistic but also ambitious, ensuring the best possible level of service is provided to those living within the borough with the indicative funding levels.

Target	Description
1	To increase walking mode share in Maidstone from 8% of all work trips to more than 10% of all work trips by 2021 and 12% by 2031.
2	To increase cycling mode share in Maidstone from 0.8% to more than 2% of all work trips by 2021 and 3% by 2031.
3	To increase public transport mode share in Maidstone from 7.3% to more than 10% of all work trips by 2021 and 12% by 2031.
4	To decrease car driver mode share in Maidstone from 44.3% of all work trips to below 40% by 2021 and below 37% by 2031.
5	To undertake a full and independent review of Maidstone’s Park and Ride provision, issue and act upon recommendations by 2017.
6	To double the number of electric charging points in Maidstone by 2021 and to double again by 2031.

9.3 Data to monitor the above will be sourced from traffic management updates; school and workplace travel plans; future census data; and bus patronage data from bus operators. Future footfall and traffic surveys conducted by KCC will also provide important interim data to monitor how progress is being made towards the general aims and objectives of the ITS.

9.4 The Borough and County Councils will also need to assess whether there are any implications for the borough’s transport network arising from projects with wider impacts such as the new Integrated Kent Franchise (IKF) in 2018 or the potential Lower Thames Crossing project.

9.5 The latter is still at a relatively early stage. Highways England is, however, currently evaluating two potential route corridors (the area adjacent to the existing Dartford crossings and to the east of Gravesend). Formal public consultation on the potential route options took place in early 2016. If accepted as a scheme, subject to funding and the necessary consents (as a significant piece of National Infrastructure), works may commence in 2020/2021 with a potential opening in 2025. However, the route options did not incorporate earlier proposals to upgrade the A229 link between the M20 and M2. These were discounted on cost and environmental grounds. As such, the potential impact of the Lower Thames Crossing project on the borough is considered to be relatively minor.

9.6 At this stage, potential strategic projects and interventions have not been justified taking account of the implementation of sustainable transport policies but may be considered as the ITS is reviewed in conjunction with the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

9.7 The ITS is designed to be a living strategy, one that is flexible and can adapt to changing circumstances. To this end, it will be subject to monitoring and review which will align with the work to monitor and review the Local Plan once that is adopted. The first major review is therefore scheduled to commence by 2022, although the monitoring work will clearly commence prior to then to inform the review process.

10.1 The implications of the ITS on the borough's highway network have been tested by using the Maidstone VISUM strategic highway network model to assess alternative transport infrastructure scenarios and their impacts in terms of travel time and distance.

10.2 The Maidstone VISUM model is a strategic highways model which is best suited to modelling highways improvements. It can, however, identify how trips can transfer between car and public transport; how vehicle trips may be reassigned across the network; and it can highlight locations where travel time delay may be experienced as a result of constrained highway capacity. It can model bus service changes, but in assessing the attractiveness of these services it is unable to take into account bus capacity issues; furthermore it is unable to model bus priority measures. Increases in walking and cycling can only be reflected in an estimation of the number of car trips which may be removed from the road network due to changes in mode share. Furthermore, as a strategic model VISUM is unsuited to assessing individual junction capacity, or to assessing the impacts of proposed infrastructure improvements at those junctions.

Modelling Scenarios

10.3 The VISUM model was first developed by JMP Consultants Ltd for MBC in 2007/8 to help assess the impact of the Kent International Gateway proposal and the previous Core Strategy preferred option for new development. It was updated in 2011 for a previous version of the ITS and a report prepared in April 2012 which assessed the current and future demand for travel in the Maidstone Core Strategy.

10.4 Just over 10,000 new houses were input into the model (significantly fewer than the current objectively assessed need) and four options were tested; Option 1 being the reference case, Options 2 and 3 including various road and public transport assumptions, and Option 4 modelling the provision of the South East Maidstone Strategic Link (SEMSL). The results are presented in the JMP Report dated 12 April 2012 (Maidstone Integrated Parking Strategy Research) and it was concluded that, although SEMSL had strong potential for handling traffic from the south and east of Maidstone, there was overcapacity on key routes and it was unlikely to reduce traffic congestion on the scale that was initially anticipated and offered lower value for money than Options 2 and 3.

10.5 The present version of the VISUM model was updated in 2014 to take account of revised proposals for the Local Plan and to update baseline conditions.

10.6 Certain ITS actions have been tested in various new Do Something (DS) scenarios which identify the changes in impact on the highway network which may be achieved if the actions are implemented during the plan-period. A final DS scenario has been run with the objectively assessed need for housing numbers and an agreed programme of highway and transport improvements. It has two variants, DS4a and DS4b, the former including a South East Maidstone Strategic Link (SEMSL). All other highway and transport improvements are identical in both variants.

10.7 Both scenarios incorporate the provision of the housing, commercial and retail activity proposed in the Local Plan for the plan period to 2031 as follows:

- 18,560 residential units
- 151,000 m² of employment space
- 12,100 m² of retail space

2031 Do Minimum (DM)

10.8 A base case scenario known as Do Minimum (DM) provides the benchmark for understanding the predicted overall impact of the ITS on travel demand and network conditions in Maidstone in the plan period (to 2031) from a base case established in 2014 without any significant highways interventions, except the proposed Bridge Gyratory scheme in Maidstone town centre, or any other transport interventions. This scenario has been re-run with the objectively assessed need for housing included, for a true reflection of the DM impacts.

2031 Do Something (DS4)

10.9 A series of Do Something (DS) scenarios (DS1-DS4) model a range of highway improvements agreed with KCC and certain sustainable transport initiatives in the ITS, although it was not possible to model all of these initiatives in VISUM. The agreed highway junction mitigations incorporated in the model runs, in addition to the Bridges Gyratory scheme are:

- A20/ Coldharbour Lane Junction
- A249/Bearsted Road roundabout
- Bearsted Road/New Cut junction
- Dual carriageway between A249 and New Cut junctions
- A20 Ashford Road/Willington Street
- A229/A274 Wheatsheaf Junction
- A274/Wallis Avenue Junction
- A26 Fountain Lane Junction

10.10 For DS4a and DS4b different modelling assumptions from DS2 and DS3 were included for the sustainable transport assumptions as follows:

- typical 10 minute bus frequency on radial corridors;
- discounting of walk/cycle trips to be based on a distance threshold of 5km within the town centre; and
- 50% increase in long-stay parking charges.

Strategic modelling results

10.11 Previous scenarios tested by VISUM were a highways based option (DS1), a sustainable transport option (DS2) and a hybrid scenario (DS3). These did not model the emerging Local Plan objectively assessed need for housing and so do not provide a true forecast of network conditions in 2031. Consideration of the model results is therefore focused on scenarios DS4a and DS4b.

10.12 The results for the DM scenario indicate an increase in network travel time during the AM peak of 33% in 2031 relative to the 2014 baseline, from 8,250 to 11,000 hours. For scenario DS4a (with SEMSL), the network travel time during the AM peak is increased to 9,300 hours in 2031. This represents an increase of 6% relative to the 2014 baseline, but a reduction of 15.5% relative to the 2031 DM scenario. For scenario DS4b (without SEMSL), the network travel time during the AM peak is increased to 9,800 hours in 2031, a reduction of 11% relative to the 2031 DM scenario. The journey time reduction achieved with scenario DS4a relative to DS4b is 4.5%.

10.13 The modest journey time saving for DS4a relative to DS4b is reflected in the published VISUM traffic flow outputs for the two scenarios ⁽²⁸⁾. These suggest that the reassignment of traffic from the urban area with SEMSL in place is limited. For example the forecast two-way AM peak traffic flow on the A229 Loose Road north of the Wheatsheaf junction in the year 2031 is 3,000 vehicles for DS4a, compared with 3,200 for DS4b. On Willington Street (North), the equivalent flows for the two scenarios are 2,300 for DS4a and 2,400 vehicles for DS4b.

10.14 Forecast travel times from VISUM for the year 2031 have been published for eight road corridors. On the A274 Sutton Road, the predicted AM peak inbound travel time is 12 minutes 26 seconds for DS4a compared with 13 minutes 38 seconds for DS4b. The predicted AM peak outbound travel time is 11 minutes 7 seconds for DS4a and 11 minutes 53 seconds for DS4b. The forecast travel time savings of approximately one minute with SEMSL in place cannot be regarded as significant when considered in the context of the variations in traffic conditions that can typically be expected to occur on a day-to-day basis.

10.15 The VISUM outputs for DS4a and DS4b do not, therefore, conclusively demonstrate the beneficial impacts of SEMSL upon congestion. All other transport interventions are identical for both scenarios. The outputs for scenario DS4b demonstrate a level of impact on the highway network with Local Plan growth which, following mitigation with a balanced package of highway, public transport and walking/cycling improvements, cannot be regarded as severe in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Localised junction modelling

10.16 As noted above, VISUM is a strategic highway model and as such is unsuited to the assessment of individual junction capacity. Accordingly, more useful modelling relating to additional junction capacity assessments have been undertaken using the LinSig, ARCADY and PICADY modelling software packages for specific locations around the borough which have been identified as being potentially sensitive to future traffic flow changes.

A274 Sutton Road

10.17 The A274 Sutton Road and A229 Loose Road already experience traffic congestion, particularly at peak times, largely due to the capacity of the signalised junctions. Linsig models have been built for the four signalised junctions on the A274/A229 corridor, namely:

- A229/Armstrong Road/Park Way;
- A229/A274/Cranbourne Avenue;
- A274/St Saviour's Road; and
- A274/Wallis Avenue/Willington Street.

10.18 With no changes to the existing highway infrastructure, background growth in traffic flows combined with additional traffic associated with new developments on the corridor will make congestion worse, both in duration and intensity (i.e. longer periods of queuing and much longer queues).

10.19 The package of priority highway capacity improvements referred to in paragraph 10.7 above has been developed to mitigate the impacts of increased traffic flows arising from planned development in the emerging Local Plan. To complement these capacity improvements for general traffic, bus priority proposals have been developed (described in Action PT1) which will protect buses from residual queues and delays, contributing to quick and reliable bus services toward Maidstone town centre, with largely continuous bus priority between Wallis Avenue and Armstrong Road.

10.20 The impacts of the highway capacity improvements, together with the bus priority proposals, have been tested using the Linsig models. The model outputs confirm that the bus priority proposals will not affect capacity for general traffic, nor increase queues or delays for other road users.

A229 Loose Road

10.21 Work is ongoing with KCC to identify and secure highway capacity improvements (Action H1) on the A229 Loose Road from its junction with Upper Stone Street/Sheals Crescent to its junction with Boughton Lane/Cripple Street.

10.22 At the A229 Loose Road/A274 Sutton Road "Wheatsheaf" junction, works identified by KCC involve making Cranborne Avenue entry only from the junction, which would enable an additional 340 vehicles per hour to pass through the junction and mitigate the impact of development currently proposed. Other identified capacity improvements involve the alteration of lane markings at Loose Road / Upper Stone Street / Sheal's Crescent junction; works at Loose Road / Armstrong Road / Park Way; and the relocation and/or removal of bus stops to allow traffic to pass in both directions when a bus is stationary.

10.23 In light of the now quashed Inspector's appeal decision (APP/U2235/A/14/2227839) in relation to application 13/2197 for 220 housing units on land at Boughton Lane (Local Plan site H1(29)), a study was

commissioned ⁽²⁹⁾ to consider possible capacity improvement measures at the A229 Loose Road / Boughton Lane / Cripple Street signalised junction, which already experiences traffic congestion. No highway mitigation measures had previously been identified for this site in support of the Local Plan housing allocation.

10.24 Various options were therefore considered to improve highway capacity, comprising the widening/reconfiguration of the existing signal junction as well as its replacement by a mini-roundabout. The results of the junction modelling confirm that, with the implementation of mitigation measures, the Boughton Lane residential development and other proposed and committed developments in the area can be delivered with a net positive impact on the operation of the A229 Loose Road / Boughton Lane / Cripple Street junction. This would improve operating conditions for car and bus users alike.

A229 Royal Engineers Way

10.25 As the Local Plan identifies Invicta Park Barracks as a broad location for housing growth towards the end of the Plan period (post 2026), a study was commissioned ⁽³⁰⁾ to consider the capacity at the roundabout junction of the A229 Royal Engineers Road which serves the existing Barracks. ARCADY modelling shows that the existing roundabout is forecast to operate above capacity in 2031, with or without housing development on the Barracks site.

10.26 LinSig modelling demonstrates that partial signalisation of the roundabout would successfully mitigate the impacts of Local Plan development and expected background growth, with queueing reduced to below existing levels.

Rural Service Centre junction modelling

10.27 Modelling undertaken within Lenham, Headcorn, Staplehurst and Coxheath indicates that key junctions within these RSCs and Larger Villages will continue to operate satisfactorily in future years, taking into account the additional traffic generated by Local Plan development sites, with mitigation measures implemented where necessary.

29 Mott MacDonald (2016), A229 / Boughton Lane - Junction Review.

30 Mott MacDonald (2016), Invicta, Maidstone - Junction Review.

**Maidstone Walking and Cycling
Strategy
2011-2031**

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Introduction

1.1 This Walking and Cycling Strategy provides the evidence base for walking actions W1 to W6 and cycling actions C1 to C13 in the Transport Action Plan set out in the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy 2011 – 2031 (hereafter referred to as the ITS). It brings together policies and related actions to promote walking and cycling and the delivery of related infrastructure in Maidstone Borough, with the aim of increasing the proportion of journeys made by these active travel modes. Furthermore, the Strategy provides a basis for making bids for improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure in Maidstone through the Local Enterprise Partnership (Local Growth Fund) and other transport funding awarded to Kent County Council (KCC) by the Department for Transport. The Strategy will be a material consideration in development management and spatial planning decisions, and will help to secure support for walking and cycling from other possible funding streams, e.g. developer funding via s106 obligations and CIL together with public/private partnerships between MBC, KCC and public transport operators to improve facilities.

1.2 The emphasis of the Strategy has been on identifying the improvements required to deliver a comprehensive and well-connected cycle network (rather than focusing in detail on pedestrian-only facilities), which will help to make both cycling and walking more attractive alternatives for journeys within the borough. The Strategy has been drafted by MBC with support from the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum and KCC. The document will act as a tool to assist in the delivery of the Transport Vision for Maidstone and in support of four of the five main ITS objectives as follows;

Objective 1: Enhancing and encouraging sustainable travel choices including:

A: The development, maintenance and enhancement of walking and cycling provision, through network improvements and encouraging uptake amongst the population;

C: Promotion and education regarding walking, cycling and public transport travel options;

E: Place sustainable travel options at the heart of all new developments within Maidstone, to ensure a fully integrated network that puts pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users at the centre of any transport proposals.

