

AGENDA

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT ADVISORY GROUP MEETING



Date: Monday 8 December 2008

Time: 6.00 pm

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Chittenden, English, Harwood, Horne,
Lusty, Marchant, Moriarty, Nelson-
Gracie, Robertson (Chairman),
Mrs Stockell, Thick and J.A. Wilson

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Notification of Visiting Members
4. Disclosures by Members and Officers
5. Disclosures of Lobbying

Continued Over/:

Issued on 28 November 2008

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**David Petford, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council,
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone Kent ME15 6JQ**

6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.
7. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 10 November 2008 1 - 4
8. Report of the Assistant Director of Development and Community Services - Annual Monitoring Report 2007/2008 5 - 88
9. Report of the Assistant Director of Development and Community Services - Loose Road and London Road Character Area Assessments: Lessons Learned 89 - 116
10. Report of the Assistant Director of Development and Community Services - Loose Road and London Road Character Area Assessments: Proposed Changes following Public Consultation and Adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents 117 - 182

Please note – The appendices to this item are attached as two separate documents. Members are asked to bring these with them to the meeting for consideration of this item.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT ADVISORY GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2008

PRESENT: Councillors Chittenden, English, Harwood, Horne, Lusty, Marchant, Moriarty, Robertson, Mrs Stockell, Thick, Verrall and J A Wilson

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Mrs Williams

27. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apology for Absence was received from Councillor Moriarty.

28. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillor Mrs Wilson was substituting for Councillor Moriarty.

29. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor Mrs Williams.

30. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures.

31. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

32. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

RESOLVED: That the Items on the Agenda be taken in public as proposed.

33. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed.

34. **PARTIAL REVIEW OF THE SOUTH EAST PLAN: GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION NEEDS**

The Group considered the Report of the Assistant Director of Development and Community Services regarding the response to be made to SEERA on its consultation on the Partial Review of the South East Plan relating to the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.

An update to the Report was circulated at the meeting, setting out a further option (Option E) which was being proposed by Kent County Council at a meeting of the Kent and Medway Joint Member Steering Group on 10 November. The principal characteristics of Option E are as follows:-

- a. It still allows for a significant element of regional re-distribution (50%) as with Option C
- b. In contrast to Options C and D, it uses Option A as the starting point (i.e. need where it arises) rather than Option B (need distributed within Kent according to 6 defined sustainability criteria devised in consultation with Kent authorities)
- c. In contrast to Options C and D, the element of the regional re-distribution which 'comes back' to Kent is distributed using the 6 defined sustainability criteria rather than the 2 criteria used by SEERA.

The outcomes of the approach of Option E are that:-

- a. It gives a higher degree of emphasis to meeting need where it arises than Option C (or D). This could help to reduce a risk that provision is made in districts/boroughs in Kent where it is not needed and insufficient provided where it is needed.
- b. By not starting from Option B, it takes less account of sustainability criteria (i.e. the actual constraints that would limit an individual authority's ability to find sufficient suitable sites).
- c. It overcomes the anomaly in Option B that 50% of Kent's need is distributed within the county according to 6 sustainability criteria but that the element of the regional re-distribution that 'comes back' to Kent is distributed according to 2 criteria used by SEERA.

The Group discussed the various options available. Two members felt that Option B was the most appropriate due to the emphasis on environmental constraints. The Group agreed that their recommendation should take account of whatever decision was made at the Kent and Medway Joint Member Steering Group.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet be recommended to respond to the consultation as follows:

- i. That for Gypsy and Traveller provision, Option C for a provision of 32 pitches be supported,
- ii. That the Group will support Cabinet should Option E be agreed at the Kent and Medway Steering Group and Cabinet are minded to support this Option;
- iii. That for Travelling Showpeople provision, Option A for no provision of pitches be supported;
- iv. That, in addition, support be expressed for both the principle of taking account of sustainability factors and a degree of rebalancing, in determining the distribution of pitch requirements;

- v. That the Partial Review makes the best use possible of available evidence in determining the general level of need for transit pitches without further delaying the Review, and allow the exact location of the requirement to be determined at the local level. Furthermore, that SEERA be urged to undertake a regional scale study of transit patterns consistent with the above. The Kent advice did not propose a need for strategic transit sites in Maidstone borough and this advice continues to be supported.

25. DURATION OF MEETING

6.00 pm to 6.55 pm.

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT ADVISORY GROUP

8 DECEMBER 2008

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Report prepared by Louise Lynds & Sue Whiteside

1. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2007/08

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider the submission of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) to the Secretary of State, in accordance with Regulation 48 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004.

1.2 Recommendation of Assistant Director of Development and Community Services

1.2.1 That the AMR (attached as Appendix 1 to this report) be considered.

1.2.2 That the Local Development Document Advisory Group refers the report to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration with a recommendation to approve the AMR for submission to the Secretary of State.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The production of an AMR is required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The AMR covers the policy monitoring period 1st April to 31st March and the calendar year of progress of the Local Development Scheme to date. The report must be submitted to the Secretary of State by 31st December each year, and the submission date is a recorded milestone that has an impact on housing and planning delivery grant if it is not met.

1.3.2 The AMR must assess whether policies and related targets or milestones in local development documents have been met and, if not, what progress is being made to address this. The attached report is structured as follows.

- Contextual Indicators demonstrate the wider social, environmental and economic characteristics of the Borough.
- Core Output Indicators are defined through national policy guidance and the indicators must be collected on a consistent timeframe.

These indicators were revised by Communities and Local Government in July 2008. The guidance for the existing indicators has been updated, two completely new indicators introduced and seven indicators have been removed. The majority of the new/revised indicators have been successfully monitored in this AMR. However for some indicators methodologies need to be refined and new data collected. National Indicators 154 (net additional dwellings for the reporting year), NI 155 (gross affordable housing completions) and NI 159 (net additional dwellings for future years) are monitored by Core Indicators H2b, H5 and H2c respectively.

- Local Output Indicators address policies not covered by Core Output Indicators. Prior to the adoption of the Core Strategy, local indicators are defined by a selection of saved policies from the adopted Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan (2000), as amended by the Secretary of State's Direction of 28 September 2007.
- A review of the Local Development Scheme (LDS), which must assess the progress of the timetable for the production of local development documents and identify any changes proposed to next year's programme. If the Council has failed to meet any of its milestones, the AMR should explain why.

1.3.3 The Council has been monitoring specific data for a number of years, notably for housing and employment policies. The setting up of new databases for the collection of data in these areas and others during 2008/09 has enabled the Council to provide additional information in this year's AMR for total amount of floorspace for 'town centre' uses and net additional gypsy and traveller pitches. This year's AMR has also compared the results of the 2008 footfall survey with previous surveys. The 2007/08 AMR includes the Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2007 and graphs showing commuting by occupation and industrial sector. The AMR will inevitably expand further over time as more monitoring systems are set up and existing systems are improved. With this fourth AMR that looks across an increasingly comprehensive set of indicators it is becoming possible to identify trends.

1.3.4 Key findings of the core output indicators in the AMR demonstrate a net gain of employment floorspace overall. For 2007/08, the amount of new employment floorspace on previously developed land totals 97%, and the percentage of new dwellings completed on brownfield sites totals 87%.

1.3.5 Maidstone can meet 99% of its housing requirement to deliver 10,080 dwellings between 2006 and 2026 as set out in the draft South East Plan. In the longer term the planned growth figures will be refined through the Core Strategy and other land allocation Development Plan

Documents to ensure targets are met. The housing trajectory includes an estimated yield from the areas of search for residential development identified in the Core Strategy. In the short term, the Council can demonstrate a 6.8 year housing land supply without taking into account any allowance for windfall sites, which produced over 360 units in 2007/08. The total housing land supply also excludes adopted local plan Greenfield allocations that were not released for development following the results of the 2002 Urban Capacity Study. Therefore, it is still not necessary to consider releasing Greenfield allocations for development.

- 1.3.6 Maidstone continues to make best use of its available land: 84.47% of dwellings were constructed at densities in excess of 30 units per hectare and 51.68% above 50 units per hectare. This is a reflection of the high number of flats built on urban brownfield sites that have been released in recent years so, as greenfield sites come forward in the medium to long term, average densities are likely to be lower.
- 1.3.7 The AMR monitors planning consents determined under both the former local plan policy that sought 25% affordable housing on sites of 25units/1 hectare and above, and also for the Council's adopted policy (AH1) that seeks 40% on sites of 15 units/0.5 hectare or greater. Consents under the former policy yielded at least 25% affordable units, whilst those subject to current policy secured 53% affordable dwellings. Consequently, both policy targets have been met in 2007/08. Policy AH1 requires 60% socially rented units from the total number of affordable dwellings. During 2007/08 only 19% of the affordable units completed were for social rent. This is because the completed dwellings were granted in accordance with the former local plan policy that did not require a minimum percentage for social rent.
- 1.3.8 The AMR also demonstrates that policy objectives have been met in other areas, such as enhancing the Riverside Zone of Special Townscape, protection of the AONB and constraints on replacement dwellings in the countryside.
- 1.3.9 Since 2007 unemployment in Maidstone has increased. House prices have risen 6% from 2006/07 to 2007/08 compared to 8% between 2005/06 and 2006/07.
- 1.3.10The review of the Local Development Scheme (2007) demonstrates that the majority of targets and milestones were not met during the calendar year of 2008, the slippage relating to the production of the Core Strategy DPD. The Council was unable to submit the document in October 2007, and consequently could not meet Examination and Adoption milestones in 2008. The implications of a Core Strategy representation at Preferred Options stage, seeking the allocation of land for a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) at Hollingbourne,

had to be fully assessed before the Council could proceed to Independent Examination. The public will be re-consulted on the Core Strategy in 2009 under new plan making regulations once a decision on whether to include the proposal in the Core Strategy has been made.

1.3.11 The delay to the LDS programme affected the production of other DPDs set out in the approved LDS, namely the Land Allocations and Implementation DPD, which was due to be published for public consultation (Preferred Options) in March 2008.

1.3.12 It is worth noting that the Council has fully utilised this time to undertake a considerable amount of further work to support the evidence base for the Core Strategy, in order to respond to representations received at Preferred Options stage and also to address requirements for additional material to support Core Strategies set by new government legislation published this year. These measures will greatly improve the robustness of the evidence base supporting a sound Core Strategy at Independent Examination.

1.3.13 During 2008, the Council has also progressed two Character Area Assessment SPDs that are nearing adoption, and the Residential Extensions SPD that is currently subject to public consultation until 19th December.

1.3.14 Furthermore, at the meeting of this Group on 6th October 2008, Members considered the Council's priorities for the publication of future LDF documents, which were subsequently confirmed by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration. The purpose of this early debate was to establish an agreed approach towards DPD publication, and also to facilitate a speedier production of the LDS review once a decision on the SRFI allocation has been made.

1.3.15 The Core Strategy DPD remains the Council's focus for 2009, but an early Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD will be produced in advance of the Core Strategy, to respond to local priorities and the need to provide accommodation for this sector of the community. An Urban Regeneration Action Area Plan (AAP) for the town centre and defined urban areas will follow the Core Strategy programme, and the Land Allocations DPD will follow the AAP. This approach will be examined in much more detail during the revision of the LDS, but it is a realistic option because strategic and other land allocations will be made through the Core Strategy, the Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD and the Urban Regeneration AAP. However, the Council will need to ensure it can demonstrate a continuing robust 5-year housing land supply until new greenfield land allocations are adopted. The Land Allocations DPD would therefore address the

balance of site allocations for housing, employment, retail, community facilities, etc, and would define landscape designations.