Objective 2: The enhancement of strategic transport links to, from and within Maidstone town.

Objective 3: Ensure the transport system supports the growth projected by the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

Objective 4: Reducing the air quality impacts of transport.

Objective 5: Ensure the transport network considers the needs of all users, providing equal accessibility by removing barriers to use.

1.3 The overarching aim of the Walking and Cycling Strategy is, in addition to supporting the Transport Vision for Maidstone, to provide a framework for delivery of the Department for Transport's Cycling Delivery Plan⁽¹⁾ (draft published October 2014) at the local level. Our local vision supports the national vision, i.e. that:

Walking and cycling become the natural choices for shorter journeys in Maidstone Borough – or as part of a longer journey – regardless of age, gender, fitness level or income.

1.4 The Strategy is aligned with the Submitted Maidstone Borough Local Plan and the Integrated Transport Strategy and is supported by the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy which promotes the use of urban green space and Public Rights of Way for active travel. In facilitating the use of non-motorised transport it also contributes to the objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy, Air Quality Action Plan, Adopted and draft Neighbourhood Plans and KCC Environmental Strategy.

1.5 The Walking and Cycling Strategy encourages active travel and identifies the shared commitment of MBC and KCC to provide an enhanced network for these modes. It acknowledges that, in particular, levels of cycling in Maidstone are low at present and that whilst the borough has some cycle routes which link Maidstone town centre with the surrounding suburban areas; these are often incomplete or require upgrading. In the rural areas of the borough there are very few designated safer routes for cyclists. There is a lack of cycle parking facilities at some key destinations.

1.6 The benefits which can be derived from promoting walking and cycling as low cost, efficient, healthy and environmentally friendly modes of transport for people of varying ages and abilities are wide ranging. These include not just their contribution towards improved mental and physical wellbeing amongst local residents, but also their positive impact on the efficient and reliable operation of the local highway network, and helping to realise a better environment for everyone through reduced air pollution and carbon dioxide emissions. The Strategy identifies a range of measures and interventions to make walking and cycling a more attractive proposition in all areas of the borough, and especially for shorter journeys.

1.7 It is recognised that the Strategy's focus is on the Maidstone Urban area. This is where most people live, where most new development will take place in the coming years and where the infilling of gaps in cycle facilities will make the greatest contribution towards achieving modal shift from private car journeys. However, there is also merit in developing longer distance cycle routes to encourage inter-urban travel and cycle tourism and so the identification of opportunities for improving cycle linkages into neighbouring authorities has been

1 Department for Transport, Draft Cycling Delivery Plan, October 2014, <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/cycling-delivery-plan-informal-consultation>

another focus of this Strategy. It is intended to complement the measures and interventions identified in the cycle strategies prepared by neighbouring authorities in conjunction with KCC.



National and Local Policy Overview

2.1 This Strategy is informed by a range of national and local policies and strategies. This chapter briefly outlines the current policy context within which the Strategy has been prepared.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.2 The NPPF ⁽²⁾ sets out in broad terms the approach that local authorities should follow in preparing land use and transport plans, to which this Walking and Cycling Strategy is aligned. In particular, para 17 of the NPPF states that a core principle is that planning should actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling. Developments should be located where the need to travel will be minimised (para 34) and designed so that 'priority is given to pedestrian and cycle movements', with 'safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians'.

National Walking and Cycling Policy Overview

2.3 The All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group published the Get Britain Cycling ⁽³⁾ report in 2013. This marked the outcome of an inquiry which was informed by Members from both Houses of Parliament. The report aims to enable more people across the UK to take up cycling, to cycle more often and to cycle more safely. It seeks to identify the obstacles that must be overcome to achieve these objectives and suggests measures to be undertaken by central and local government, as well as the wider business and third sectors. Recommendations are numerous and divided into five broad topics:-

- A new priority for investing public funds - including the creation of a cycling budget of at least £10 per person per year, increasing to £20.
- Redesigning our roads, streets and communities - including a statutory requirement for developments to be designed for cyclists and pedestrians.
- Safe driving and safe speed limits - including the extension of locally determined speed limits.
- Training and education - including the provision of cycle training for people of all ages and backgrounds
- Political leadership - including the provision of a cross-departmental Cycling Action Plan.

2.4 The DfT published a draft Cycling Delivery Plan in 2014. The document identifies the ambition of Government to do more to encourage people across England to cycle. The Government wants to see hundreds of thousands more people taking advantage of the benefits of cycling and walking. The Cycling Delivery Plan is a 10 year plan for England and recognises that a step change in cycling cannot be achieved overnight; this requires strong leadership, commitment and long term planning for incremental change that develops an environment in which cycling is the norm. A subsequent commitment has been set in the

2 Department for Communities and Local Government, National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012,

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

3 <http://allpartycycling.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/get-britain-cycling1.pdf>

Infrastructure Act (2015) which requires Government to prepare a national Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. The resultant Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy was published by the DfT in March 2016. There is a new 'Access' fund for sustainable travel building on the legacy of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and supporting growth in cycling and walking, with £580 million (£80 million revenue and £500 million capital) being provided to the year 2020.

2.5 The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) produced guidance in November 2012 (PHG41) ⁽⁴⁾; on Local Measures to Promote Walking and Cycling as Forms of Travel or Recreation which has been taken into account within this strategy.

Local Walking and Cycling Policy Overview

2.6 The third Local Transport Plan for Kent (2011-16) sets out Kent County Council (KCC)'s policies and delivery plans for the management and improvement of the local transport network. It has five principal themes, all of which include walking and cycling as an aspect; 'Growth Without Gridlock', 'A Safer and Healthier County', 'Supporting Independence', 'Tackling a Changing Climate' and 'Enjoying Life in Kent'. The Plan seeks to support housing and employment growth whilst managing the County's highways and Public Rights of Way, many of which include cycle routes. The Plan supports active travel and the development of cycling as a transport mode.

2.7 The Countryside and Coastal Access Improvement Plan (2013-2017) is KCC's strategy to increase usage and enjoyment of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and improve access to green spaces in Kent. The County's extensive network of paths is a great asset which can be developed further to provide infrastructure for cyclists as well as pedestrians in both urban and rural areas.

2.8 KCC is also preparing an Active Travel Strategy, a draft of which was published for consultation in May 2016. The Strategy has one overarching ambition, to 'Make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys in Kent.' The objectives and implementation of the Active Travel Strategy will closely support the aims and objectives of this Walking and Cycling Strategy as well as the ITS.

2.9 The Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS), for which this Walking and Cycling Strategy provides the evidence base for measures supporting active travel modes, sets out the vision for transport in the borough between 2011 and 2031. The ITS seeks to achieve this vision through addressing existing transport problems in a holistic manner, encouraging a modal shift from the private car and identifying the transport solutions necessary to support the development aspirations of the draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan over the same period. The enhancement of cycling and walking provision is one of the key ITS priorities.

4 National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, Walking and Cycling: Local Measures to Promote Walking and Cycling as Forms of Travel or Recreation, November 2012, <http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph41>

2.10 This Strategy is also supported by the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy which promotes the use of urban green space and Public Rights of Way for active travel. In facilitating the use of non-motorised transport it also contributes to the objectives of the following strategies/action plans:

- Maidstone Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2020 (July 2013)
- Maidstone Air Quality Action Plan (2010)
- Climate Change Framework 2011-2016
- Adopted Neighbourhood Plan for North Loose
- Draft Neighbourhood Plans for Boughton Monchelsea, Boxley, Broomfield and Kingswood, Coxheath, Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Loose Parish, Marden, Staplehurst and Sutton Valence
- Kent Environment Strategy – A Strategy for Environment, Health & Economy: Consultation Draft (July 2015)

The Benefits of Walking and Cycling

3.1 Walking and cycling are low cost, efficient, healthy and environmentally friendly modes of travel. The benefits which can be derived from promoting these modes for people of a variety of ages and abilities are wide ranging. These can be broadly grouped into economic, health and social benefits. This chapter discusses each of these in turn.

Economic Benefits

3.2 Active travel modes benefit the economy through encouraging local trade, due to the increasing number of people travelling on local streets and routes. In urban areas they can improve the efficiency of the transport network through reducing congestion, and in turn, the air pollution that is generated by vehicular traffic. In short, active travel modes have the potential to make a major contribution to supporting the borough's high streets, making them quieter, cleaner, more liveable and more prosperous.

3.3 Kent's visitor economy is reported to be worth £3.4bn according to research commissioned by Visit Kent, with 57 million visitors per year. Over 5 million of these visitors are estimated to be enticed by the County's cycling attractions. Maidstone Borough itself attracts over 4 million visitors per year, spending more than £250 million in the local economy. A Destination Management Plan was produced for the Borough Council in 2015⁽⁵⁾. One of its priorities is to make the River Medway an attraction in its own right and promote its use as a green corridor for cyclists and walkers, alongside the development of other themed cycling/walking trails in Maidstone Borough.

3.4 Existing leisure cycling opportunities in the borough include Mote Park, which is a short distance from Maidstone town centre via National Cycle Route 17 (NCR17). NCR17 provides a signed cycle route between Rochester and Ashford via Maidstone along a mixture of quiet lanes and traffic-free sections. From Mote Park, cyclists can cycle northeast to meet the Pilgrims Cycle Trail which connects Rochester Cathedral to Canterbury Cathedral through the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. North of Maidstone town centre, NCR17 climbs Blue Bell Hill before cutting across the countryside to arrive in Rochester by the River Medway and Cathedral. Further information about these opportunities is available from the Explore Kent website

3.5 There are a number of local cycling clubs, including the San Fairy Ann Cycling Club (with more than 500 members) and MCC Offroad which organise and participate in numerous cycling events in the Maidstone area and further afield.

3.6 Cycling is reported to be worth £2.9bn per annum to the UK economy, with the average cyclist contributing £230 per annum through activities including bicycle retail and related employment.⁽⁶⁾

Health Benefits

5 Maidstone Destination Management Plan, July 2015.

6 London School of Economics, The British Cycling Economy: 'Gross Cycling Product' Report, August 2011, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/38063/1/BritishCyclingEconomy.pdf>

3 . The Benefits of Walking and Cycling

3.7 The role of active travel modes in helping to create liveable towns and cities and promoting improved health/social inclusion is now becoming widely recognised by all tiers of government and health authorities. The link between transport, physical activity and health has been highlighted by the British Medical Association (BMA) ⁽⁷⁾ and warnings about the health consequences of an increasingly sedentary society are widely reported. It has been estimated that the cost of transport-related physical inactivity in England totals £9.8 billion per year. This is in addition to the estimated £2.5 billion annual healthcare cost of treating obesity.

3.8 The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) identifies that the health benefits associated with active travel, include:

- improved mental health and wellbeing;
- improved physical fitness; and
- the prevention of chronic diseases and health conditions, which include coronary heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, cancer and obesity.

3.9 Both cycling and walking are effective ways of increasing and integrating levels of physical activity into everyday life. Many people have yet to experience the benefits of regular cycling, especially for local journeys. In the UK 67% of trips by all modes are less than five miles (well within an hour's cycle ride in an urban area), and 38% are less than two miles ⁽⁸⁾, or within 40 minutes on foot. Therefore cycling is a potential mode for many of these trips.

3.10 Walking and cycling isochrones for the Maidstone urban area are presented in technical documents at the end of this strategy. These show that the vast majority of the Maidstone urban area is within the 5000m (5km) threshold for trips by cycle and a significant proportion of the Maidstone urban area is within the 2000m (2km) threshold for trips on foot. This demonstrates the huge latent potential for increasing the proportion of trips made by walking and cycling.

3.11 A recent study by the DfT into the value for money of the Cycle City Ambition Grant and the Cycling in National Parks Grant found that the combined Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of each of these funding streams was 5.5:1, which was considered to represent very high value for money. Around 60% of these benefits were accounted for by improved physical fitness, with much of the remainder being associated with journey quality and congestion relief ⁽⁹⁾.

3.12 Walking and cycling in urban areas can improve air quality through reducing congestion, and the air pollution that is generated by motor traffic, which represents the majority of air pollutants in Maidstone Borough. An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was designated in 2001 which covers the

7 British Medical Association, Healthy Transport = Healthy Lives, July 2012, <http://bma.org.uk/transport>

8 Department for Transport, National Travel Survey 2013, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2013>

9 Department for Transport, Value for Money Assessment for Cycling Grants, August 2014, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/348943/vfm-assessment-of-cycling-grants.pdf

entire urban conurbation of Maidstone. Within the AQMA, the automatic air quality monitoring station at the A229 (Bridge Gyratory) recorded a mean concentration of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) of 46.9µg/m³ in the year 2014⁽¹⁰⁾, above the maximum annual mean of 40µg/m³ as required by national air quality regulations. Of the 65 other (non-automatic) monitoring sites across the borough, fifteen sites exceeded the maximum annual mean in the year 2014.

3.13 The above results highlight air quality concerns in the vicinity of main roads in the borough. Poor air quality affects health, contributing towards cardiovascular disease and respiratory illness, adding further to NHS costs. It has been reported that air pollution reduces life expectancy by 7-8 months, which has the equivalent UK economic impact of £20 billion per year.⁽¹¹⁾ The potential for walking and cycling in Maidstone Borough to help increase life expectancy and decrease the economic impact of air pollution generated by vehicular traffic is therefore evident.

Social Benefits

3.14 Both walking and cycling are activities which can be fun and provide an opportunity for social interaction, unlike single occupancy car journeys. They enable a better appreciation of the borough's urban and rural environment. Cycling provides access to routes and locations which are often too far for many to walk. Bicycles can coexist well with other users in residential streets and town centres, unlike the severance effect which can be caused by busy motor traffic routes.

3.15 As well as enabling exercise and recreation, cycling can also be a faster option for short journeys in congested urban environments. It is also a low cost transport option and therefore accessible to most people, promoting social inclusion. By reducing or removing the costs of car ownership, cycling when effectively linked with the public transport network has the potential to be an attractive option for young people in particular, giving them independence and increasing their ability to access education, training, employment, leisure and healthcare opportunities further afield.

10 Bureau Veritas, Maidstone Borough Council Updating and Screening Assessment Report, December 2015, http://www.kentair.org.uk/documents/Maidstone_USA_2015_final_issued.pdf

11 Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs, Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, July 2007, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69336/pb12654-air-quality-strategy-vol1-070712.pdf

Walking and Cycling in Maidstone Borough Today

Existing Cycle Network

4.1 The borough's existing cycle network links the town centre to most suburban areas and community facilities, including several schools, Maidstone East railway station and Mote Park. National Cycle Network route 17 (NCR17) provides an 11 mile leisure/commuter link (approximately half off-carriageway) between Maidstone and Rochester. Via Mote Park, Weaving Street and Hockers Lane, NCR17 connects to the Pilgrims Cycle Trail at Detling in the North Downs. At present, NCR17 connects with NCR1 (Inverness to Dover) in Rochester and ends in Ashford, but KCC has plans to extend the network by connecting to NCR2 (Dover to St Austell) on the South Coast.

4.2 Maidstone has a Regional Route 12 (RR12) which originates in the town centre and extends along the A20 London Road into Tonbridge and Malling. A section of the route within Maidstone Borough is traffic free and provides good linkages to local schools in the residential area of Allington. In addition, Regional Route 19 (RR19) connects the A249 Bearsted Road (in the vicinity of the Hilton Hotel) to the town centre via Hampton Road and Snowdon Avenue/Vinters Road along Union Street to Week Street.

4.3 Cycle parking facilities are provided at locations within the Maidstone town centre shopping area, as well as cycle stands at Maidstone East and West railway stations and at the Gateway, KCC Sessions House and Invicta House. In addition, cycle lockers are available at Maidstone East railway station. Outside the town centre, some neighbourhood shopping areas are provided with cycle stands and Bearsted, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst railway stations have well-used cycle parking facilities.

4.4 Existing walking and cycling routes and facilities within the Maidstone urban area are illustrated in the Maidstone Walking and Cycling Map published by Explore Kent in 2012. Explore Kent (<http://explorekent.org>) is currently producing webpages for all Kent towns (including Maidstone) which will communicate cycling information including route maps. The Maidstone Walking and Cycling Map will also be added to the Borough Council and Visit Maidstone websites.

4.5 There are a number of issues which currently constrain the attractiveness of walking and cycling within Maidstone Borough:

- **Accessibility** – in many areas the pedestrian network does not currently provide equal access for all users. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving to assist the mobility and visually impaired may be unavailable, and the width of footways may in some cases be too narrow (whether in terms of their actual width, or their usable width due to the presence of sign columns or street furniture) to enable their use by wheelchairs and mobility scooters for example. Some routes are stepped without having a ramped alternative. In some locations topography is also likely to be a constraint.
- **Connectivity** – Linkages from west to east Maidstone via the town centre are limited, although the situation has recently improved with the refurbishment of the pedestrian bridge connecting Maidstone East and

Maidstone Barracks railway stations. Subways are often flooded due to inadequate drainage systems and maintenance. To the south of the town centre there are currently no designated cycle routes in Tovil and Loose, although there are bridleways to the east of the latter. Similarly there are no designated cycle routes in Fant, to the west of the town centre. Safer routes for cyclists to Maidstone West railway station and from the east to the schools and college at Oakwood Park are currently absent.

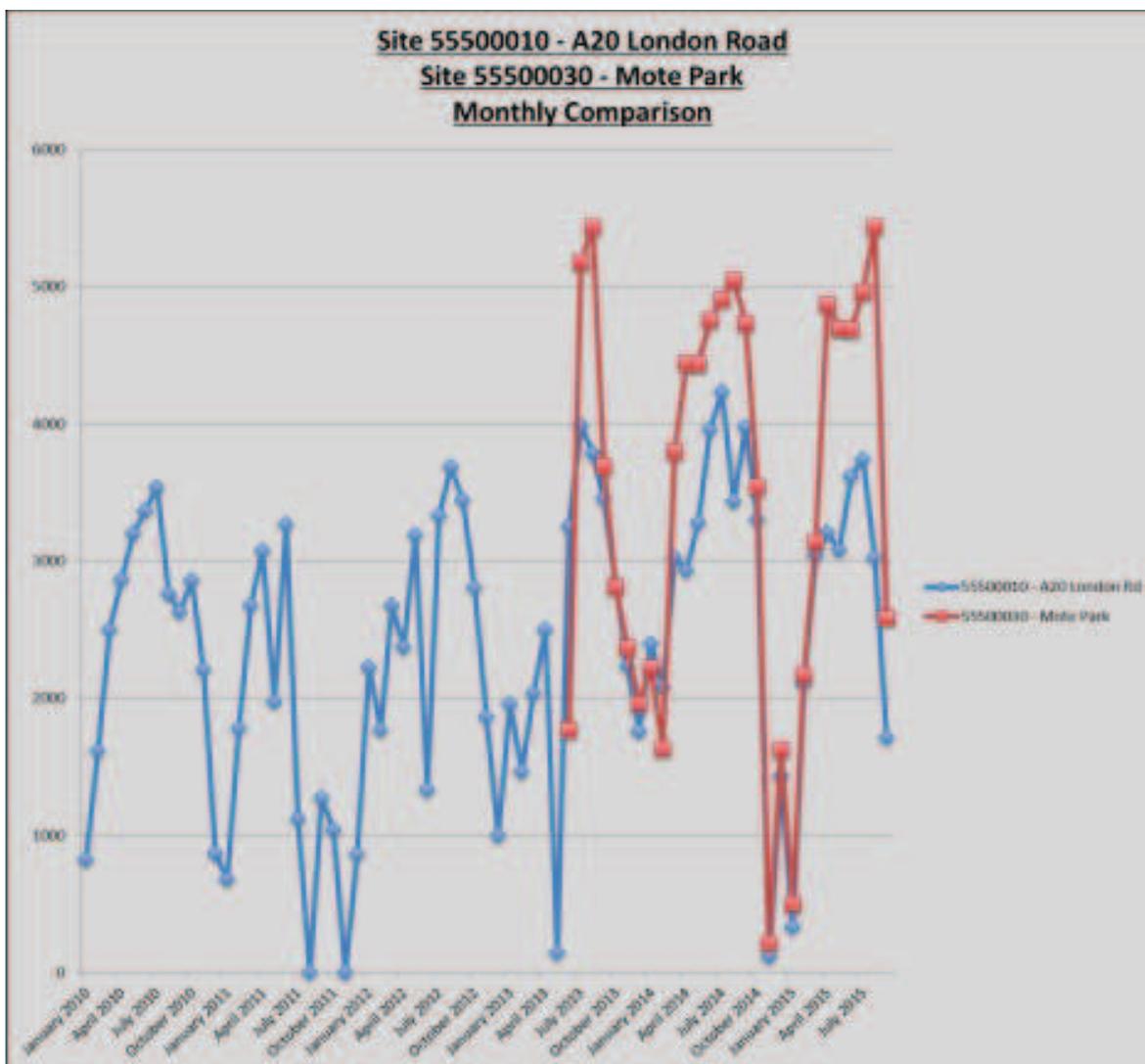
- **Safety** – safety concerns are frequently a barrier to people choosing to walk or cycle for some journeys. There are few traffic free cycle paths in the borough and new cyclists may lack the confidence to share road space with motor traffic. Walking and cycling routes lack lighting and natural surveillance, this may be another deterrent to the use of these modes. In winter, resources may enable the gritting of the most well used pedestrian and cycle routes. Funding for fault repairs and maintenance of cycle and pedestrian routes must be prioritised to enable the busiest routes to continue to be safe to use.
- **Secure cycle parking** – although considerable progress has been made in recent years, the availability of secure and safe cycle parking at key locations such as shopping areas and railway stations can be limited.

Existing Cycling Activity

4.6 DfT provides year on year monitoring of cycling trips across Kent from inner urban cordons and automatic traffic counts. KCC currently has only two fixed off-highway cycle counters for Maidstone, one on the A20 outside the Kent Police traffic headquarters, and the other in Mote Park, on NCR17, which was purchased and installed in 2013. More counters are needed at strategic locations to monitor trip data. This will help gauge the success of future improvements to the walking and cycling network.

4.7 Monthly data for the two fixed cycle counters covering the period from January 2010 to September 2015 is presented overleaf. This suggests that the rate of cycling has remained reasonably consistent over the period, although there is much variability from month to month which could be explained by the following:

- The relatively small number of cyclists crossing the counters;
- Lower levels of cycling in the winter months; and
- Battery problems with the counters may mean some cycling activity was not recorded. The counters are solar powered, but the batteries do not always correctly charge.



4.8 Cycle to work data from the 2011 Census indicates that only 0.8% of adults (935 people) usually cycle to work from homes in Maidstone Borough. DfT Annual Average Daily Flow data ⁽¹²⁾ for the years 2000 to 2014 have been analysed for automated traffic count sites on the key radial routes into the Maidstone urban area. For each radial route, the graphs presented at the end of the strategy identify the average number of cyclists passing the count sites each day and the percentage of all vehicles that these represent. Although this data records on-highway cycle flows only and not movements on parallel shared use footways, it nevertheless provides a useful baseline against which to measure the success of this Strategy.

4.9 Another potential source of useful baseline data is the number of children walking or cycling to school, which can be recorded through School Travel Plans. The reported modal share for all schools completing pupil travel surveys in Maidstone Borough is presented in the table below ⁽¹³⁾.

12 Source: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/traffic-counts/>
 13 Source: KCC School Travel Planning team

Mode of Travel to School	2013	2014	2015
Walk	33.0%	40.1%	41.2%
Cycle	2.5%	1.3%	3.4%
Bus	31.6%	16.4%	17.5%
Rail	4.4%	3.2%	0.8%
Car (shared)	3.5%	5.8%	2.1%
Car (alone)	24.6%	30.1%	29.4%
Other	0.4%	3.1%	5.6%
Number of schools submitting completed surveys	12	23	18

4.10 Given that not all schools repeat their surveys on an annual basis, the above data should be treated with some caution. However, KCC's school travel planning team indicate that there are a total of 20 schools in Maidstone Borough which have conducted two or more pupil travel surveys since 2007. Travel survey data collated by KCC will be reviewed on an annual basis to identify positive/negative trends in walking and cycling levels at each school and the potential explanatory factors.

Existing Walking Activity

4.11 KCC's Public Rights of Way (PROW) team has fixed walking counters on two footpaths in the Borough. One is path KB22 which connects Cripple Street with Old Drive to the south. The other is path KB11 which is the River Medway towpath between East Farleigh and Upper Fant. The data, not unreasonably, suggests that there are higher levels of walking activity in the summer months.

Improving the Walking and Cycling Network

5.1 As outlined in chapter 9 of the ITS, the Council’s targets for active modes are to:

- Increase the walking mode share of all work trips made by Borough residents from 8% in 2011 to more than 10% of all work trips by 2021 and more than 12% by 2031.
- Increase the cycling mode share of all work trips made by Borough residents from 0.8% in 2011 to more than 2% of all work trips by 2021 and more than 3% by 2031

5.2 This Walking and Cycling Strategy identifies four main objectives to achieve these targets:

1. *Creating new links* – seeking new opportunities to extend routes to more people;
2. *Maintenance of the cycle route network* – looking after what we already have, and improving it;
3. *Creating a safer environment for walkers and cyclists* – designing safer routes and providing road safety education for motorists and non-motorised users alike; and
4. *Spreading the word* – raising awareness of existing and emerging facilities available to walkers and cyclists.

5.3 In terms of creating new cycling links within the borough, which will also benefit walkers, proposals will be developed subject to available funding with the following strategic long-term aims in mind:

- “Filling in of the gaps” to create a **fully integrated urban cycle network**, with radial routes joined across the town centre. Key destinations (e.g. schools, colleges, hospitals, shopping centres, visitor attractions) and new housing and employment sites will be integrated into the cycle network.
- The creation of an **orbital walking and cycling route** around the Maidstone urban area, linking to the town centre via radial routes. This would be delivered through the designation of cycle routes along quiet lanes as well as the upgrading of existing footways alongside distributor roads and, where possible, footpath networks to provide cycle linkages. The following areas in particular are identified for intervention:
 - i. To the southeast of the town, between Langley and Loose, incorporating Boughton Monchelsea;
 - ii. To the south, within the Loose Valley Conservation Area and Hayle Park;
 - iii. To the west, within the Medway Valley and on Hermitage Lane (linking with Barming railway station);

- iv. To the north, from Hermitage Lane to Sandling via Allington Lock; and
- v. To the east, via the A20 Ashford Road.
- The creation of **cycle routes from rural service centres and smaller settlements to transport hubs** (where new/improved cycle parking will be provided), along a mixture of quiet lanes and segregated shared use footways, such as:
 - i. To rural railway stations (Headcorn, Staplehurst, Marden, Yalding, East Farleigh, Hollingbourne, Harrietsham, Lenham); and
 - ii. To bus stops on corridors where frequent interurban services are available or are planned as part of the ITS (e.g. A26 Tonbridge Road, A249 Sittingbourne Road).
- The creation of a **rural circular cycle route** (which could potentially be branded as a “Maidstone Ring” or similar) to encourage leisure cycling and exploration of the Borough’s rural attractions. This would complement the existing NCR17/Pilgrims Cycle Trail and improve connectivity between rural service centres by cycle.

5.4 Where the upgrading of existing public footpaths to provide cycle linkages is feasible in rural areas, consideration will be given to their conversion to bridleway status (rather than to cycle tracks) where appropriate and where a need has been identified, so that they can be used by equestrians as well as walkers and cyclists.

5.5 The above principles, and the guidance gratefully received from the Maidstone Cycling Campaign Forum, have informed the development of the detailed Action Plan presented in section 10. These detailed actions feed into the high level Transport Action Plan presented in Chapter 8 of the ITS. In respect of the cycle network the ITS actions are:

Action W1: Provision of accessible pedestrian routes for all users.

Action W2: Improve pedestrian accessibility across the River Medway in Maidstone town centre.

Action W3: Implement public realm improvement schemes within the town centre, such that pedestrian access is the primary mode within the central core of Maidstone.

Action C1: Maintain and further develop a strategic cycle network, connecting the town centre to key facilities and residential areas.

Action C2: Maintain and further develop cycle routes in rural service centres, connecting local amenities and transport hubs (rail stations and bus stops) to housing.

5.6 The objectives of network maintenance, creating a safer cycling environment and spreading the word are explored further in later parts of the strategy.