- 1.3.16 In addition to the proposed four DPD/AAP publications, the production of a number of SPDs will be confirmed through the LDS review: Kent Design Guide, Interim Planning Tariff, Access for Disabled People, Air Quality, Urban Extension, Landscape Character Area Assessment (toolkit), final Planning Tariff, and a Parking Strategy. Subject to staff resources and in the context of competing priorities for the preparation of SPDs, consideration will also be given to the production of further Character Area Assessment SPDs.
- 1.3.17 The plan making element of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) is now dependent on meeting milestones for the Core Strategy DPD, together with DPDs that allocate land for more than 2,000 dwellings. Additional funding is available for demonstrating a 5-year housing land supply, and for the completion of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments and Strategic Housing Market Assessments. The Council currently has 6.8 years of housing land supply against its 20-year target of 10,080 dwellings (reducing to 6.1 years if targets are increased to 11,080 through the South East Plan consultation process). Both the Housing Land Availability and Housing Market Assessments for Maidstone will be completed in 2009.
- 1.3.18 Whilst the delay to completing the Core Strategy programme impacted on the Council's ability to secure HPDG in 2008, the risk of proceeding to Independent Examination without giving full consideration to the SRFI representation would have carried its own financial implications if the Core Strategy was found unsound and would have had a much greater impact on the Core Strategy timetable.

Alternative Action and why not Recommended

- 1.3.19 The submission of the AMR is a defined milestone of the Local Development Scheme and if the Council does not meet a December submission, there could be financial penalties through the housing and planning delivery grant system.

1.4 Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 1.4.1 The AMR monitors the success of a range of policies that will have an impact on corporate objectives.

1.5 Risk Management

- 1.5.1 The LDS section of the AMR (chapter 5) draws attention to the particular risks for the LDS programme. There are a number of considerations that will be crucial if the Council is to keep track with

the revised timetable in 2008. These include securing support for the Council’s approach to setting its LDS programme from GOSE, the preparation of a sound evidence base, the ability of consultants to deliver reports within set timeframes, continued full officer staffing levels, and the diversion of officer time away from the plan making process to undertake other projects or react to developer proposals. These risks will require careful management.

1.6 Other Implications

1.6.1

1.	Financial	X
2.	Staffing	X
3.	Legal	-
4.	Social Inclusion	X
5.	Environmental/Sustainable Development	X
6.	Community Safety	X
7.	Human Rights Act	-
8.	Procurement	-

1.7 Financial

1.7.1 There will be general costs involved in the production of the AMR, such as printing, but these can be accommodated within the LDF budget. Meeting the milestones set in the Local Development Scheme has implications for the receipt of housing and planning delivery grant.

1.8 Staffing

1.8.1 These can be accommodated within the existing staff structure.

1.9 Social Inclusion

1.9.1 Social inclusion is inherent in the policies that are the subject of monitoring in the document.

1.10 Environmental/Sustainable Development

1.10.1 When assessing the implementation of policies, the AMR must have regard to the effects on social, environmental and economic objectives, which are the key indicators in defining sustainability.

1.11 Community Safety

1.11.1 Community safety is inherent in the policies that are the subject of monitoring in the document.

1.12 Background Documents

1.12.1 Local Development Scheme (2007)

http://www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk/PDF/070329_LDS%20March%202007.pdf

NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED

Is this a Key Decision? Yes No

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan? _____

Is this an Urgent Key Decision? Yes No

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**Maidstone Local Development
Framework**

**Annual Monitoring Report
2007/2008**

December 2008



**This document is produced by
Maidstone Borough Council**

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Introduction

- 1.1** Maidstone's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) provides a framework with which to monitor and review the effectiveness of Development Plan policies in addressing local circumstances over the monitoring period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008. The AMR is submitted to the Secretary of State by 31 December 2008, so there is an inevitable time lag between 31 March 2008 and when the AMR is submitted and published. Whilst the data is a correct statement of conditions over the monitoring period the situation may have changed in the last nine months for certain indicators such as employment and house prices due to the unprecedented change in the economic situation.
- 1.2** The AMR should assess whether policies in the Development Plan and related targets or "milestones" set out in the Local Development Scheme have been met or whether progress has been made in meeting them. Where targets are not being met or are not on track to be achieved, the AMR must set out the reasons why and the appropriate action to be taken. Chapters 2 to 4 of this document cover the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008, whilst chapter 5 reviews the Local Development Scheme programme.
- 1.3** The AMR should address the impact policies are having on national, regional and local policy targets, with a particular emphasis on demonstrating how policies will deliver new housing. The document ought to consider whether local policies need adjusting or replacing because they are not working as intended, and whether policies need to be reviewed to reflect changes in national or regional policy. If changes are necessary, then the AMR must set out the actions needed to achieve this. The AMR is a vital part of the "Plan, Monitor, Manage" process, providing a review of whether policies are working, and the document is a means of measuring and reviewing policy set out in government guidance. The policies subject to this review (for the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008) include saved Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan policies (September 2007) and policies contained in adopted LDF documents.
- 1.4** With regard to the implementation of local policies, the report should consider the effects on social, environmental and economic objectives, which are the key aspects of development.
- 1.5** The Report should not set out the detail of how policies might be revised or amended, but it should clearly set out the steps that will be taken to address such concerns. The Borough Council has been monitoring specific data for a number of years, notably for housing and employment policies.
- 1.6** The AMR is structured as follows:

 - Contextual indicators establish the baseline position of the wider social, environmental and economic characteristics of the Borough. Topics will include, for example, population size, household types, crime rates,

unemployment levels, household income, key assets of the natural and built environments, housing stock conditions, access to transport and completed housing density.

- Core output indicators are defined through national policy guidance and the indicators must be collected on a consistent basis nationally. In July 2008, the Core Indicators were revised by Communities and Local Government. The guidance for existing indicators has been updated, two completely new indicators introduced and seven indicators have been removed. The majority of the new/revised indicators have been successfully monitored in this AMR, however for some indicators methodologies need to be refined and new data collected. There are 17 indicators in total but only 13 apply to this local authority. The indicators cover policy themes for business development and town centres, housing, transport and environmental quality. National Indicators (NI) 154 (net additional dwellings - for the reporting year), NI 155 (gross affordable housing completions) and NI 159 (net additional dwellings - in future years) are monitored by Core Indicators H2b, H5 and H2c respectively.
- Local output indicators address policies not covered by core output indicators. The choice of the indicators varies according to local circumstances and issues. Local output indicators should reflect local policy and be developed on an incremental basis over time, to address changing policy monitoring needs and the availability of resources. Local output indicators have been selected to monitor key saved policies from the Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan and adopted LDF policies, although future AMRs will use indicators defined by the emerging Core Strategy.
- The review of the Local Development Scheme assesses the progress of the timetable for preparing local development documents. It should demonstrate whether or not the Council has met its key milestones (or targets) for the production of documents. If the Council has failed to meet any of its milestones, the AMR should explain why. If the AMR identifies new priorities and issues, these will be reflected in changes to the Local Development Scheme work programme.

Contextual Indicators

- 2.1** Contextual indicators establish the broader descriptive character of Maidstone Borough in terms of the social, environmental and economic characteristics of Maidstone. The indicators are confined to key characteristics of the area and to local issues.
- 2.2** Maidstone is the County Town of Kent and an important administrative and commercial centre. The Borough has a population of 142,800 ⁽¹⁾ and comprises one main urban area, located to the north west of the Borough, together with a large number of large and small villages located in its extensive rural hinterland. The characters of the built and natural environments vary considerably.
- 2.3** The protection of Maidstone's rural environment and biodiversity are important issues for the Council because the Borough is the subject of a number of important environmental constraints, including Metropolitan Green Belt, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Special Landscape Areas and Areas of Local Landscape Importance. Furthermore, parts of the area adjacent to its rivers lie within a floodplain and contain nature designations, such as the Special Area of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Wildlife Sites (formerly Sites of Nature Conservation Interest). Strategic policies also restrict development through defined Strategic Gap and southern anti-coalescence policies. These constraints are illustrated on figure 2.1. It may appear that there are some areas of the Borough that are unconstrained but Maidstone comprises large swathes of best and most versatile agricultural land, including areas of grades 1 and 2 agricultural land.
- 2.4** National policies require local authorities to make the best use of previously developed land in urban areas before releasing greenfield sites for development. The quality and protection of the built environment is also an important consideration for the Council. The urban area contains over 600 listed buildings and six conservation areas within or adjoining the town centre. There are also large numbers of village conservation areas and historic buildings in villages and the countryside that are listed. It is vital that new development maintains and enhances the amenity of the urban area to protect the quality of life for existing residents.
- 2.5** Maidstone Borough has direct rail links to London and the proximity of the capital is a factor in shaping the local economy, house prices and travel. Two designated growth areas, Thames Gateway to the north and Ashford to the east, will also have an increasing effect on the economy, environment and growth of Maidstone Borough.

1 Source: Kent County Council 2007 forecast based on the draft South East Plan

- 2.6** Whilst Maidstone has transport links to London and the coast via two railway lines and the M20 motorway, it suffers from congestion in the town. Further and improved infrastructure will be necessary for Maidstone to grow and sustain the quality of life and assist movement.
- 2.7** In October 2006 the government announced that Maidstone Borough was one of 29 areas named as a New Growth Point. The Panel Report into the examination of the South East Plan confirmed this status in July 2007. New Growth Point Status is built on four principles:
- early delivery of housing as part of balanced and sustainable growth plans
 - supporting local partners to achieve sustainable growth
 - working with local partners to ensure that infrastructure and service provision keep pace with growth
 - ensuring effective delivery.
- 2.8** In the 2007/8 monitoring period, as a result of New Growth Point Status, £1,500,000 was awarded by Communities and Local Government (CLG) to redevelop Maidstone Borough Council's depot at Armstrong Road for housing and to design and build a new depot incorporating sustainable development principles at Langley Park Farm West.
- 2.9** In addition £400,000 was awarded to help plan for growth. Consultants have been commissioned to undertake highway and transportation studies, and to lead the master planning of the proposed urban extension.
- 2.10** A 'Programme of Development' for the period 2006 to 2026 was submitted to the government in October 2007 detailing the vision and rationale for growth. The programme includes a housing trajectory and investment plan necessary to deliver the growth. This submission also included a bid to government for the period 2008 to 2011.
- 2.11** In December 2007, CLG announced grant awards to all New Growth Points. Maidstone was allocated £1,808,535 in 2008/09 and an indicative allocation of £3,271,861 between 2009/10 and 2010/11.