Maintenance of the Walking and Cycling Network

6.1 Unless new and existing walking and cycling facilities are maintained to an appropriate standard they will quickly fall into disrepair and will not be used. In residential areas, regular street cleaning may keep footways running parallel to motor traffic routes clear of debris, and surface defects may be promptly identified and repaired. However, the maintenance regime for off-carriageway routes, due to issues such as access and pressures on limited funding, is likely to be less extensive.

6.2 Cycle routes require specific maintenance, including the regular cleansing of gullies and kerb lines as well as the cutting back of vegetation to preserve available width and sight lines. Surface defects should be repaired before they become a hazard. Road accident debris such as glass and overgrown vegetation can present hazards to cyclists, resulting in punctured tyres, compromised route alignments or obstacles, all of which could risk the safety of a cyclist and put them in conflict with other road users.

6.3 KCC has primary responsibility for the co-ordination of highways and Public Rights of Way maintenance. It works with third party landowners including MBC, where required, to achieve maintenance objectives. KCC's maintenance programme is determined on the basis of information from regular inspections, annual surveys using specialist equipment, and reports from councillors, parish councils, community groups, user groups and residents. Road surfaces are surveyed by KCC Highway Inspectors in a manner which takes into account the needs of cyclists; for example, by giving appropriate attention to the two metre strip alongside the kerb line where most cyclists ride. In constructing and maintaining cycle routes, the County Council refers to guidance outlined in TRL Application Guide AG26 (Version 2)⁽¹⁴⁾.

6.4 All KCC Highways maintained off-carriageway routes are maintained to set criteria including surface vegetation cuts twice per year on the most well used routes if there is funding available. Maintenance of these routes is led by Maidstone's District Manager with support from the Cycling Transport Planner. The maintenance of the National Cycle Network routes within Maidstone is supported by Sustrans Rangers. They help to maintain the cycle network in a number of ways, including placing temporary signs, reporting faults, undertaking small-scale vegetation clearance and organising work days for more ambitious maintenance projects.

Action C3: MBC and KCC to work with partners to ensure the regular maintenance of all cycle tracks within the borough.

14 TRL, Footways and Cycle Route Design: Construction and Maintenance Guide, 2003, <http://trl.co.uk/reportspublications/trl-reports/report/?reportid=6180>

Safer Walking and Cycling

Cycle Training

7.1 National Standard Cycle Training (Bikeability) is provided across Kent by KCC and local School Games Partnerships. The training courses are structured for primary and secondary age school children, with training subsidised by the DfT for those in Years 5 to 9. The courses give children the skills to make safer choices when cycling and to enjoy the freedom of riding a bike. Bikeability courses are booked directly by schools.

7.2 Bikeability comprises three levels of competency-based cycle training. Level 1 is aimed at the basic bicycle control skills that are required to cycle safely in any environment. Level 2 is delivered on quiet roads and teaches participants the skills necessary to take a basic on-road journey and includes a variety of junctions. Level 3 tackles busy traffic situations and complex junctions. Importantly, participants must demonstrate competence at each level before they progress to the next.

7.3 Adult cycle training courses are also available. Corporate, group and individual training courses can be arranged and further information is available on KCC's website⁽¹⁵⁾



Action C4(a): Year 6 children will have access to Level 1 and 2 Bikeability training, and children in Years 7 to 9 will have access to Level 3 training.

Action C4(b): Adult cycle training will continue to be offered.

Road Safety

7.4 A key barrier to the use of active travel modes are people's concerns about road safety. Traffic free, segregated cycle routes are not available in all parts of the borough. Footways can be narrow or absent and lighting is not always available which can make walking an intimidating experience after dark.

7.5 KCC undertake regular road safety campaigns targeted at different road user groups. For example the "Share the Road Safely" ⁽¹⁶⁾ campaign seeks to promote a better understanding amongst all road users of the challenges faced by others, be they pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, car drivers or HGV drivers. The objective is for road users to be better able to anticipate hazards.

7.6 Plots of Personal Injury Collisions (PICs) involving pedestrians and cyclists are included at the end of the strategy.

7.7 These data plots will be reviewed in detail to identify significant clusters of PICs involving non-motorised users and to analyse the main causes of these collisions. This review will be used to develop a priority list of locations (e.g. road junctions, pedestrian crossing locations) where the upgrading of pedestrian and cycle facilities is required.

7.8 This priority list will be developed with reference to KCC's Road Casualty Reduction Strategy 2014-2020 ⁽¹⁷⁾ which identifies initiatives to improve safety along routes as a whole. Its objective is to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured (KSI) in road crashes by 33% compared to those recorded in Kent during the year 2010.

Action W4: Identify priority areas for implementation of safety improvements to reduce road traffic collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists.

16 <http://www.kentroadsafety.info/oneroadforall/>

17 <http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-safety/road-casualty-reduction-strategy>

Promoting Walking and Cycling in Maidstone Borough

8.1 The Council recognises that providing new walking and cycling routes alone will not dramatically increase the use of active travel modes in the borough. Action to create a pro-active travel culture is needed in a range of areas which include land use and transport planning, regeneration, leisure, health and education. Promotion of walking and cycling will not only involve improved engineering measures and safety but also training, publicity and raising awareness amongst a range of different audiences.

Walking and Cycling Route Mapping

8.2 First and foremost, KCC and MBC's websites need to be kept updated to enable local residents and visitors to access the latest information on walking and cycling routes and facilities. The Maidstone walking and cycling map should be updated and made available both electronically and in paper format, with copies distributed to the visitor information centre, tourist attractions, hotels, large employers and schools.

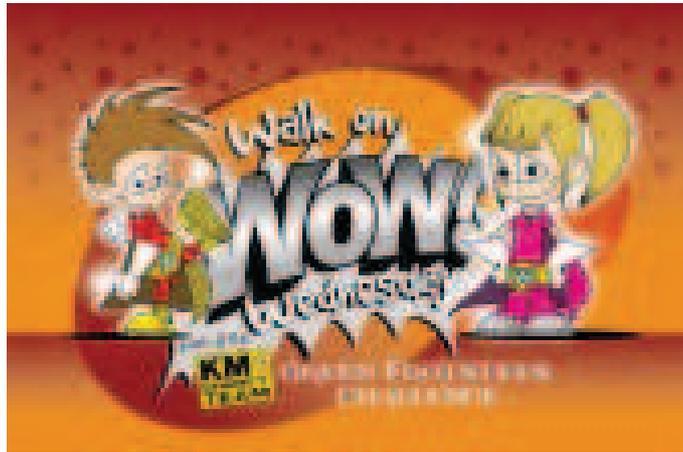
Wayfinding

8.3 Efficient wayfinding can encourage walking and cycling through providing people with the information they need to navigate the town successfully, and understand the journey times between locations. Having clearly branded, consistent, wayfinding throughout the Maidstone central area not only provides information and reassurance to those less familiar with the area, but also adds to the overall experience of the public realm. All cycle routes throughout the borough should be fully signposted for the benefit of new cyclists and those who are unfamiliar with the area.

Travel Planning

8.4 As well as walking, cycling should form a key component of school and workplace Travel Plans and local clubs and cycle shops could help to promote cycling within the borough through active promotion and use of the local network. Travel Plans will be encouraged as they can include commitment to improving cycling facilities like secure parking, bicycle lockers or the provision of shower facilities for large employers. Guidance for schools and businesses on preparing their own travel plans is provided at www.jambusterstpms.co.uk and www.kentsmartertravel.co.uk respectively.

8.5 With respect to school travel planning specifically, MBC is a sponsor of the KM Charity Group 'Walk to School' which seeks to encourage more parents and children to walk to school. KM and KCC jointly run walking buses and the 'Walk on Wednesday' scheme. Across the County since its inception, the Charity has resulted in:



- 40,000 children and families being involved;
- 600,000 green journeys annually; and
- 250,000 school run car journeys removed.

8.6 KCC also runs a 'Small Steps' programme which is aimed at Year 2 and teaches pupils to be 'Brilliant Pedestrians'

8.7 Schemes such as the above contribute greatly to reducing traffic congestion. These achievements will be built on via the appointment of a "school travel plan champion" within MBC to work with schools and KCC to further reduce car trips undertaking the "school run".

8.8 A number of Maidstone Borough Council's Civic Enforcement Officers, who have received training through KCC, are now equipped with and use cycles as part of their daily work routine within the urban area.

Walking and Cycling Events

8.9 Successful recent initiatives include:

- **Sky Ride Local** – this programme provides free guided cycle rides for all ages and abilities throughout the UK, including rides in Maidstone Borough. These have been delivered since 2012 by KCC Highways (lead partner), Kent Sport, the KCC Public Health team and MBC's community



team in partnership with British Cycling. Many rides have been linked to Shepway Community Centre and the Fusion Healthy Living Centre at Park Wood. They are led by qualified staff and benefit from wider promotion via www.goskyride.com. Funding has been secured to deliver further Sky Rides Local, Ride Social and Breeze rides in Kent during 2016.



- **Ride Social** – this programme is intended to keep people cycling beyond the Sky Ride Local schedule of rides, assisting Public Health meet targets in reaching inactive people and producing more cycling commuters.
- **Breeze** – this British Cycling programme is targeted at women (young children are also allowed). With the support of Kent Sport a dedicated KCC co-ordinator has been appointed, encouraging new ride “Champions”.
- **Cycle Healthy, Cycle Happy** - this scheme is supported by MBC and run through three GP surgeries in the town (<http://www.communitycycleworks.co.uk/cycle-healthy/>)

8.10 In addition other opportunities to establish cycling events will be investigated, such as during National Bike Week each June and National Cycle to Work Day each September.

Promoting Walking and Cycling Through the Planning Process

8.11 It is important that the requirements of planning applications are standardised and clarified so that cycling can be promoted through the development management process. In particular it is essential that new residential properties and other developments (such as employment, retail, healthcare and educational uses) provide secure cycle parking/storage areas close to the building entrance/exit. In respect of residential properties, for example, although a cycle locked in a shed at the end of a garden is stored within the curtilage of the property as required by the Kent & Medway Structure Plan 2006: SPG4 Vehicle Parking Standards ⁽¹⁸⁾, it is less likely to be used than one stored close to the front door. The provision of secure cycle storage should be managed via the development management process in the same way as car parking is managed. Equally important is the provision of attractive pedestrian and cycle routes within and surrounding new developments, with good natural surveillance and crossing facilities to integrate with the surrounding neighbourhood. The Kent Design Guide ⁽¹⁹⁾ provides detailed guidance regarding the design of streets for pedestrians and cyclists.

Maidstone Cycling Campaign Forum

8.12 With the support of KCC’s Cycling Transport Planner, the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum was re-established in 2015. The Forum brings together Members and officers from the Council, representatives of organisations with an interest

18 http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/869846/Kent-and-Medway-Structure-Plan-2006-SPG4-Vehicle-Parking-Standards.pdf
 19 <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/strategies-and-policies/regeneration-policies/kent-design-guide>

in cycling and interested members of the public. Its goal is to “help create a cycle-friendly culture in Maidstone, where residents and visitors of all ages and abilities choose to cycle regularly for those shorter journeys they do not make on foot.”

8.13 The Forum has completed a number of cycle related research tasks since its original establishment, and has recently provided assistance with the assessment of existing cycling routes in the borough, highlighting missing links, as well as identifying potential new strategic routes.

Action W5: Actively encourage and promote walk to school initiatives.

Action W6: Improve street signage with better pedestrian wayfinding and a reduction in footway clutter.

Action C5: Support the Maidstone Cycling Campaign Forum as a group to promote the cycling cause in the borough.

Action C6: Improve cycle security and parking at all key transport hubs and public amenities (including schools, healthcare facilities and retail locations).

Action C7: Encourage employers to incorporate cycling into Workplace Travel Plans.

Action C8: Promote cycling in schools through School Travel Plans.

Action C9: Ensure all cycle routes are fully advertised and signposted within the borough.

Action C10: Revise and update the “Explore Maidstone Walking and Cycling Map” to extend coverage to the wider borough and indicate destinations in neighbouring local authorities. Map to be available both electronically and in paper format.

Action C11: Standardise and clarify the requirements of planning applications with respect to the provision of walking and cycling facilities, to promote the use of these active travel modes.

Monitoring the Walking and Cycling Strategy

9.1 This Strategy will be regularly monitored alongside the ITS.

9.2 Monitoring should take several forms including continuous automatic counters on walking and cycling routes and detailed user surveys. This will enable a detailed database to be established which in turn can inform economic appraisals and health impact assessments in the borough.

9.3 Details of the walking and cycling modal share targets are presented in Chapter 11 of the ITS. Progress against the ITS targets will be monitored using future census data, but walking and cycling activity will be analysed on a more regular basis using the above data sources. It is envisaged that the Walking and Cycling Strategy itself will be updated every five years, with the first update scheduled in 2021.

Action C13: MBC and KCC to identify locations throughout the cycle network where new automatic walk/cycle counters should be installed to enable a detailed analysis of usage. Installation to proceed as resources allow, but each new walking/cycling infrastructure proposal will be assessed to see if an additional counter should be added to augment the data gathering process.

10.1 Proposed Development of the Walking and Cycling Network

10.2 If the aims set out in this strategy are to be achieved then the schemes chosen must create a network that appeals to both existing and potential pedestrians and cyclists.

10.3 Planning and prioritisation of the development of the walking and cycling network in Maidstone Borough has been undertaken with input from the Maidstone Cycling Campaign Forum. Proposals have been sifted on the grounds of likely technical and political deliverability. Recommended interventions have been identified and the Action Plan overleaf splits these into the following geographical areas:

- Maidstone Town Centre
- North West Maidstone
- South West Maidstone
- North East Maidstone
- South East Maidstone
- Rural Maidstone Borough

10.4 The technical documents at the end of the strategy contain three maps illustrating the recommended infrastructure interventions, one covering Maidstone town centre, the second covering the Maidstone urban area and the third the wider borough. These are described in the accompanying Action Plan, together with an indicative timetable for their implementation, potential funding sources and delivery partners.

10.5 As this is a strategy, it should be noted that the proposals are indicative only and that their implementation will be dependent upon negotiation with existing landowners, securing the necessary funding and the completion of satisfactory feasibility design, detailed design and public consultation exercises at the appropriate stage.

10.6 In the first instance, however, it is recommended that a detailed audit of the borough's walking and cycling corridors is undertaken to identify missing links, gaps or barriers, including locations for new or extended cycle parking. The recommended infrastructure interventions will then be refined accordingly. For example, a similar exercise has recently been undertaken by Sustrans on behalf of Medway Council. It is suggested that an indicative budget of £15,000 could be allocated for this task, with the DfT's new Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund being the most likely funding source.

10.7 This Walking and Cycling Strategy is a living strategy, one that is flexible and can adapt to changing circumstances. In particular, emerging Neighbourhood Plans, developed by parish councils in working partnership with MBC, can provide a more local emphasis on the walking and cycling improvements required in rural areas. Furthermore, ongoing engagement with the Maidstone Cycling Campaign

Forum will take place to review progress in implementing the Action Plan. Where appropriate, actions will be refined or new interventions identified which will inform future iterations of the Strategy.

10.8 The improvements identified within the Neighbourhood Plans and through ongoing engagement with the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum will be incorporated within an updated Walking and Cycling Action Plan as appropriate as part of the monitoring and review process for the Strategy.

Action C14: MBC and KCC to commission a detailed audit of the borough's walking and cycling corridors to refine the infrastructure interventions recommended in the Action Plan.

Maidstone Town Centre

Action	Proposal	Type of Infrastructure Required	Timescale for Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Potential Funding Sources	Delivery Partners
			Short term <5 years	Medium term 5 - 10 years	Long term >10 years		
MTC1	Widening of existing Wat Tyler Way shared use footway	Footway widening on east side of Wat Tyler Way between Ashford Road and Chancery Lane, amended carriageway markings (reduced lane widths).				CIL DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund DfT Integrated Transport block funding	KCC MBC
113							
MTC2	Upgraded crossing facilities on A249 Sittingbourne Road at Union Street/Vintners Road junction.	Signage, upgrading of controlled crossing to toucan standard, widening of footway alongside Sittingbourne Road, surfacing				CIL DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund DfT Integrated Transport block funding	KCC MBC

MTC3	Improved cycle connectivity between High Street and Lockmeadow.	<p>Package of measures to improve cycle facilities between High Street and Barker Road. Signage, upgrading of Bishops Way controlled crossing, expansion of cycle/pedestrian waiting areas, relocation of lamp columns/street furniture, cycle facilities on Barker Road, surfacing. Installation of cycle shelter/stands at Lockmeadow. Some measures to be delivered as part of Maidstone Bridges Gyrotory remodelling, other measures as part of action MTC9.</p>			LEP Local Growth Fund MBC New Homes Bonus	KCC MBC
MTC4	Enable cycling between College Road and Brunswick Street.	<p>Upgrade existing footpath link between A229 Hayle Road and Brunswick Street. Install toucan crossing on A229 Hayle Road to facilitate cycle access to and from College Road. Amended Right of Way Order required, signage, surfacing.</p>			CIL S106 DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund DfT Integrated Transport block funding	KCC MBC

MTC5	<p>Package of measures to improve pedestrian environment and public realm along Week Street, incorporating appropriate access for cyclists.</p>	<p>Allow cycle access to Week Street:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) at all times between Station Road and Union Street (contraflow required); 2) from 8pm to 8am between Union Street and High Street (subject to review). <p>Cycle parking facilities to be provided within improved public realm. Amended Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) required, signage on entries to pedestrian priority zone, contraflow road markings, surfacing (to indicate cycle route).</p>			<p>CIL MBC Capital Programme</p>	<p>KCC MBC Town Centre Partnership</p>
MTC6	<p>Package of measures to improve linkages between River Medway and Week Street, including pedestrianisation of Earl Street.</p>	<p>Pedestrianisation of Earl Street between Pudding Lane and Week Street should be designed to maintain access for cyclists. Cycle parking facilities to be provided within improved public realm. Linkages with MTC13.</p>			<p>CIL</p>	<p>KCC MBC Town Centre Partnership</p>

MTC7	New cycle route between Week Street (NCN17) and Medway Valley towpath, serving Kent History & Library Centre.	Signage, footway widening on Stacey Street and Fairmeadow, new direct shared use footway from James Whatman Way to Fairmeadow, existing crossing facilities to south of A229/James Whatman Way roundabout to be upgraded to toucan standard.				CIL S106	KCC MBC
MTC8	Upgrade existing footway across River Medway between Maidstone Barracks (Buckland Hill) and Maidstone East (Station Road) for shared pedestrian/cycle use.	Signage (to indicate shared use of path, but with priority to pedestrians).				CIL S106 DfT Integrated Transport block funding	KCC MBC
MTC9	Medway Valley Towpath	Towpath improvements and making of Cycle Tracks Order to create a cycle route between Allington Lock and East Farleigh. In the longer term, this route to be extended as per RMB7 to the				LEP (Local Sustainable Transport Fund) MBC (New Homes Bonus)	KCC MBC

MTC10	Scotney Gardens – Whatman Park towpath	Medway Towns and Tonbridge.	On west side of River Medway, new section of towpath and improvements to existing towpath.				S106	KCC MBC
MTC11	Wayfinding Strategy – package of measures to introduce themed trails and quarters in the town centre to improve legibility.	Additional signage to benefit pedestrians and cyclists within town centre. Monoliths and finger posts at key locations: • Barracks, East, West rail stations • Outside shopping centres/main shopping streets • Outside major attractions (e.g. museum, theatre)					CIL DfT Sustainable Travel “Access” Fund	KCC MBC Town Centre Partnership South Eastern Rail Franchisee Network Rail Bus Operators
MTC12	Public realm improvements on King Street between Wyke Manor Road and existing bus station access.	Footpath improvements, cycle facilities. Upgraded crossing facilities at junction with Church Street.					CIL S106 (Church Street crossing improvements)	KCC MBC Town Centre Partnership

							Bus Operators
MTC13	New River Medway pedestrian/cycle crossing	Provision of shared use pedestrian/cycle footbridge linking St Peter's Street and Earl Street.				CIL LEP Local Growth Fund	KCC MBC Town Centre Partnership
MTC14	New cycle parking facilities at Maidstone West railway station.	Funding secured for the installation of five cycle stands (accommodating 10 cycles) with shelter, together with CCTV				LEP (Local Sustainable Transport Fund)	MBC South Eastern Rail Franchisee KCC

North West Maidstone

Action	Proposal	Type of Infrastructure Required	Timescale for Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Potential Funding Sources	Delivery Partners
			Short term <5 years	Medium term 5 - 10 years	Long term >10 years		
NWM1	Footway widening on north side of A20 London Road between Castle Road and Grace Avenue to create two-way cycle path.	Signage, surfacing, reconfiguration of Grace Avenue eastbound bus stop layby.				CIL DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund DfT Integrated Transport block funding	KCC MBC
NWM2	Upgraded crossing facilities at Castle Road/London Road junction.	Install controlled crossing facilities on all arms. Dropped kerbs, tactile paving, signage.				CIL DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund DfT Integrated Transport block funding	KCC MBC
NWM3	Create new cycle route between	Signage, footway improvements				CIL	KCC

NWM4	Newbury Avenue and Sandling via Allington Lock, providing low vehicle traffic route to Museum of Kent Life.	(widening, dropped kerbs, tactile paving) between Forstal Road and Sandling.			DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund DfT Integrated Transport block funding	MBC
120	Cycle route on east side of Hermitage Lane, linking Barming rail station (TMBC) with traffic free cycle path to Queen's Road (Cherry Orchard).	Footway widening, signage, dropped kerbs, tactile paving.			S106 CIL DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund DfT Integrated Transport block funding	KCC TMBC MBC South Eastern Rail Franchisee
NWM5	Cycle route between Giddyhorn Lane and Hermitage Lane. Continuation to Oakwood Park/Road.	Surface existing footpath and upgrade to bridleway status. Signage and lighting.			S106 CIL DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund DfT Integrated Transport block funding	KCC MBC

South West Maidstone

Action	Proposal	Type of Infrastructure Required	Timescale for Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Potential Funding Sources	Delivery Partners
SWM1	<p>Creation of cycle route from Barming to Kings Hill via North Pole Road. Proposals will be developed through engagement with Parish Councils and public consultation, but potential options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of reduced speed limit and cycle-friendly traffic calming measures. • The introduction of one-way through motor traffic with a short length of cycle contraflow lane in the 	<p>Dependent upon intervention pursued, but could include Traffic Regulation Order for lower speed limit/one way vehicle movement, Stopping Up Order, bollards, signage. Link with Medway Valley Towpath (MTC9) via North Street and South Street.</p>	Short term <5 years	Medium term 5 - 10 years	Long term >10 years	<p>CIL DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund DfT Integrated Transport block funding</p>	<p>TMBC KCC MBC</p>

SWM2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> middle section of North Pole Road. Closure to through motor traffic through the installation of physical bollards in the middle section of North Pole Road. 					
122	<p>Creation of cycle route from Medway Valley towpath (Unicomes Lane) to Hackney Road and westwards to South Street. This would provide an alternative cycle route during floods at East Farleigh.</p>	<p>Signage, upgrade existing footpaths to bridleway status, vegetation clearance (e.g. east of Farleigh Lane).</p>			<p>CIL DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund DfT Integrated Transport block funding</p>	<p>KCC MBC</p>
SWM3	<p>Upgrading of new footpath on east side of Dean Street linking public footpaths KB14 and KB15 to bridleway status.</p>	<p>Signage, upgrade to bridleway status, dropped kerbs/crossing facilities</p>	<p>Medium</p>		<p>CIL s106 DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund</p>	<p>KCC MBC</p>

	DfT Integrated Transport block funding							
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North East Maidstone

Action	Proposal	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Potential Funding Sources	Delivery Partners
			Short term <5 years	Medium term 5 - 10 years	Long term >10 years		
NEM1	Package of highway improvements between Bearsted and New Cut Roundabouts.	Provision of new toucan crossing and combined foot/cycle way between the Bearsted and New Cut roundabouts as part of dual carriageway works.				S106	KCC MBC
NEM2	Package of highway improvements at M20 Junction 7.	As part of Junction 7 signalisation, creation of a new signal controlled pedestrian route through the gyratory				S106	Highways England KCC MBC
NEM3	Cycle friendly traffic management measures on	Feasibility study required but potential measures include:				CIL Integrated Transport block funding	KCC MBC

125	Sandling Lane/ Penenden Heath Road.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in speed limit from 40mph to 30mph • Vertical/horizontal traffic calming • Footway widening to facilitate shared pedestrian/cycle use • Improved connectivity with pedestrian/cycle facilities on Bearsted Road (NEM1) 					
NEM4	New cycle parking facilities at Bearsted railway station.	Funding secured for installation of four cycle stands accommodating eight cycles, and CCTV				LEP (Local Sustainable Transport Fund)	MBC South Eastern Rail Franchisee KCC
NEM5	Package of improvement	In conjunction with pedestrian				S106/S278	MBC

	<p>measures on the A20 Ashford Road between New Cut Road and Woodcut Farm</p>	<p>refuges and bus stops outside site EMP1(5), improvements to north side footway to facilitate shared use by pedestrians and cyclists, to connect with existing advisory cycle routes in Bearsted.</p>				<p>CIL LEP (Local Sustainable Transport Fund)</p>	<p>KCC</p>
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South East Maidstone

Action	Proposal	Type of Infrastructure Required	Timescale for Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Timescale for Delivery	Potential Funding Sources	Delivery Partners
SEM1	Creation of a cycle route from Sutton Road (Local Plan site H1(10) to The Quarries via Brishing Lane and Brishing Road (these are existing advisory cycle routes). This would connect with an existing advisory cycle route to Loose and the proposed Loose "Greenway".	Signage, surfacing.	Short term <5 years	Medium term 5 - 10 years	Long term >10 years	S106	Developers KCC MBC
SEM2	Loose "Greenway" – cycle route from Old Drive to Cripple Street. Potential further extension southwards to Kirkdale.	Signage, surfacing, widening, existing footpaths upgraded to bridleway status.				LEP Local Growth Fund	KCC MBC Loose Parish Council
SEM3	Eastwards extension of Sutton Road cycle routes	Signage, surfacing, lighting, toucan				S106	KCC MBC

	to provide sustainable transport access to housing sites H1(7), (8), (9) and (10).	crossing(s) on A274 to connect housing sites to north and south of road and to connect with existing cycle routes through Shepway/Park Wood.				
SEM4	Crossing facilities on A274 to connect housing site H1(7) to the north with site H1(10) to the south.	Dropped kerbs, tactile paving, Toucan signage. Toucan crossing anticipated but details subject to agreement with KCC.	S106	KCC MBC		
SEM5 SEM5	Crossing facilities on A274 north of Horseshoes Lane junction to provide sustainable transport access to amenities on housing site H1(10) for residents of Langley/Langley Heath.	Dropped kerbs, tactile paving, Toucan signage. Toucan crossing anticipated but details subject to agreement with KCC.	S106	KCC MBC		

Rural Maidstone Borough

Action	Proposal	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Potential Funding Sources	Delivery Partners
			Short term <5 years	Medium term 5 - 10 years	Long term >10 years		
RMB1	Creation of cycle route from Maidstone to Headcorn (and beyond to Biddenden)	Signage, quiet unclassified roads, some on-street cycle lanes/segregated cycle track (A274).				CIL S106 DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund	KCC MBC Ashford DC Sustrans
129							
RMB2	Creation of cycle route from Maidstone to Staplehurst (and beyond to Cranbrook)	Signage, quiet unclassified roads, some on-street cycle lanes/segregated cycle track (A229).				CIL S106 DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund	KCC MBC Tunbridge Wells DC Sustrans

Action	Proposal	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Potential Funding Sources	Delivery Partners
RMB3	Creation of cycle route from Maidstone to Marden via Coxheath	Signage, quiet unclassified roads, some on-street cycle lanes/segreated cycle track.	Short term <5 years	Medium term 5 - 10 years	Long term >10 years	CIL S106 DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund	KCC MBC Sustrans
RMB4	Creation of cycle route from Medway Valley towpath to Paddock Wood via Laddingford	Signage, quiet unclassified roads.				CIL S106 DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund	KCC MBC Tunbridge Wells DC Sustrans

Action	Proposal	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Potential Funding Sources	Delivery Partners
			Short term <5 years	Medium term 5 - 10 years	Long term >10 years			
RMB5	Creation of cycle route from Maidstone to Sittingbourne via A249 and quiet lanes	Signage, segregated shared use footways, possible toucan crossings.					CIL S106 DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund	KCC Highways England MBC Swale BC Sustrans
131								
RMB6	Creation of cycle route from Maidstone to Harrietsham/Lenham via A20.	Signage, segregated shared use footways, possible toucan crossings.					CIL S106 DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund	KCC MBC Sustrans