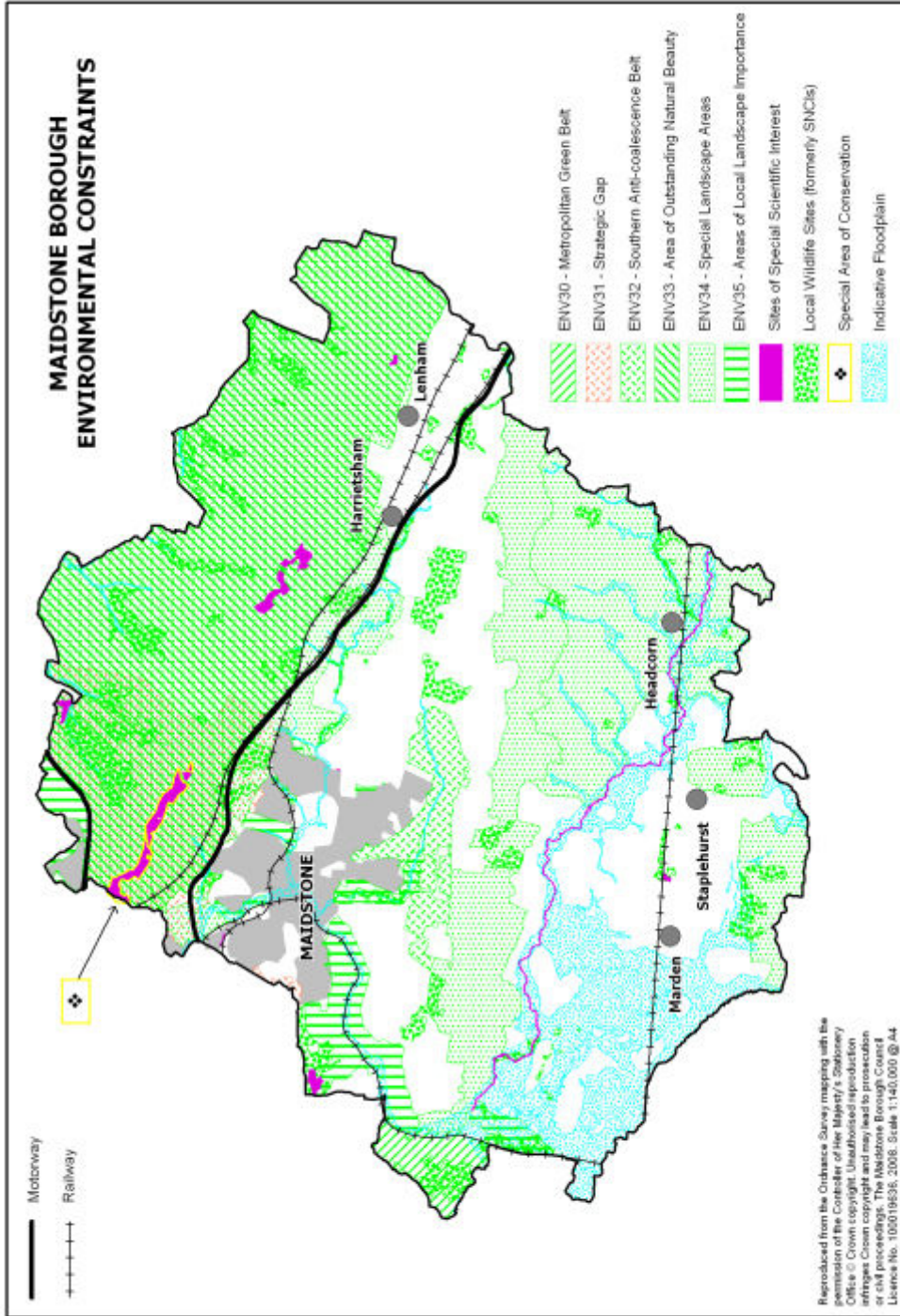


Figure 2.1 Maidstone Environmental Constraints

2.12 The following section includes statistics and commentary used to analyse each Contextual Indicator.

Contextual Indicator A: Demographic Structure

Age Group	Change	% Change
0-15 years	None	-0.2%
16-24 years	1500 more people	+10.9%
25-44 years	2600 less people	-6.6%
45-64 years	3,800 more people	+9.9%
65-84 years	9,500 more people	+46.8%
85+ years	2,800 more people	+88.5%
All Age Groups total 157,700 population by 2026	14,900 more people	+10.4%

Population Change in Maidstone 2006-2026, figures published September 2007 (source: Kent County Council)

	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026	Change
Households	58,800	61,000	63,900	66,400	68,900	
Household Change		+2,200	+2,900	+2,500	+2,500	+10,100
% Change		+3.6%	+4.5%	+3.8%	3.6%	+17.2%

Household Projections in Maidstone 2006-2026, figures published September 2007 (source: Kent County Council)

Key Findings: The population statistics in the tables above are forecasts published in September 2007, based on the housing target of 10,080 dwellings by 2026 as recommended by the Examination into the South East Plan. The size of the population will increase by 10.4% over a 20-year period between 2006 and 2026. Proportionately, by 2026 the number of children under 15 years will remain relatively unchanged. The number of economically active people in the 16-24 age category and 45-64 age category will increase, although there will be a lower number of economically active people in the 25 to 44 age category. The ageing population will continue to expand to 2026, the greatest rise within the 85+ age category.

Household formation is set to increase by 17.2% between 2006 and 2026. The number of households is forecast to rise more than the level of population growth in the same period.

Commentary: An ageing population is not unique to Maidstone, but it clearly has implications for services, particularly the health service. The contrast in population and household increases is due to a predicted continued increase in single person households caused by elderly people living longer, by separation and divorce, and by young people forming single person households. Housing targets indicated by the South East Plan will be considered in this context.

Should recent proposed changes to the South East Plan, published by the Secretary of State for public consultation, increase the housing target to 11,080 by 2026, population projections in the next AMR will be recalculated accordingly.

Contextual Indicator B: Socio-Cultural Issues

Crime type	Maidstone			South East			England		
	2006 /07	2007 /08	% change	2006 /07	2007 /08	% change	2006 /07	2007 /08	% change
Violence against person	2,389	2,353	-1.51	Not Comparable					
Robbery	88	97	10.23	6,386	5,639	-11.70	98,050	82,404	-15.65
Burglary (dwelling)	445	364	-18.20	32,706	30,098	-7.97	281,704	269,400	-4.37
Theft of a motor vehicle	590	410	-30.51	22,311	19,817	-11.18	181,593	160,109	-11.83
Theft from a vehicle	986	759	-23.02	65,626	55,120	-16.01	473,171	407,141	-13.96

Crime Statistics (Source: National Statistics)

	No. Unemployed September 2008	% Rate Unemployed (Residential)	No. Change since 2007	% Change since 2007
Maidstone	1,219	1.4	170	16.2
Kent (including Medway)	19,193	1.9	1,847	10.6
South East	261,798	2.2	19,555	8.1

2 . Contextual Indicators

8

Annual Monitoring Report 2007/2008

	No. Unemployed September 2008	% Rate Unemployed (Residential)	No. Change since 2007	% Change since 2007
Great Britain	914,913	2.5	110,853	13.8

Unemployment Statistics (Source: Kent County Council)

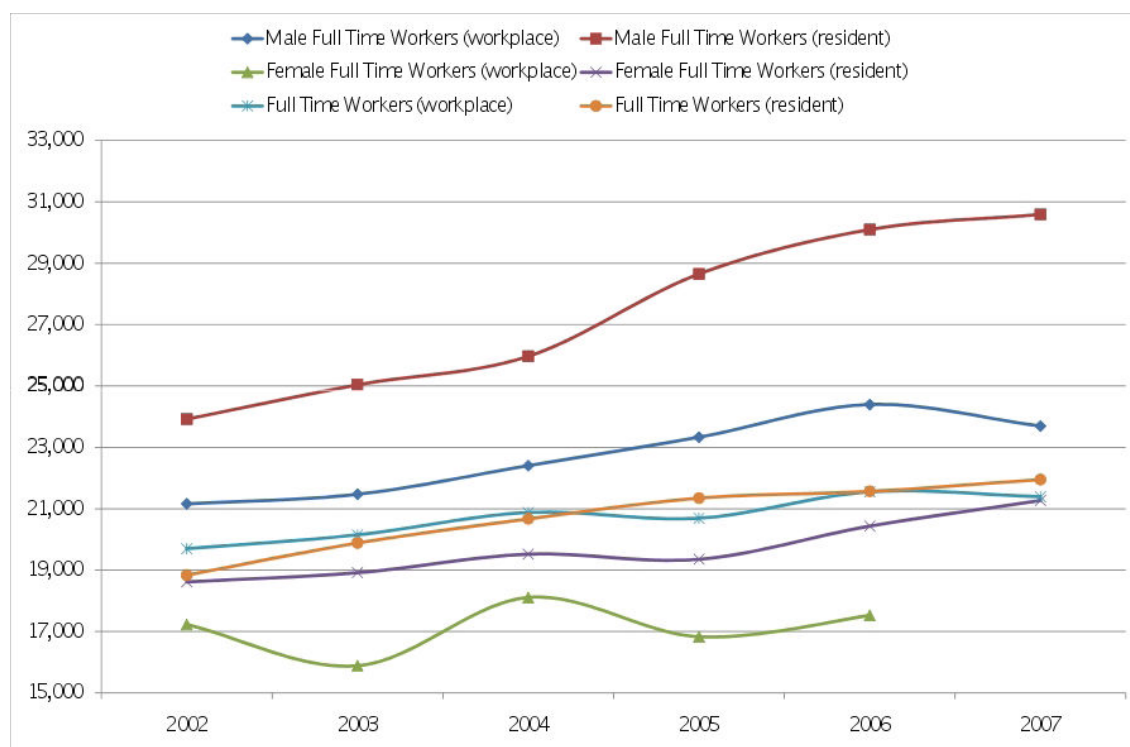


Figure 2.2 Full time Annual Earnings Figures for Maidstone from 2002-2007 (Workplace and Resident based) (source: Office of National Statistics)

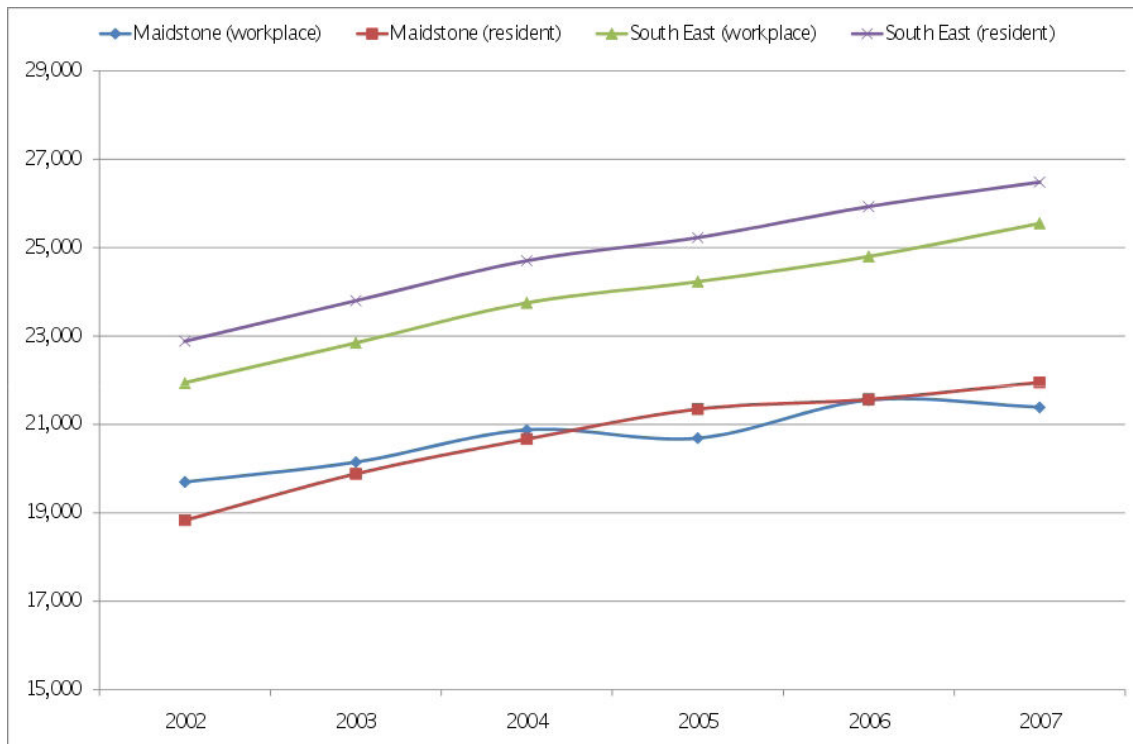


Figure 2.3 Full Time Annual Earnings Figures from 2002-2007 - Maidstone compared to the South East (Workplace and Resident based) (source: Office of National Statistics)