Action	Proposal	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Potential Funding Sources	Delivery Partners
			Short term <5 years	Medium term 5 - 10 years	Long term >10 years		
RMB7	Creation of Maidstone – Tonbridge cycle route via Medway Valley	Extension of action MTC8. From Allington Lock northwards and Barming Bridge southwards. Signage, anticipated mixture of riverside towpath, segregated cycle track and quiet unclassified roads. Interaction of cyclists with existing agricultural activities such as cattle grazing will need to be carefully mitigated.				CIL DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund	Landowners KCC MBC Tonbridge & Malling BC Medway Council Sustrans Medway Valley Countryside Partnership
RMB8	Creation of rural circular cycle route linking Rural	Signage, some segregated cycle track, on-street cycle lanes.				CIL DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund	KCC MBC Swale BC

133	<p>Service Centres and other smaller settlements, e.g. Bredhurst, Wichling, Lenham (via Swale), Headcorn, Staplehurst (via TWDC), Marden, Yalding and via River Medway to Maidstone.</p>	<p>Potential scope for route branding/marketing of attractions en route to stimulate leisure cycling/tourism, in addition to use by commuting cyclists accessing public transport hubs.</p>				MBC	<p>Tunbridge Wells DC Parishes Private Sector Sustrans</p>
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Action	Proposal	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Potential Funding Sources	Delivery Partners
		Short term <5 years	Medium term 5 - 10 years	Long term >10 years			
RMB9	Coxheath Sustainable Transport Package	Further work is required to determine specific interventions. An audit of pedestrian/cycle accessibility to key infrastructure (e.g. bus stops, schools, shopping areas) is required. Potential interventions could include measures identified in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the need for a new footway link from site H1 (45) to Mill Lane, Coxheath has already been				CIL S106	KCC MBC Coxheath Parish Council

RMB10	Harrietsham Sustainable Transport Package	identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.				
135	<p>Initial work has been undertaken to identify a package of interventions, including the outline design of pedestrian crossing improvements and speed reduction measures on the A20. Other potential interventions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycle route between railway station and primary school • Additional cycle parking at railway station • Footway enhancements 				<p>CIL S106 DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund</p>	<p>KCC MBC South Eastern Rail Franchisee Harrietsham Parish Council</p>

RMB11 136	Headcorn Sustainable Transport Package	A full audit of pedestrian/cycle accessibility to key infrastructure (e.g. public transport stops, schools, shopping areas) is required to determine the specific interventions taken forward.				
		Further work is required to determine specific interventions. An audit of pedestrian/cycle accessibility to key infrastructure (e.g. public transport stops, schools, shopping areas) is required. Potential interventions could include measures identified in the			CIL S106 DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund	KCC MBC Headcorn Parish Council South Eastern Rail Franchisee

137		<p>Neighbourhood Plan. However, the need for crossing improvements at A274 Wheeler Street and a footway link from site EMP1(4) to the A274 has already been identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan. In addition funding has been secured for the installation of a shelter over the existing cycle stands at the railway station.</p>					
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Appendix A . Walking and Cycling Action Plan

Action	Proposal	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Type of Infrastructure Required	Potential Funding Sources	Delivery Partners
			Short term <5 years	Medium term 5 - 10 years	Long term >10 years		
RMB12	Hollingbourne - Cycle Parking	Funding has been secured for the installation of five cycle stands and CCTV at the railway station.				Local Enterprise Partnership (LSTF)	South Eastern Rail Franchisee KCC MBC
RMB13	Lenham Sustainable Transport Package	Further work is required to determine specific interventions. An audit of pedestrian/cycle accessibility to key infrastructure (e.g. public transport stops, schools, shopping areas) is required. Potential interventions could include				CIL S106 DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund	KCC MBC Lenham Parish Council

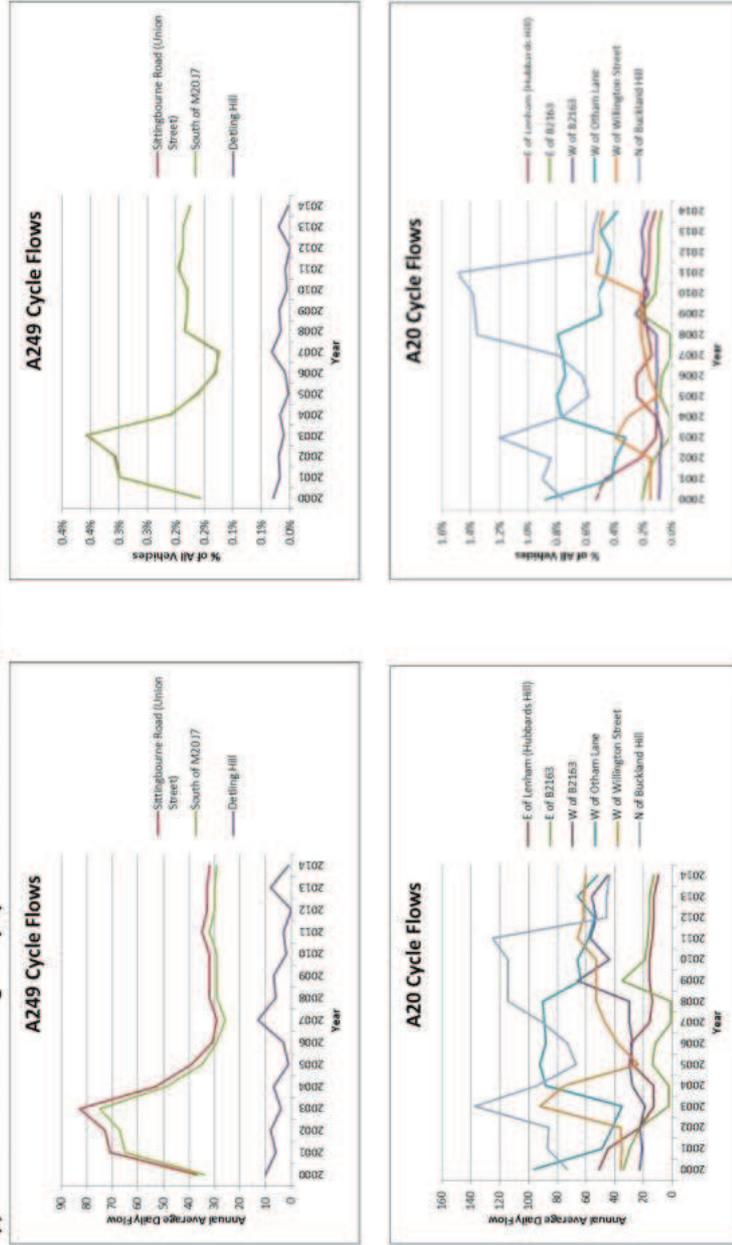
140		<p>measures identified in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan has already identified the need for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrading of the Goudhurst Road zebra crossing to a pelican crossing • New pedestrian crossing on Church Green • Traffic calming measures <p>In addition funding has been secured for the installation of 10 cycle stands and a shelter at the railway station.</p>					
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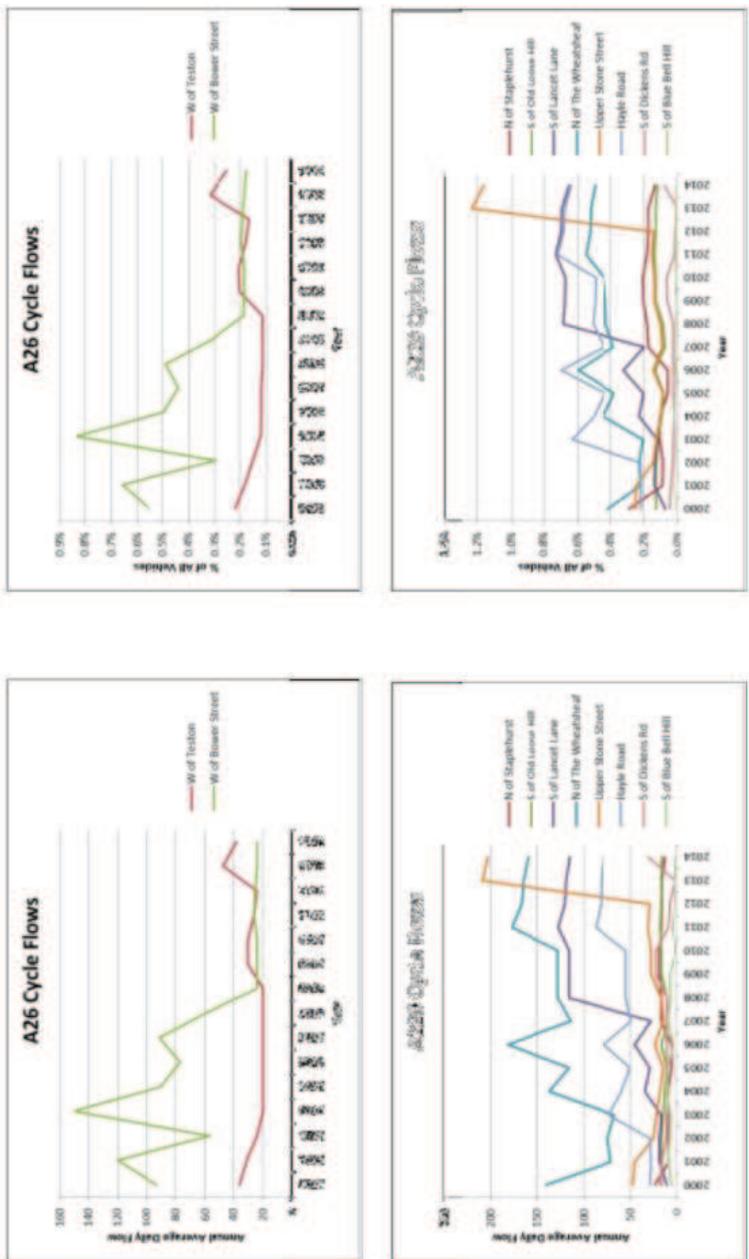
RMB15	Staplehurst Sustainable Transport Package	Further work is required to determine specific interventions. An audit of pedestrian/cycle accessibility to key infrastructure (e.g. public transport stops, schools, shopping areas) is required. Potential interventions could include measures identified in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, proposals are currently being developed at the railway station to:				CIL S106 South Eastern Rail Franchisee DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund	KCC MBC Staplehurst Parish Council South Eastern Rail Franchisee Bus Operators
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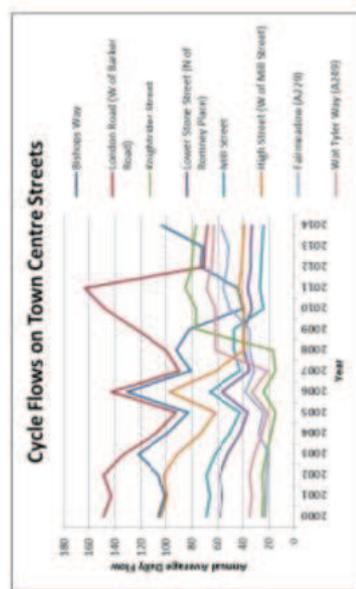
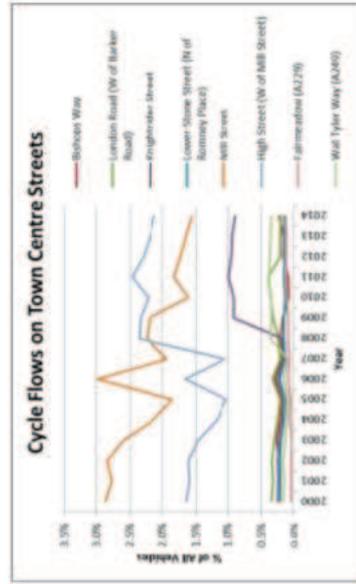
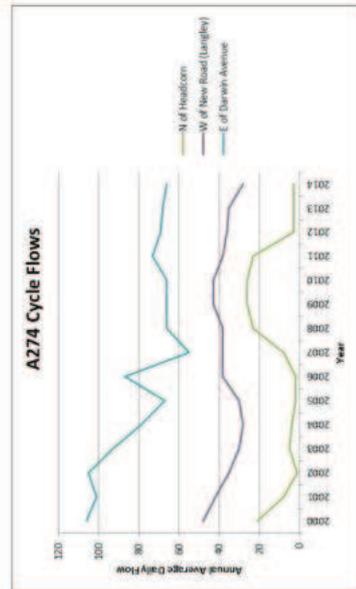
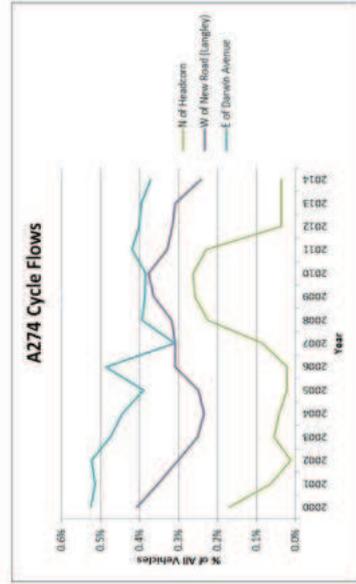
RMB16	Yalding Sustainable Transport Package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional cycle parking • Enhance footway and crossing facilities on Station Approach. 				
142		<p>Further work is required to determine specific interventions. An audit of pedestrian/cycle accessibility to key infrastructure (e.g. public transport stops, schools, shopping areas) is required. Potential interventions could include measures identified in the Neighbourhood Plan. Measures could include the</p>			<p>CIL S106 South Eastern Rail Franchisee DfT Sustainable Travel "Access" Fund</p>	<p>KCC MBC South Eastern Rail Franchisee Yalding Parish Council</p>

					provision of cycle parking to encourage the use of proposed new rural cycle routes (RMB4, RMB7, RMB8).		
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Appendix B: Annual Average Daily Cycle Flows & Modal Share – Maidstone Radial Routes









Legend

- 1000
- 2000
- 5000
- Located
- ?● Unlocated



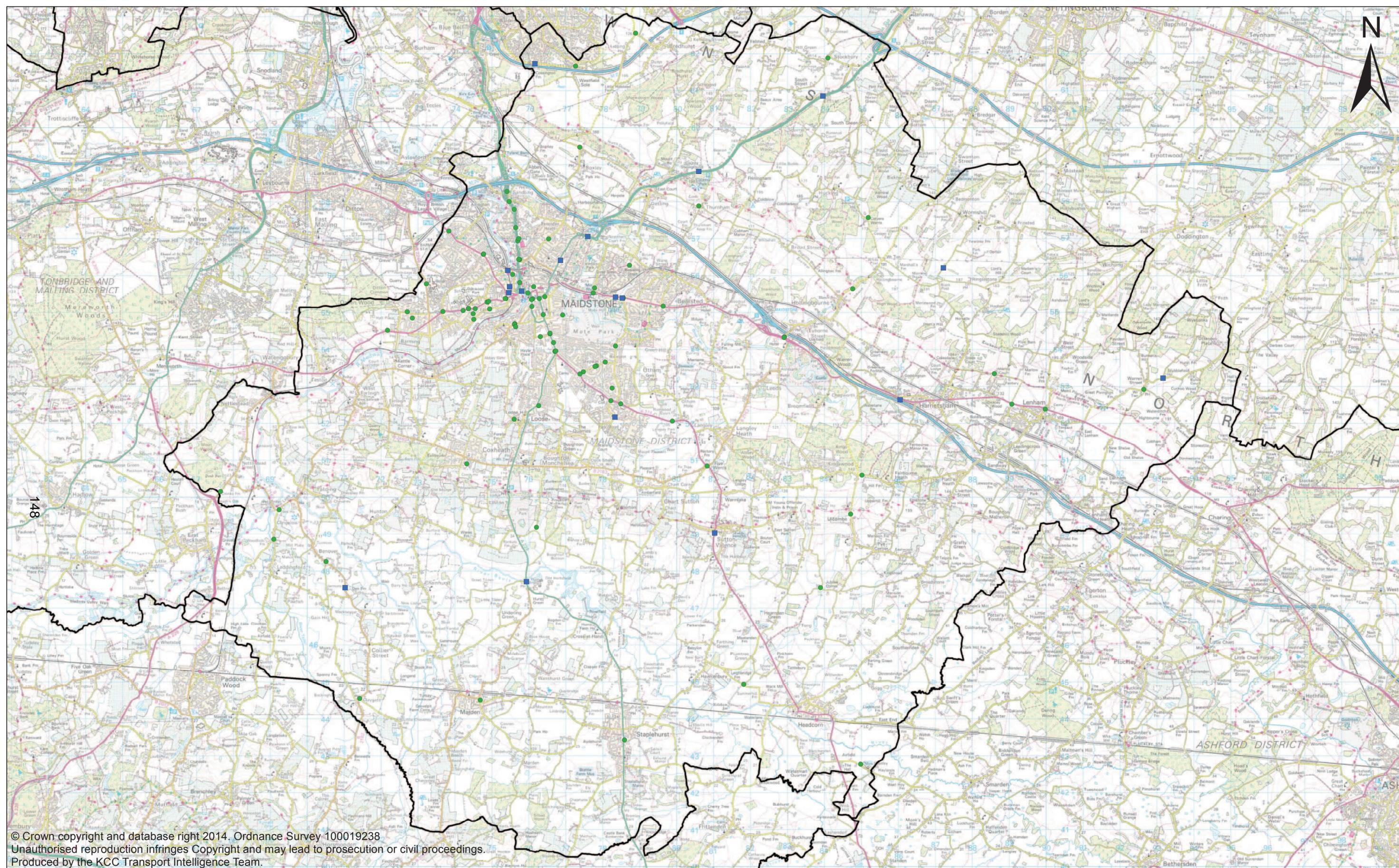
Project:
Maidstone

Drawing Name:
**Maidstone Distance Contour
OS Meridian 2 Layer
Network Analysis**

Drawn: WA	Checked: HM	Approved: TH
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Orig. Size: ISO A3	Scale: NTS
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Drawing Number: 001	Rev: A
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Maidstone District Pedal Cycle Collisions

(01.07.2012 to 30.06.2015)

Note: There were no fatal pedal cycle collisions recorded during this period

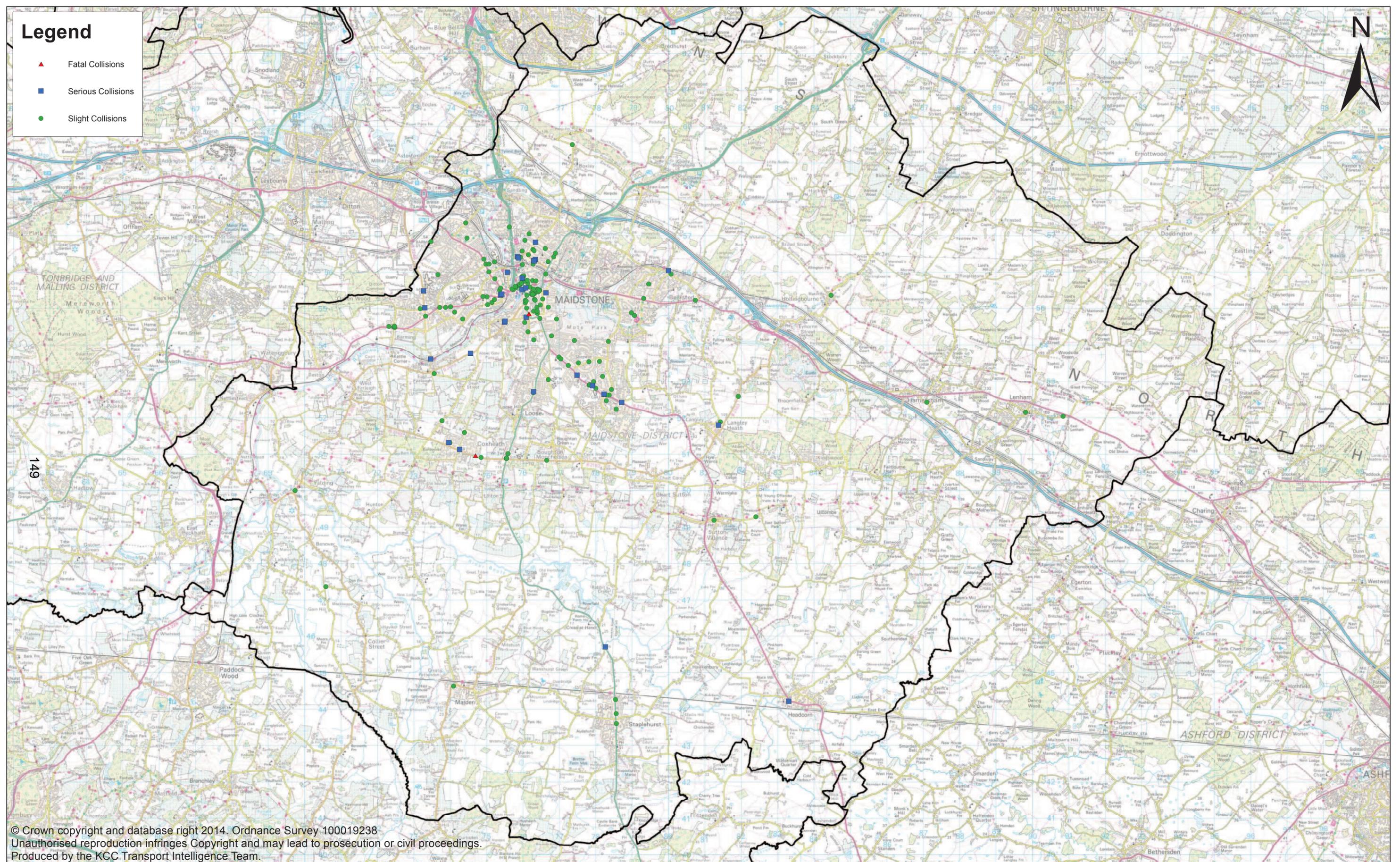
Legend

- Serious Collisions
- Slight Collisions

Kent County Council
 kent.gov.uk

Legend

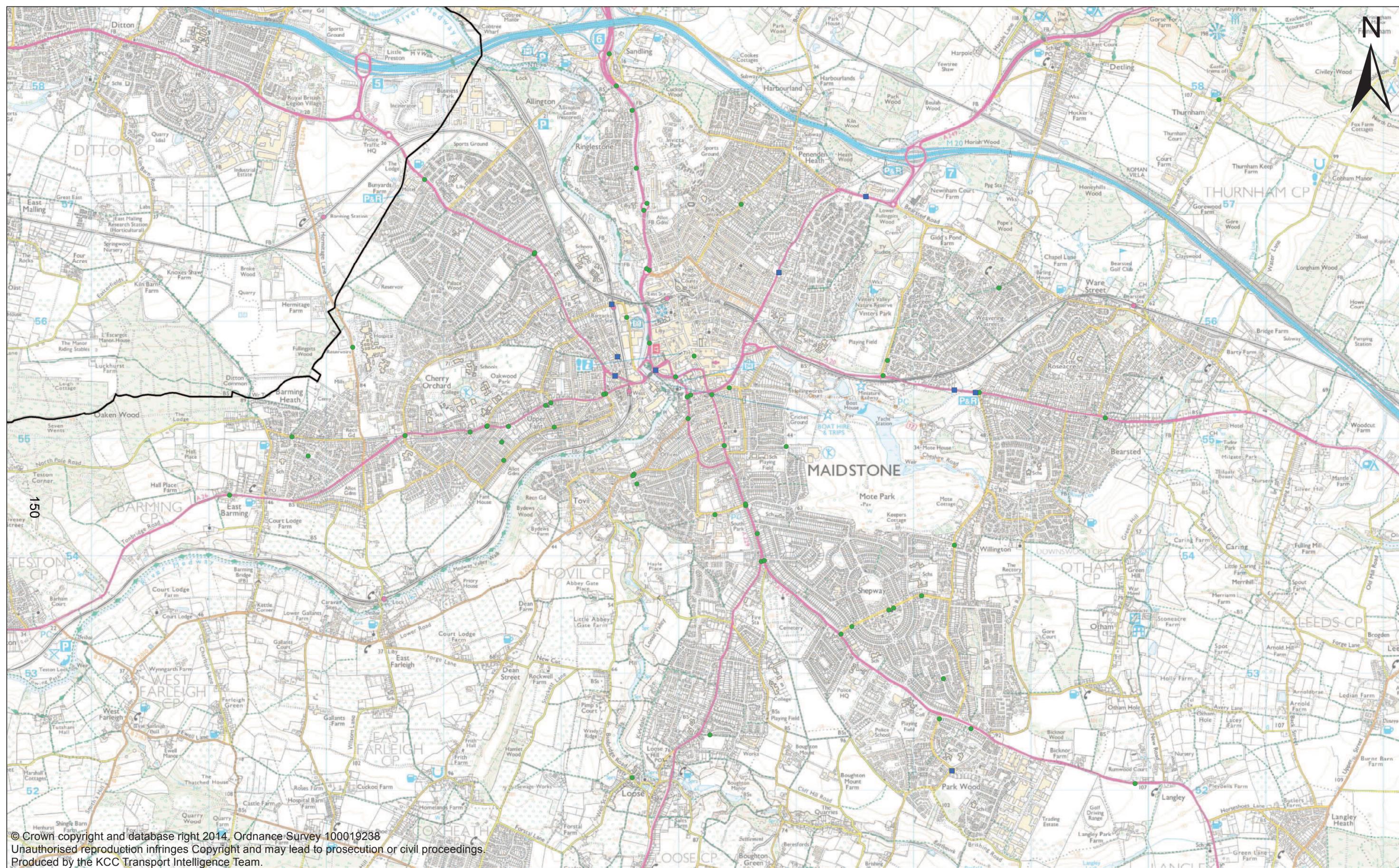
- Fatal Collisions
- Serious Collisions
- Slight Collisions



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Maidstone District Pedestrian Collisions
 (01.07.2012 to 30.06.2015)





Maidstone Pedal Cycle Collisions

(01.07.2012 to 30.06.2015)

Note: There were no fatal pedal cycle collisions recorded during this period

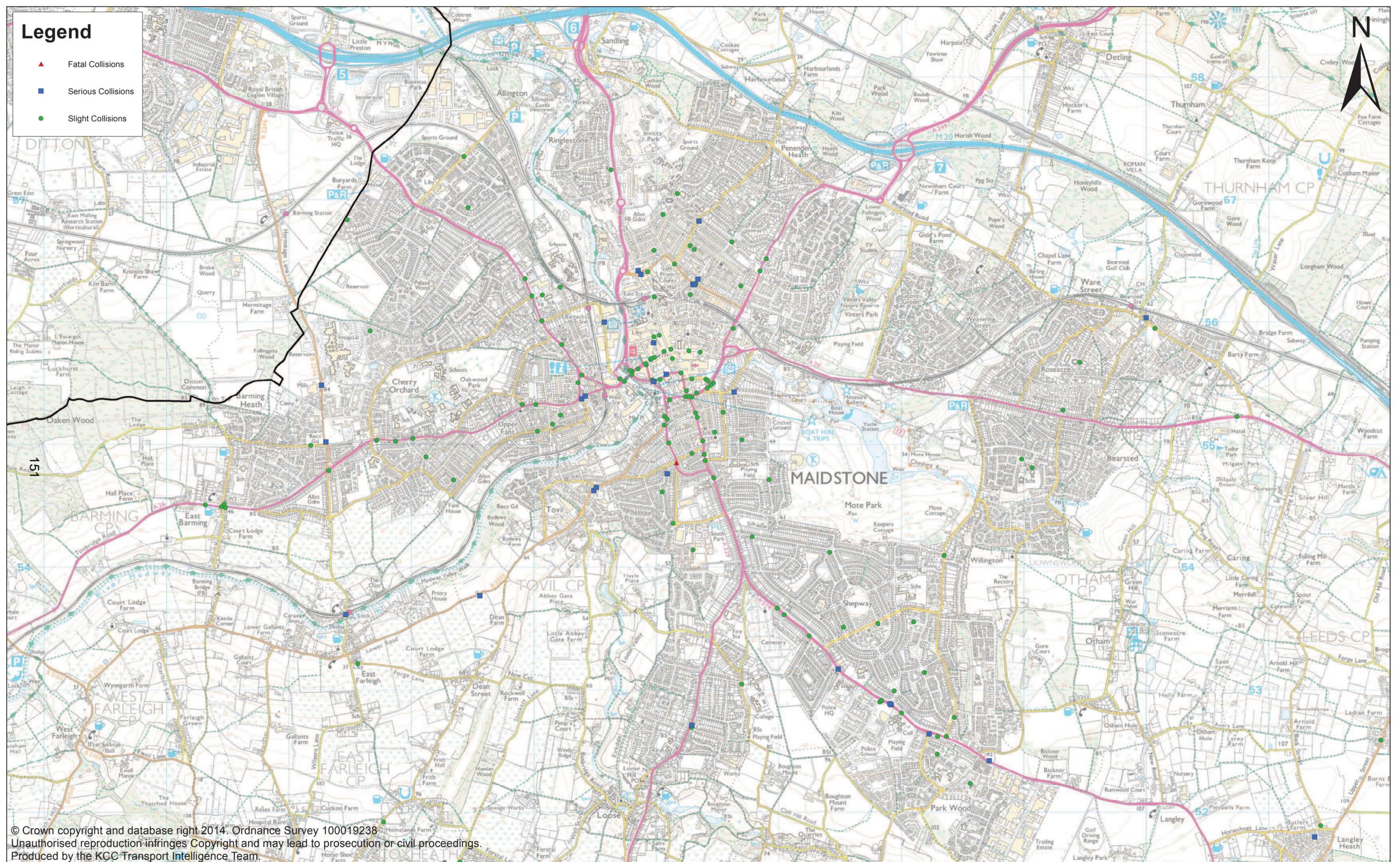
Legend

- Serious Collisions
- Slight Collisions



Legend

- ▲ Fatal Collisions
- Serious Collisions
- Slight Collisions



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Maidstone Pedestrian Collisions