	Maidstone	South East	England
September 2006 to August 2007 ⁽²⁾	68.4%	62.1%	62.0%
September 2005 to August 2006	65.0%	59.5%	58.5%
September 2004 to August 2005	64.9%	57.6%	56.3%
September 2003 to August 2004	60.7%	55.3%	53.7%
September 2002 to August 2003	63.0%	55.4%	52.9%

GCSE and Equivalent Results for Young People Achieving 5+ A* - C (Source: Government Neighbourhood Statistics)

2 The results in 2006/07 are not comparable with previous years due to a shift from age-based reporting to stage based reporting

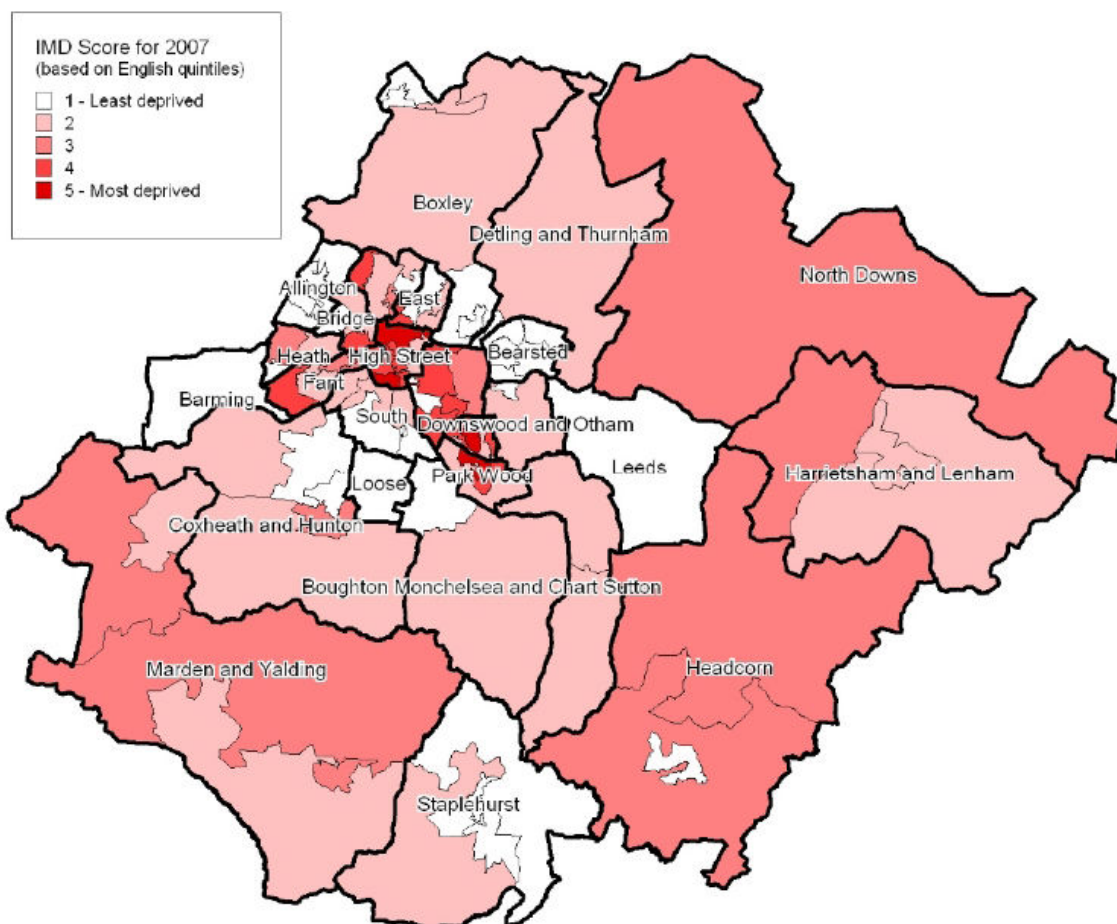


Figure 2.4 Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007 (source: Gavurin Maidstone: State of the Economy Report March 2008)

Key Findings: Maidstone crime statistics show that, between 2006/2007 and 2007/2008, a slight fall in the number of offences for violence against the person. The number of offences for burglary, theft of a motor vehicle and theft from a motor vehicle have decreased more significantly in Maidstone than the trends regionally and nationally. The number of robberies in Maidstone have increased, but have declined in the South East and England.

Maidstone has low unemployment ⁽³⁾, and the percentage unemployment rate in Maidstone is lower than county, regional and national unemployment rates. Unemployment has increased (% change since 2007) in Maidstone during the 2007/08 monitoring period, more than it has regionally and nationally.

3 'Residential' figures refer to the population that live in the specified area. 'Workplace' figures refer to people who are employed in the specific area regardless of where they live.

The statistics show that male full time workers in Maidstone earn significantly more than female full time workers. Full time male and female workers living in Maidstone (resident based) earn more than full time male and female workers who have their workplace in Maidstone (workplace based). Overall, full time resident and workplace based earnings are similar. In recent years, full time resident male earnings have increased and full time male workplace earnings have decreased. These figures are reflected in the overall full time earnings trend. From 2005, residential full time workers have been earning slightly more than those that have their workplace in Maidstone. Figure 2.3 shows that earnings in the South East are significantly higher than earnings in Maidstone. Workers who live in the South East (resident based) earn more than those who have their workplace in the South East. As there is a lack of statistically reliable data for female full time workplace earnings in 2007, the overall Maidstone earnings figures should be treated with caution. To be more robust, research that is being carried out for the Economic Strategy and Sustainable Communities Strategy will therefore examine additional sources.

Maidstone's results overall show a greater achievement in gaining 5 or more subjects at grades A* to C when compared to regional and national statistics.

Urban wards contain the highest levels of deprivation (scores 4 and 5) in the borough. The most deprived lower super output area is in Parkwood ward. Parts of Shepway South ward and High Street ward also score 5 on the index of multiple deprivation 2007. The least deprived lower super output area is in Boxley ward.

Commentary: Residents recognised community safety to be the most important theme identified in Maidstone's Community Strategy (adopted 2003 and updated 2005). The new draft Sustainable Community Strategy will be produced under new guidance and will go out to public consultation in early 2009. The Council addresses local crime and disorder through the Safer Maidstone Partnership, which has published the Maidstone Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (2005-2008), reviewed in the Review and Action Plan 2007/08. In Maidstone there is a robust approach to tackling domestic violence and in managing the largest and most dynamic night time economy in the county. It is also important to "design out" crime in all new developments, and this issue will be addressed in LDF policy documents.

A low unemployment rate is beneficial for Maidstone but a local low wage economy makes it necessary for part of the economically active sector to seek work outside the Borough. The higher wages brought in by commuting can contribute to forcing up house prices, causing problems of affordability. A balanced economy is an important aim for the Council. Based on current trends new jobs will be created in the service sector, so most new jobs are likely to be in non-business class premises rather than the traditional employment land used by offices and industry that continue to offer relatively low pay. Overall, Maidstone has a good academic record of achievement although there are pockets of the borough that are under-achieving, particularly in areas of deprivation.

Contextual Indicator C: Economy

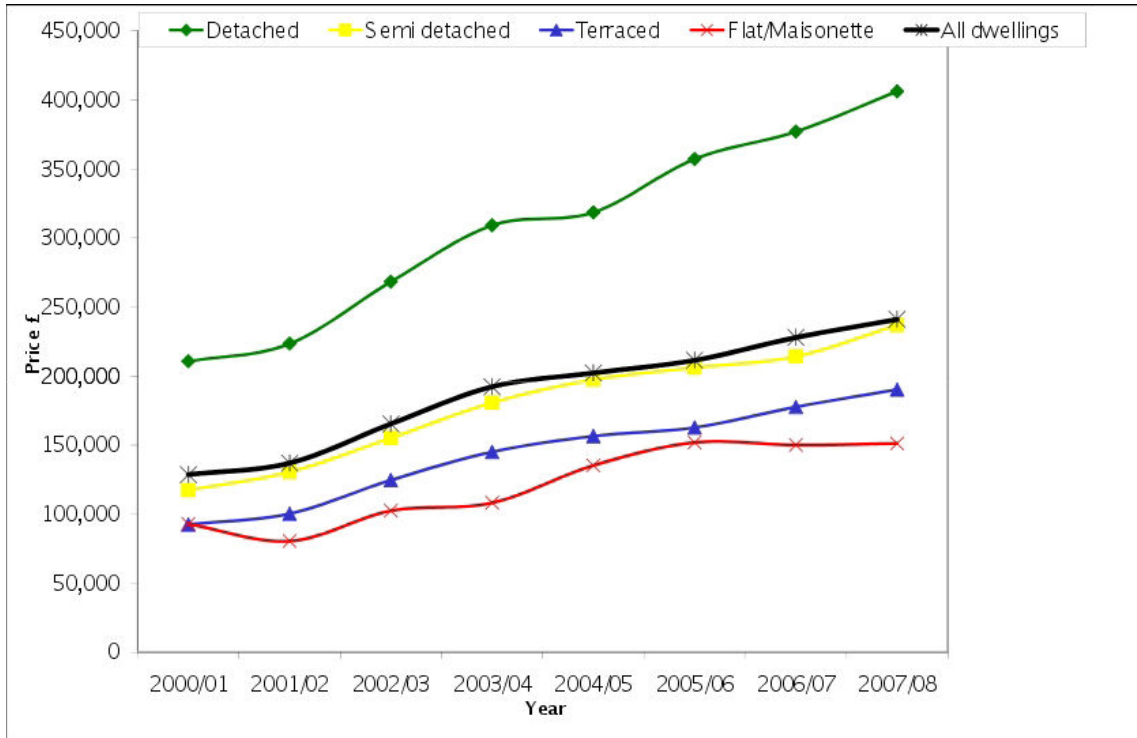


Figure 2.5 Maidstone Annual House Price Increase (source: Land Registry)

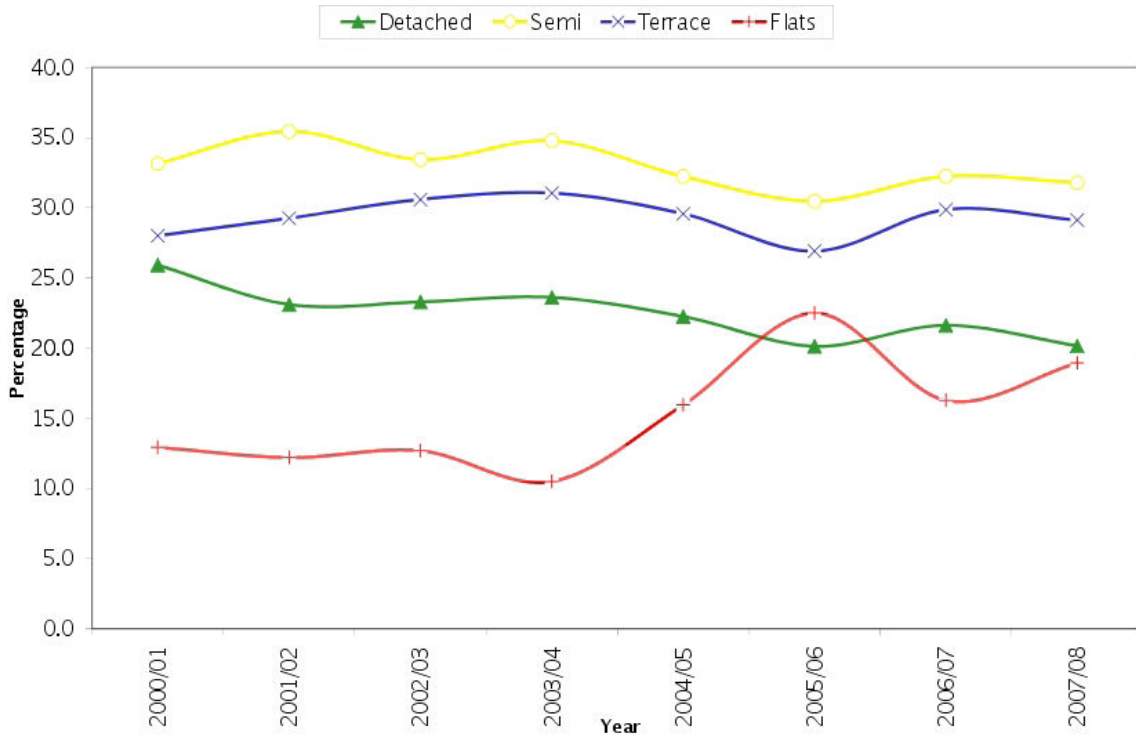


Figure 2.6 Maidstone house sales as a percentage of total sales by type of property (source: Land Registry)

Key Findings: House prices have risen steeply in Maidstone over the past 8 years. Overall, house prices have increased 5.76% between 2006/07 and 2007/08 compared to 7.79% between 2005/06 and 2006/07. Over the same period, the highest levels of property sales remain in the semi-detached sector of the housing market. Percentage sales of flatted property rose steeply in 2005/06 and overtook sales of terraced housing for the first time, during 2006/07 sales of flats declined but increased again during 2007/08. The average cost of a property in Maidstone is £241,257 and the average cost of a flat is £151,235. Based on a 95% mortgage and a 3 times gross income to lending ratio, a person would have to be earning nearly £48,000 to buy a flat in an averaged priced area of Maidstone. The average annual salary of a full time worker in Maidstone is £21,388. ⁽⁴⁾ Full time average earnings in Maidstone have risen by 8.59% in the past 6 years (2002-07): 11.96% (2002-2007) for males and 1.73% (2002-2006) for females. Over the same period, average house prices have risen by 75.98% (£137,095 in 2001/02 to £241,257 in 2007/08).

Commentary: Based on a 5% deposit and a single income, a large proportion of the population does not earn enough to purchase a flat, even in the cheapest areas of Maidstone. The increase in sales of flats reflects the release of high density urban sites for development in recent years. Although average house prices have risen more than 3 times that of the average salary in Maidstone over the past 8

4 'Workplace' figures refer to people who are employed in Maidstone regardless of where they live.

years, falling mortgage interest rates since 2000 have allowed purchasers to borrow greater sums to purchase properties. Interest rate increases during 2006/07 meant that mortgages became more expensive. Over the last twelve month period the 'Credit Crunch' and the associated restricted lending by banks has restricted mortgage lending and in turn brought about a decrease in property values. However, the situation is complex, www.propertysnake.com is revealing significant drops in house prices over almost the whole country, these vary area to area and across property type. The website (based on Land Registry returns) indicates that percentage price drops for Kent far exceed those in Maidstone postal districts. The position will be clearer at the end of the next 2008/09 monitoring period. The Housing Needs Survey (2005) demonstrated a marked increase in affordable housing need since the previous survey had been undertaken in 2001. The provision of affordable housing is a key priority for the Council, which is partly being addressed through the Affordable Housing DPD.

Contextual Indicator D: Environment

Natural Environment Assets	km ²	%	Number
Total Area of Borough	393.40	100.00	
Metropolitan Green Belt	5.29	1.34	
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	107.19	27.25	
Special Landscape Areas	200.21	50.89	
Areas of Local Landscape Importance	15.01	3.82	
Floodplain	47.72	12.13	
Special Area of Conservation	1.37	0.35	1
Sites of Special Scientific Interest	2.70	0.69	9
Local Wildlife Sites (formerly Sites of Nature Conservation Interest)	22.62	5.75	58
Roadside Verges of Nature Conservation Interest			34
Local Nature Reserves			3

Key Assets of the Natural Environment (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

Key Findings: Much of Maidstone's rural area is constrained by its high quality landscape and strategic policy constraints (see figure 2.1), as well as the rich biodiversity of the Borough. The measurement of the floodplain area has been refined as a result of the detailed Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (May 2008).

Commentary: Environmental constraints must be taken into account in the Council's plans for growth. A balance must be struck between the need for growth and the need to protect a high quality environment. Local Nature Reserves (LNR) are already established at Bell Lane and Vinters Valley Park. Boxley Warren was formally designated as a LNR during 2008. Maidstone is also pursuing the designation of further LNRs. The Len Valley is currently an informal reserve which will be formally declared as an LNR in the future. Len Valley is a habitat for rare species of White Leg Damsil fly and Desmoulins Whorl snails. Designations at Admiral and Gorham Wood and Horish Wood are underway. Fant Wildlife will be given future consideration, and the Council has aspirations for LNR status at Bredhurst Woods.

Contextual Indicator E: Housing and the Built Environment

	Local Authority	Registered Social Landlord	Other Public Sector	Private Sector	Total
2007/08	0	7,618	680	54,756	63,054
%	0%	12%	1%	87%	100%

Dwelling Stock Position at 1st April 2008 (source: HSSA Return)

	Local Authority	Registered Social Landlord	Other Public Sector	Private Sector
2007/08	0	100	0	1,900

Dwellings with Category 1 Hazards 2007/08 (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

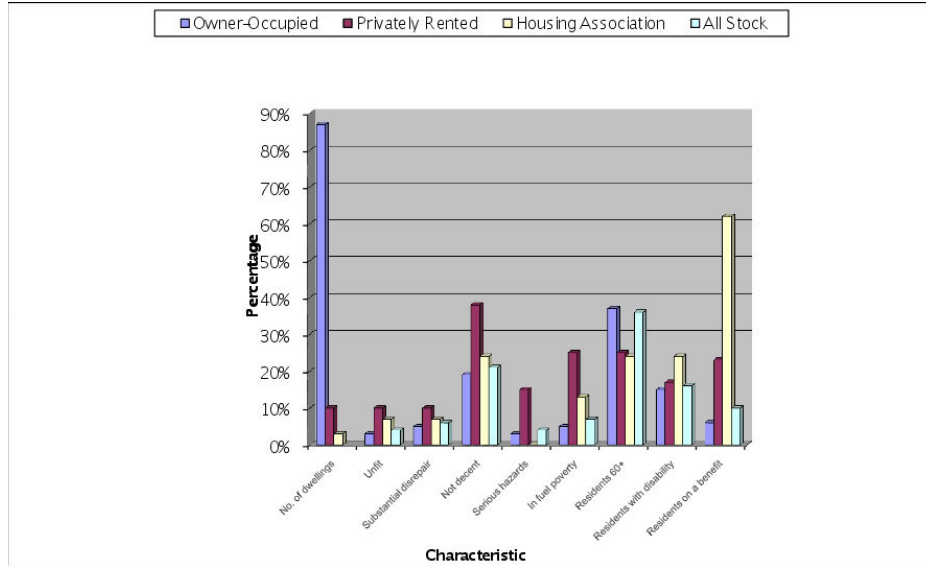


Figure 2.7 Housing Stock Condition 2003 (source: Housing Strategy 2005-2009)

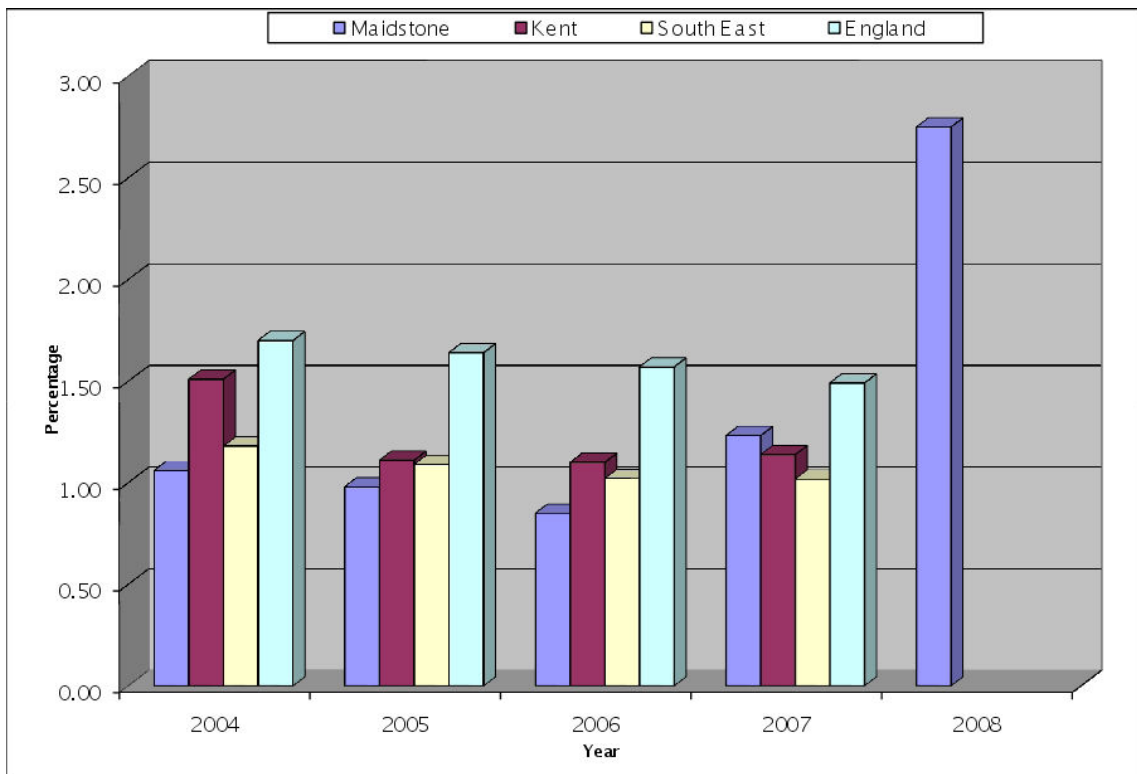


Figure 2.8 Vacant Private Sector Property as a % of all Private Sector (source: Kent County Council/Maidstone Borough Council)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Maidstone	2,173	1,254	2,562	1,764	2,079	2,290
Kent (not including Medway)	24,875	26,502	29,833	30,706	28,550	N/A
South East	146,880	168,725	181,196	195,700	208,419	N/A