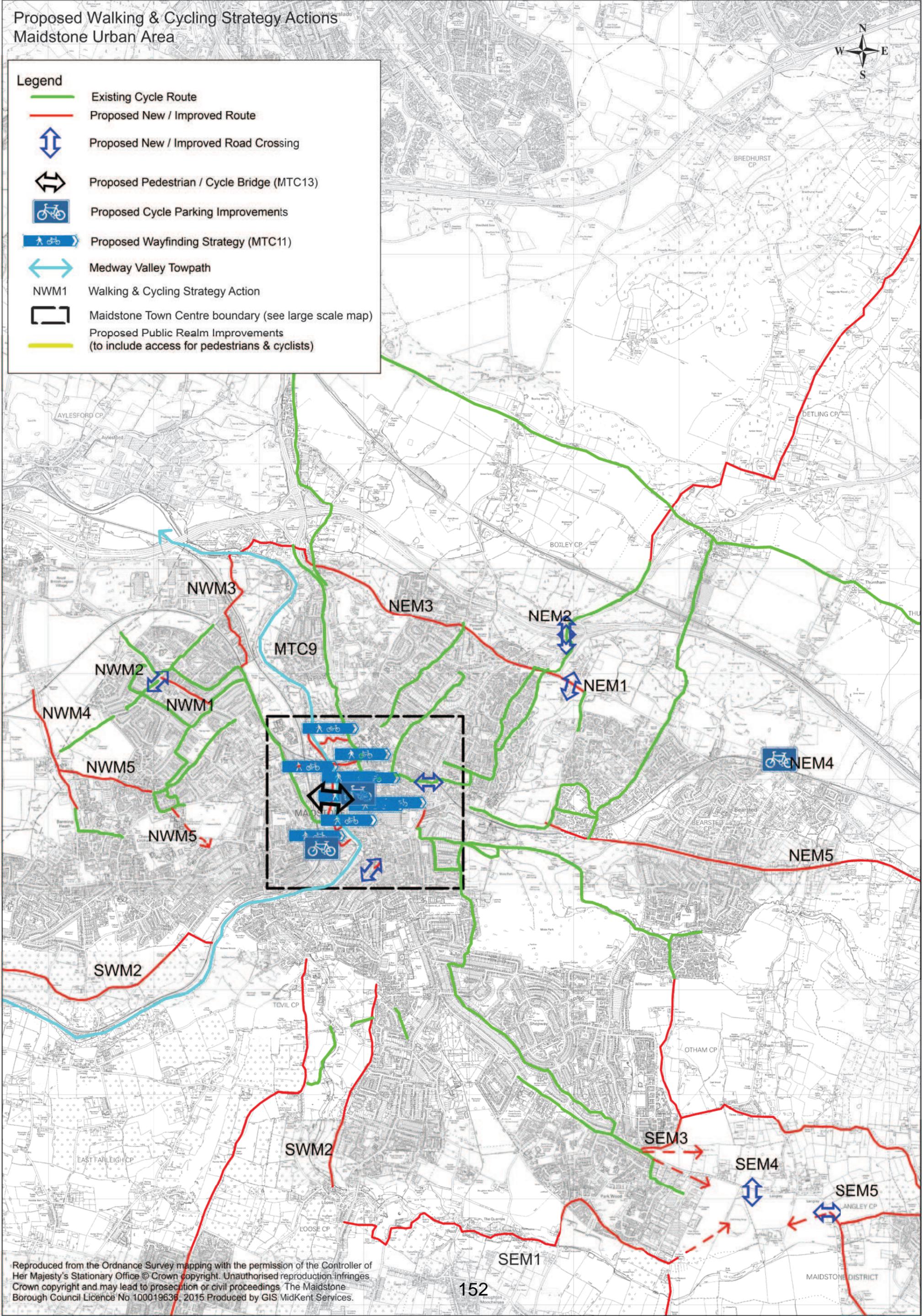
(01.07.2012 to 30.06.2015)



Proposed Walking & Cycling Strategy Actions Maidstone Urban Area

Legend

-  Existing Cycle Route
-  Proposed New / Improved Route
-  Proposed New / Improved Road Crossing
-  Proposed Pedestrian / Cycle Bridge (MTC13)
-  Proposed Cycle Parking Improvements
-  Proposed Wayfinding Strategy (MTC11)
-  Medway Valley Towpath
- NWM1 Walking & Cycling Strategy Action
-  Maidstone Town Centre boundary (see large scale map)
-  Proposed Public Realm Improvements (to include access for pedestrians & cyclists)

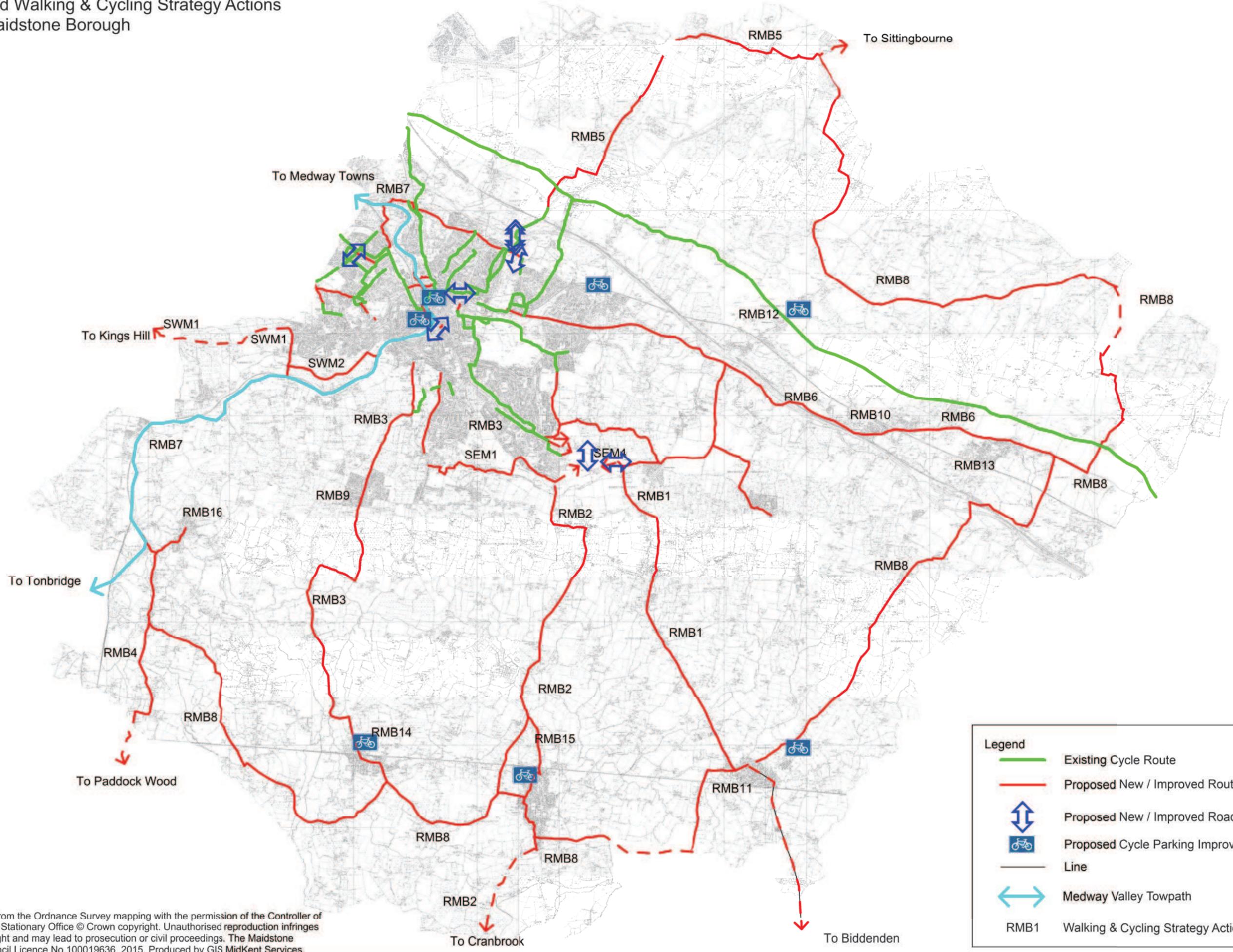


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Proposed Walking & Cycling Strategy Actions
Rural Maidstone Borough



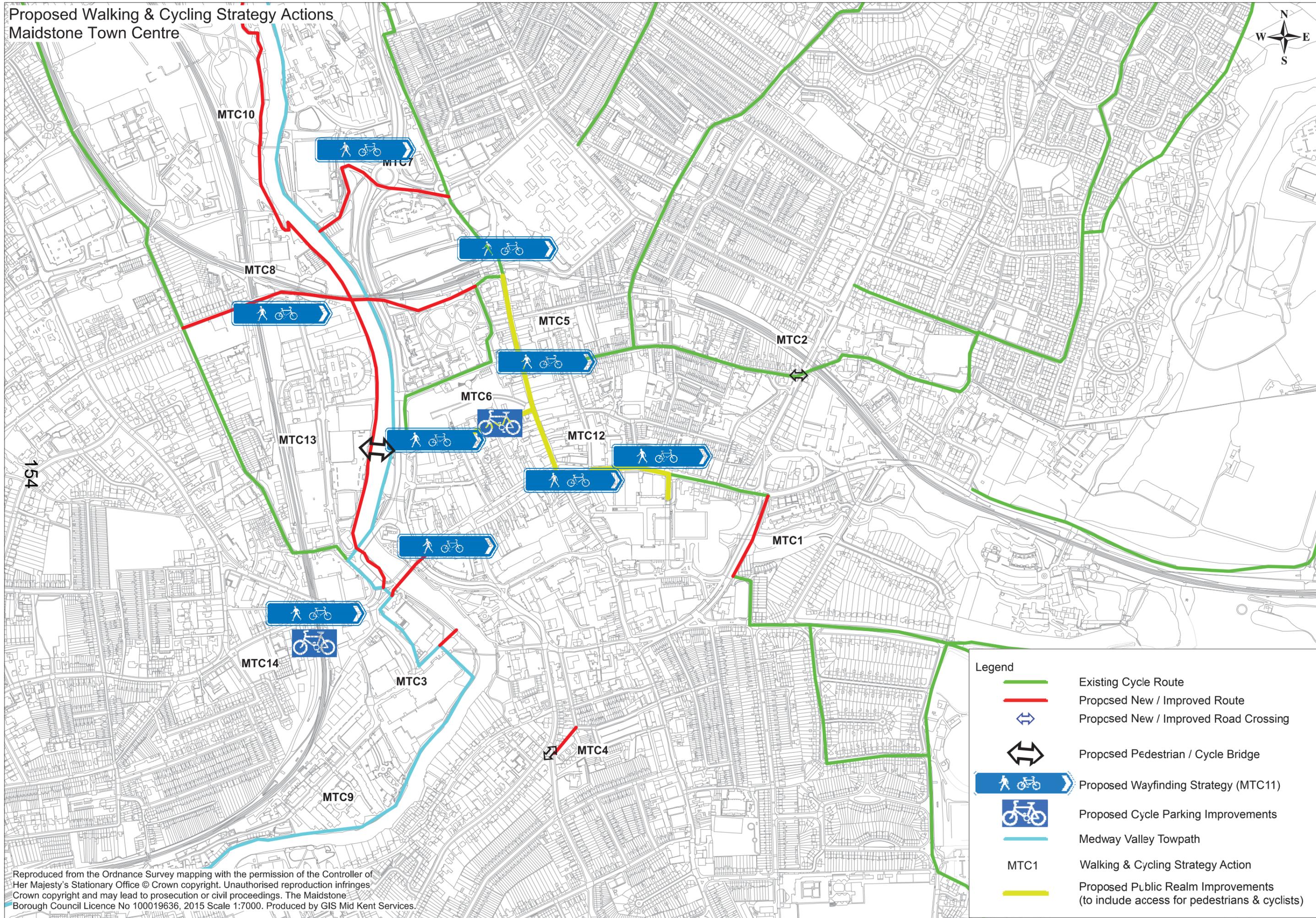
153



Legend	
	Existing Cycle Route
	Proposed New / Improved Route
	Proposed New / Improved Road Crossing
	Proposed Cycle Parking Improvements
	Line
	Medway Valley Towpath
	Walking & Cycling Strategy Action

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Proposed Walking & Cycling Strategy Actions
Maidstone Town Centre



Legend	
	Existing Cycle Route
	Proposed New / Improved Route
	Proposed New / Improved Road Crossing
	Proposed Pedestrian / Cycle Bridge
	Proposed Wayfinding Strategy (MTC11)
	Proposed Cycle Parking Improvements
	Medway Valley Towpath
MTC1	Walking & Cycling Strategy Action
	Proposed Public Realm Improvements (to include access for pedestrians & cyclists)

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