Number of Households on the Housing Register (Waiting List) (source: Kent County Council/Maidstone Borough Council)

	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Maidstone	180	228	293	174	53	41
Kent (not including Medway)	2,373	2,711	2,322	1,607	1,260	N/A
South East	15,337	15,215	12,455	9,330	5,510	N/A

Homeless Households (source: Kent County Council/Maidstone Borough Council)

Built Environment Assets	Numbers
Conservation Areas	41
Listed Buildings	2,012
Grade I	42
Grade II*	103
Grade II	1,869
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	28
Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest	6
Important Historic Parks and Gardens	9

Assets of the Built Environment (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

Key Findings: The law has now changed and unfit dwellings are no longer monitored. Houses are now assess by determining whether there are hazards at a property by using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Category 1 hazards are the most serious and are hazards where, if found, the Local Authority must take some action. Category 2 hazards are the most serious and the Local Authority may take some action. In total Maidstone Borough has 2,000 Category 1 hazards that require action. In Maidstone 87% of the total dwelling

stock at 1st April 2008 was in the private sector. During 2003, the Council assessed hazards in private sector housing, in parallel with unfitness, when it carried out the Housing Conditions Survey. A new Housing Conditions Survey will take place in 2009.

Only 4% of Maidstone's housing stock is classified as unfit for habitation in the 2003 Stock Condition Survey, compared to 7% nationally. 6% of dwellings were in need of substantial repair, and 21% of units were not decent for habitation, mainly because of poor thermal efficiency. These percentages are not exclusive and, for example, some of the dwellings in need of substantial repair will be included in the figures for units that are not decent for habitation.

The percentage of private sector vacant dwellings in Maidstone steadily fell until 2006, but rose in 2007 and increased again in 2008. This increase is due to the numbers of new build unsold properties (especially flats). The number of households on the Housing Register has increased since 2007.

In November 2007, 511 households were living in overcrowded conditions (source: Maidstone Borough Council). This figure has now decreased to 219 in August 2008.

Homeless household statistics fluctuate, during 2007/08 Maidstone had the lowest number of homeless household acceptances in absolute terms per 1000 households. Figures for 2006/07 and 2007/08 show that the number of homeless households in Maidstone has continued to considerably decrease and are at their lowest for 6 years.

The Borough has a large number of historically listed buildings and 41 Conservation Areas, of which 6 are located in or adjacent to the urban area.

Commentary: Only 12% of Maidstone's housing stock is affordable housing. The general condition of the housing stock in the Borough is good, with below average rates of unfitness and substantial disrepair. Dwellings classified as not decent for habitation are generally unfit because of poor thermal efficiency. There is also a low rate of dwellings with a serious hazard or in fuel poverty. The stock condition survey undertaken in 2003 suggests the Council concentrates its efforts on private rented sector dwellings and older owner-occupied dwellings in rural areas. Overcrowding is now less of an issue but the Council will consider and monitor more fully in future reports. A new Housing Stock Condition survey is to be carried out in 2009.

There are 2,290 households on the Housing Register in 2008, which is an indication of the need for affordable housing in the borough. This issue is being addressed through the Affordable Housing DPD. Maidstone has numerous built environment assets, which should be maintained and protected through existing and proposed policies.

	Less than 30 dwellings per hectare		Between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare		Above 50 dwellings per hectare	
	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08
Large Sites (5 dwellings +)	14.16%	11.53%	41.33%	34.29%	44.51%	54.19%
Small Sites (1-4 dwellings)	50.62%	43.75%	17.90%	22.22%	31.48%	34.03%
All Sites	21.08%	15.53%	36.89%	32.79%	42.04%	51.68%

Percentage of new dwellings completed at less than 30dph, 30-50dph and above 50dph

Key Findings: Overall 84.47% of dwellings completed in 2007/08 were constructed on sites of a density greater than 30 dwellings per hectare. 88.48% of dwellings on large sites completed in 2007/08 were constructed at a density of greater than 30 units per hectare. 65.97% of dwellings on small sites completed in 2007/08 were constructed at a density of less than 30 dwelling per hectare. These figures relate to the average density of each development site, rather than individual applications where there may be several applications for a single site at varying densities. Densities are calculated using net site areas, i.e. after subtracting hectare for other land uses associated with the planning consent.

Commentary: Over four fifths of Maidstone's dwellings were completed at densities that accord with government advice on developing at not less than 30 dwellings per hectare. The remaining fifth is a reflection of the development of small sites in rural areas, for example, replacement dwellings or the conversion of rural buildings.

Contextual Indicator F: Transport and Spatial Connectivity

Annual Monitoring Report 2007/2008

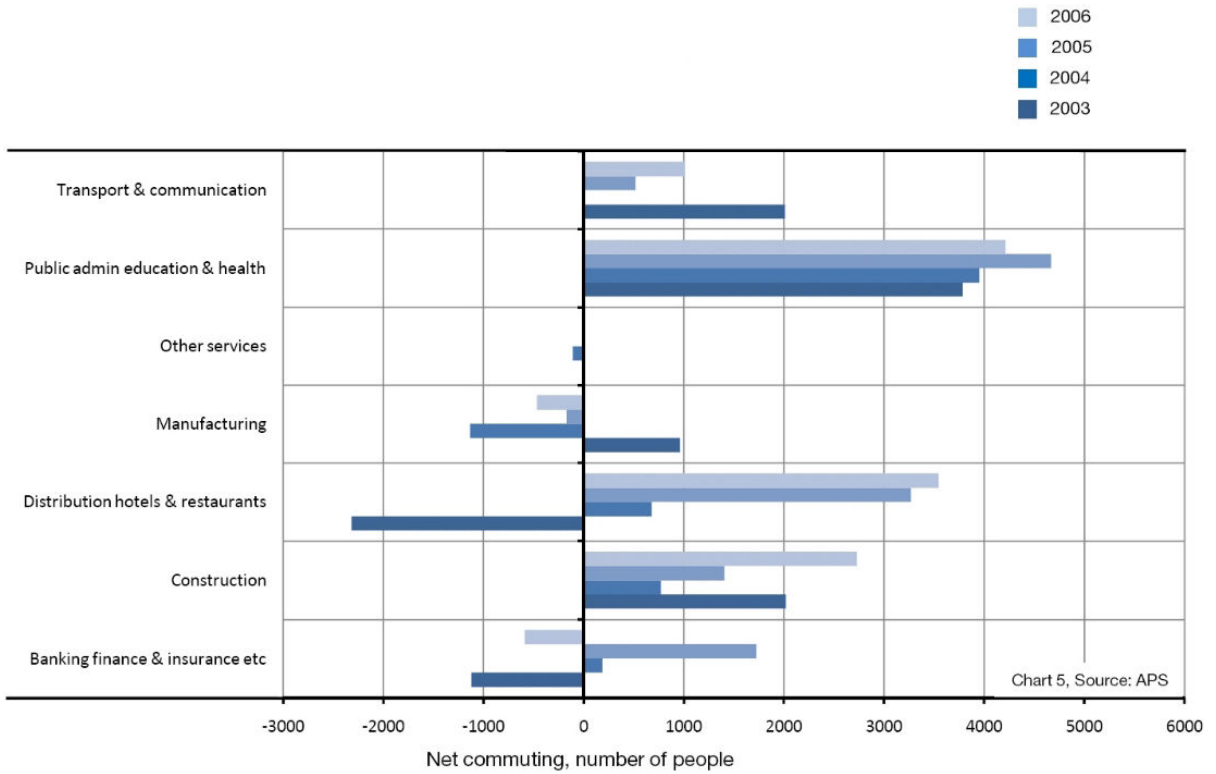


Figure 2.9 Net Commuting By Broad Industrial Sector (source: Gavurin Maidstone: State of the Economy Report March 2008)

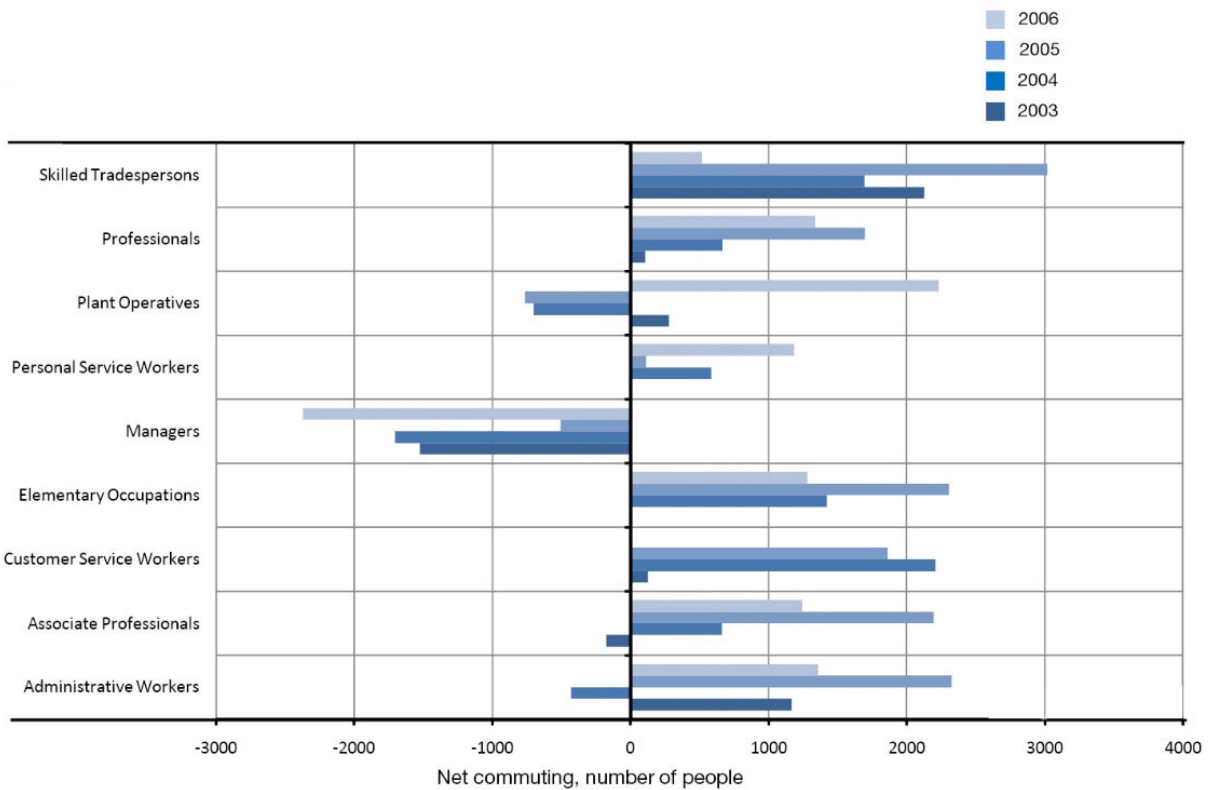


Figure 2.10 Net Commuting by Occupation (source: Gavurin Maidstone: State of the Economy Report March 2008)

Key Findings: The Gavurin Maidstone State of the Economy Report stated that people working in banking, finance and insurance and manufacturing were likely to be the people commuting out of Maidstone for work. People travelling into Maidstone in 2006 for work were likely to be the people working in public administration, education and health, transport and communication and hotels and restaurants. The Gavurin Report (2008) also stated that the occupational group of Maidstone's residents who commute out for work rather than commute in are managers. Maidstone has more professionals who commute into work than professionals who commute out.

Commentary: Designated growth areas in Thames Gateway and Ashford, together with restraints on employment in Maidstone, could encourage greater commuting on a congested transport network. However, Maidstone's Growth Point status will attract new investment for regeneration and improved transport links. 46.1% (2001) of all journeys to work are within Maidstone Borough. This is a relatively high rate given the town's proximity to London.

Core Output Indicators

3.1 Core Output Indicators are set by national policy guidance, which cover issues of business development and town centres, housing and environmental quality.

Business Development and Town Centres

Core Indicator BD1: Total amount of additional floorspace - by type

To show the amount and type of completed employment floorspace (gross and net).

	B1a (offices not within A2) m ²	B1b (Research & Development, studios, laboratories, hi-tech) m ²	B1c (Light industry) m ²	B2 (General Industry) m ²	B8 (Storage or distribution) m ²	Total m ²
Gross	3,932	0	5,225	4,661	5,505	19,323
Net	1,509	0	751	4,202	-1,294	5,168

Total amount of additional floorspace 2007/08 (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

Key Findings: During 2007/08 there has been a net gain in completed employment floorspace. Most of this net gain has been in use class B2 (general industry). There have also been net gains of completed B1a (office space) and B1c (light industry). Despite a large amount of completed B8 gross, overall there has been a significant net loss of B8 (storage or distribution). Notably there has been no gain in the amount of B1b (research & development, studio, laboratories, hi-tech) employment floorspace.

Commentary: These issues are being studied in preparation for the Core Strategy DPD and the Land Allocations and Implementation DPD.

Core Indicator BD2: Amount of employment floorspace on previously developed land - by type

To show the amount and type of completed employment floorspace (gross) coming forward on previously developed land (PDL).

	B1a (offices not within A2) m ²	B1b (Research & Development, studios, laboratories, hi-tech) m ²	B1c (Light industry) m ²	B2 (General Industry) m ²	B8 (Storage or distribution) m ²	Total m ²
Gross	3,812	0	4,783	4,661	5,505	18,761
% gross on PDL	96.95%	0	91.54%	100	100	97.09%

Amount of Floorspace on Previously Developed Land 2007/08 (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

Key Findings: 97.09% of employment floorspace (gross) was completed on previously developed land in 2007/08 (18,761m² on brownfield sites as a percentage of gains in all use classes of 19,323m²). This compares to 66.5% in 2006/07, 74.39% in 2005/06 and 100% in 2004/05.

Commentary: Maidstone cannot sustain very high percentages of development on brownfield sites, particularly given a need for better placed new sites that are located to suit modern employment needs. A proportion of greenfield land will be required for new sites that will be allocated for development in the Land Allocations and Housing Needs DPD.

Core Indicator BD3: Employment land available - by type

To show the amount and type of employment land available.

	A2/B1 (Offices)	B2 (General Industry)	B8 (Storage or distribution)	Total
Sites Allocated m ²	25,800	11,100	0	36,900
Hectares	2.58	1.11	0	3.69

BD3(i) Sites allocated for employment uses in the Local Plan 2007/08 (source: Maidstone Borough Council) NB: Use class categories will be refined in future AMRs

	B1a (offices not within A2)	B1b (Research & Development, studios, laboratories, hi-tech)	B1c (Light industry)	B2 (General Industry)	B8 (Storage or distribution)	Total
Sites for which planning permission has been granted (net) m ²	28,503	1,766	4,116	17,836	-7,291	44,930
Hectares	2.58	0.18	0.41	1.78	-0.73	4.49

BD3(ii) Site for which planning permission has been granted for employment uses, but not included in (i) 2007/08 (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

	A2/B1 (Offices)	B2 (General Industry)	B8 (Storage or distribution)
Vacant plots without planning permission (plots with potential for employment) m ²	1,738	1,738	1,563
Hectares	0.17	0.17	0.16

Vacant plots without planning permission 2007/08 (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

Key Findings: There are 3.69ha employment land allocated, the majority of which lies within use class A2/B1. The council also monitors vacant plots without planning permission with potential for employment use. 4.49ha of employment land has planning permission on unallocated sites. The greatest proportion of planning permission has been granted for B1a office use.

Commentary: The Council will address the need for suitable employment sites in the Core Strategy and Land Allocations DPDs.

Core Indicator BD4: Total amount of floorspace for 'town centre uses'

To show the amount of completed floorspace (gross and net) for town centre uses within (i) town centre areas and (ii) the local authority area.

	A1 (Shops) m ²	A2 (Financial and Professional Services) m ²	B1a (Offices not within A2) m ²	D2 (Assembly and Leisure) m ²	Total
	Net Tradable Floorspace: Sales space which customers have access to (excluding areas such as storage)	Gross Internal Floorspace: The entire area inside the external walls of a building and includes corridors, lifts, plant rooms, mezzanines, services accommodation e.g. toilets but excludes internal walls			
Gross	0	156	3,932	230	4,318
Net	-1446.3	23	1,509	-220	-134.3

BD4(ii) Town Centre uses in Maidstone Borough 2007/08 (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

Key Findings: (i) Maidstone does not yet have a defined town centre area for planning policy purposes, so it is not possible to monitor BD4(i). The town centre boundary will be defined as part of the Local Development Framework.

(ii) Overall there has been a net loss in the total amount of floorspace for the defined 'town centre uses' in the Local Authority area. The loss of net tradable floor space in A1 (shops) contributed to most of this loss. The substantial loss in A1 floor space is due to a redevelopment, where the loss of floor space has been completed but the replacement shop has not yet been completed. The completion of this redevelopment will then result in a net gain of A1 floorspace. There has also been a loss in D2 (assembly and leisure) facilities during 2007/08. There has been a significant net gain in B1a (office) floor space.

Commentary: The definition of 'town centre' used is specified in the Core Output Indicators guidance (update 2/2008) published by Communities and Local Government. This definition excludes use classes A3 (restaurants and cafes), A4 (dinking establishments) and A5 (hot food take-aways). Use classes A3, A4 and A5 will be monitored as part of the Contextual Indicators in future AMRs. Maidstone

does not have a defined town centre in the Local Plan, so there is no data for BD1 part (i). The Council will address the need for suitable 'town centre uses' and will define the town centre sites as part of the Local Development Framework.

Housing

Core Indicator H1: Plan period and housing targets

To show the planned housing period and provision.

Start of Plan Period	End of Plan Period	Total Housing Requirement	Source of Plan Target
01/04/2006	31/03/2026	10,080	South East Plan Panel Report

Plan period and housing target

Commentary: The South East Plan Panel Report requires that 10,080 dwellings are built in Maidstone Borough by 2026. This requirement is higher than the adopted Structure Plan target of 6,500 by 2016.

Government recently carried out public consultation on the changes they propose to make to the South East Plan. The proposal is to increase the regional housing target from 32,000 to an annual minimum figure of 33,125 dwelling per annum. For Maidstone this would increase the total target of 10,080 to a minimum of 11,080 over the 20 year period 2006-26. Following extensive discussion at the Local Development Document Advisory Group, Cabinet agreed a detailed response to the Government on 23 October 2008 and the Council will now be pressing its case to resist the extra 1000 dwellings. The Council strongly object to the substitution of

housing "targets" with "minimum figures". Government is expected to adopt the South East Plan in its final form in 2009. Maidstone's Local Development Framework will need to be produced in conformity with it.

Core Indicator H2

(a): Net additional dwellings - in previous years

To show recent levels of housing delivery.

(b): Net additional dwellings - for the reporting year (2007/08)

To show levels of housing delivery for the reporting year.

(c): Net additional dwellings - in future years

To show likely levels of housing delivery

This information should be accompanied by the **(i) area (in hectares)** and **(ii) the annualised plan target applying to each of the 5 years**. *NB: (i) data for area (in hectares) is unavailable.*

(d): Managed delivery target

To show how likely levels of future housing are expected to come forward taking into account the previous years performance.

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
Net additional dwellings - in previous years	722	444	379	816	756	714

Core Indicator H2a

	2007/08
Net additional dwelling - for the reporting year	992

Core Indicator H2b

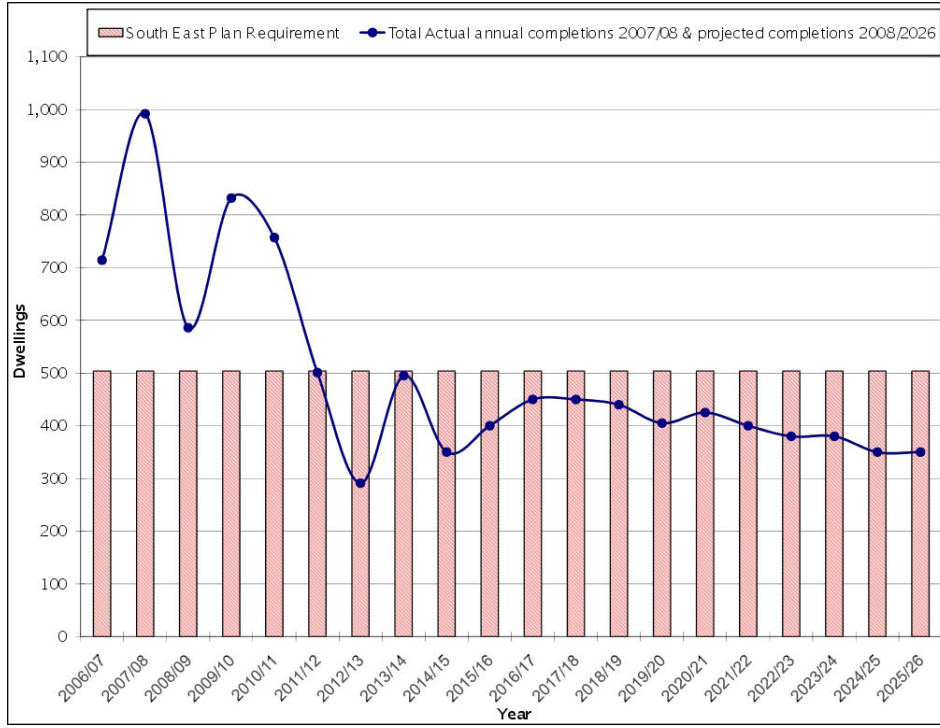


Figure 3.1 Housing land supply (completions and estimated land supply) against draft South East Plan requirement 2006 to 2026 (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

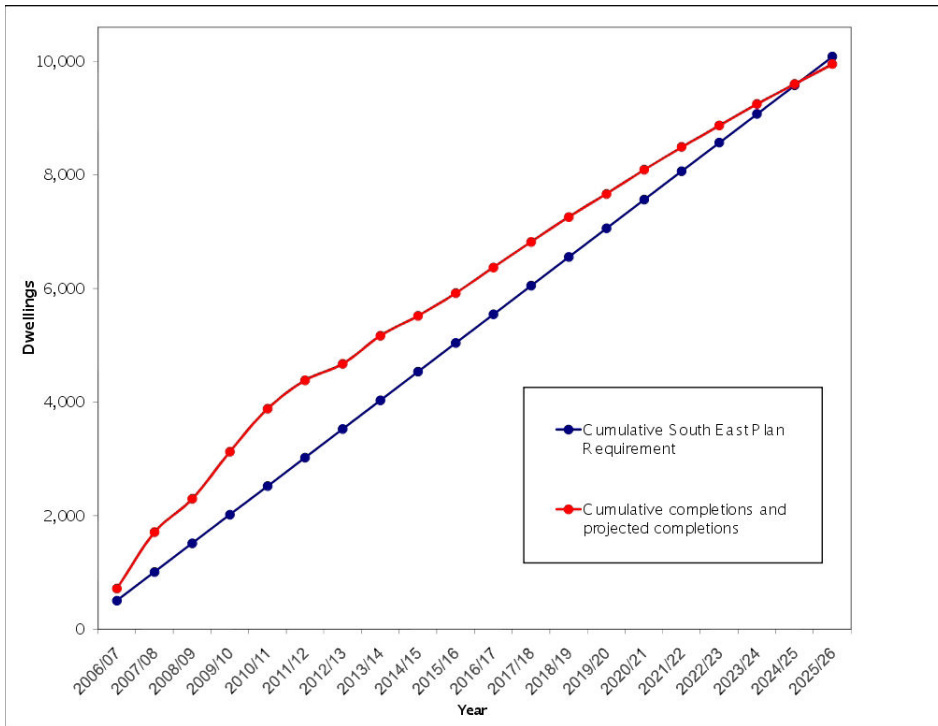


Figure 3.2 Maidstone Cumulative Housing Requirement v Supply (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

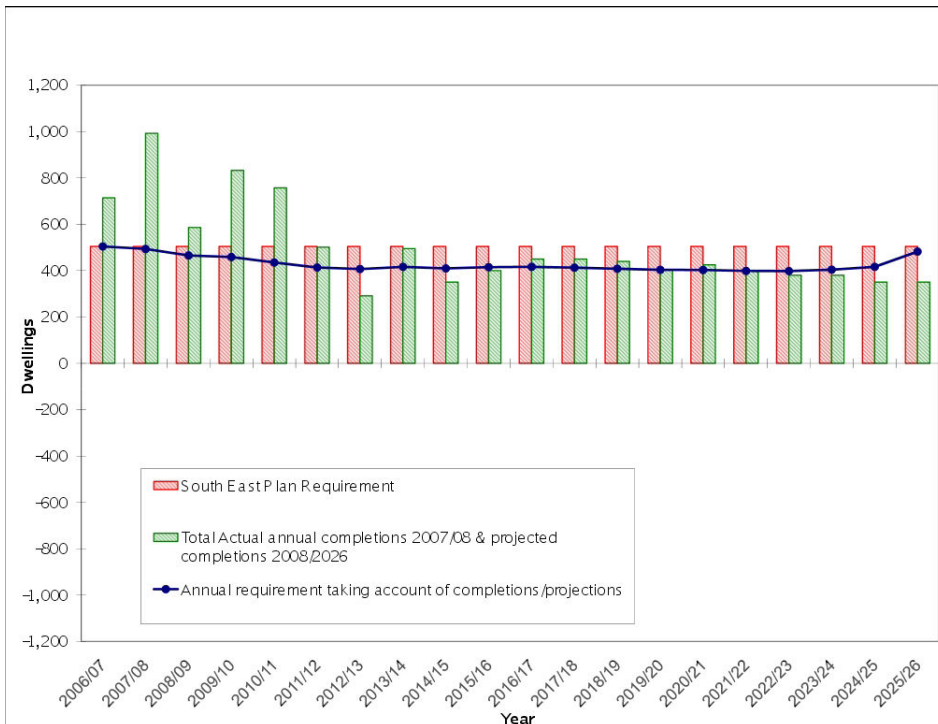


Figure 3.3 Maidstone Borough Housing Trajectory (Based on CLG Model) (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

	H2c (c): -Target (South East Plan requirement) (c)	Cumulative South East Plan requirement	Annual completions and <i>projected</i> completions	Planned Growth (Core Strategy Sites)	H2c (a): Net additional dwellings - in future years	Cumulative completions and <i>projected</i> completions	H2d: Managed Delivery Target	Years remaining
2006/2007	504	504	714		714	714	504	20
2007/2008	504	1,008	992		992	1,706	493	19
2008/2009	504	1,512	586		586	2,292	465	18
2009/2010	504	2,016	832		832	3,124	458	17
2010/2011	504	2,520	757		757	3,881	435	16
2011/2012	504	3,024	501		501	4,382	413	15
2012/2013	504	3,528	261	30	291	4,673	407	14
2013/2014	504	4,032	245	250	495	5,168	416	13
2014/2015	504	4,536		350	350	5,518	409	12
2015/2016	504	5,040		400	400	5,918	415	11
2016/2017	504	5,544		450	450	6,368	416	10
2017/2018	504	6,048		450	450	6,818	412	9
2018/2019	504	6,552		440	440	7,258	408	8
2019/2020	504	7,056		405	405	7,663	403	7
2020/2021	504	7,560		425	425	8,088	403	6
2021/2022	504	8,064		400	400	8,488	398	5
2022/2023	504	8,568		380	380	8,686	398	4
2023/2024	504	9,072		380	380	9,248	404	3
2024/2025	504	9,576		350	350	9,598	416	2
2025/2026	504	10,080		350	350	9,948	482	1
	10,080		9,948		9,948			

Annual Housing Trajectory for draft South East Plan Requirement (Core Indicator H2c and H2d) (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

Key Findings: Figure 3.1 shows annual dwelling completions and projected completions in Maidstone against draft South East Plan requirements. Housing land supply comprises 3 elements: brownfield land allocations that have not gained a planning consent, outstanding planning permissions that have yet to be implemented, and planned growth in the Core Strategy. Annual build rates fluctuate, so figure 3.2 demonstrates how Maidstone is meeting cumulative South East Plan requirements. The trajectory shows that Maidstone has 98.69% of its requirements to 2026. This supply excludes adopted local plan greenfield housing allocations that were not released for development following the results of the 2002 Urban Capacity Study. The supply also excludes any allowance for large windfall sites (539 units in 2006/07 and 360 units in 2007/08) and Urban Capacity potential from sites that have not gained planning permission.

In the longer term the Planned Growth figures will be refined through the Core Strategy and other Land Allocation Development Plan Documents to ensure targets are met. The housing trajectory in figure 3.3 compares actual and projected net annual housing completions against the draft South East Plan annual requirements over a 20 year period. The trajectory is a tool to track the provision of housing supply over the South East Plan period. The blue line of the graph shows the number of completed dwellings needed each year to meet Structure Plan targets.

The trajectory examines, on an annual basis, how many additional dwellings will be needed at any one point in time to meet the housing requirements remaining over the period of the plan. For example, in 2007/08 cumulative completions are 1,706. Subtract this figure from the total requirement over the plan period (10,080) and the remaining balance to provide for is 8,374 units. In 2007/08 there are 18 years to run to the end of the plan period, so the Council needs to build at a rate of 465 units per annum to meet the final target of 10,080 dwellings (8,374/18 years).

2,910 dwellings have consent at 1st April 2008. Adding the supply from the outstanding housing allocations in the Local Plan (but not greenfield sites) brings the total to 3,182. At 1st April 2008, there is therefore a 6.8 year supply of deliverable housing sites in the Borough (3,182 divided by 465 = 6.8 years). Significantly, this supply stems entirely from commitments and brownfield land allocations.

Commentary: Maidstone's housing land supply has been assessed against emerging South East Plan housing requirements.

Annual completion rates fluctuate according to market conditions and construction rates for property types. For example, a block of flats will be under construction for a longer time period than the equivalent number of houses that will steadily add to completion rates. The 2007/08 monitoring period had the highest ever housing completion figure at 992 net. Whilst a decline to 586 has been anticipated for 2008/09 and factored into modest projections for housing development completions, the economic situation has exceeded all expectations and the actual figure may be revealed to be lower. The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) will look in more detail at the deliverability of housing projections, taking into account market trends. The SHLAA will be published in

2009. The Council can demonstrate that it has a 6.8 year supply of deliverable housing sites. In the longer term, the Council will allocate development land through the Land Allocations DPDs to meet its housing provisions.

Core Indicator H3: New and converted dwellings - on previously developed land

To show the number of gross new dwellings being built upon previously developed land (PDL)

	% Brownfield	% Greenfield
2004/05	96.8	3.2
2005/06	94.5	5.5
2006/07	96.6	3.4
2007/08	86.8	13.2
2004/05 to 2007/08	93.7	6.3

Percentage of Completed Dwellings on Previously Developed Land (Brownfield) (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

Key Findings: A high proportion of units in the borough have been completed on brownfield sites, consistently since 2004/05. During 2007/08, 1,006 dwellings (gross) were completed on brownfield sites.

Commentary: The reason Maidstone is building such a high proportion of properties on previously developed land is due to a number of factors. First, large institutional sites, such as Oakwood Hospital, have been released for development in recent years. Second, Maidstone published its Urban Capacity Study in 2002, two years after its local plan was adopted. The Study demonstrated that the Borough had enough supply of brownfield land to meet Structure Plan requirements, so the Council resolved not to release greenfield sites allocated for development in the local plan. Third, a large number of town centre brownfield sites have been released in recent years, suitable for high density flatted development. However, Maidstone will not be able to maintain such a high percentage of brownfield development in the longer term. Nor should it have to, when national targets seek 60% of new dwellings on previously developed land.

The ability to rely so heavily on previously developed land will end over the next 5 years or so, and Maidstone will need to look towards the release of a proportion of greenfield sites to meet South East Plan housing targets. The Council's programme for the mix of previously developed land and greenfield sites will be addressed in the Core Strategy DPD and in the Land Allocations DPDs. The Kent and Medway Structure Plan guideline for completions on Previously Developed Land in Maidstone is an average of 85% over the Structure Plan period 2001 to 2016. Clearly, Maidstone has achieved this target for 2007/08.

Core Indicator H4: Net additional pitches (Gypsy and Traveller)

To show the number of Gypsy and Traveller pitches delivered.

	2006/07	2007/08
Pitches with permanent consent	10	-
Pitches with permanent consent and personal condition	2	3
Total	12	3

Net additional pitches (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

Commentary: The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment indicated a need for some 32 pitches in the borough for the 5 year period between 2006 and 2011. Significant progress has been made in the first two years of that period. The South East England Regional Assembly is currently progressing a Partial Review of the South East Plan which will confirm the Borough requirement for Gypsies and Travellers pitches and Travelling Showpeople pitches for the period 2006 to 2016.

Core Indicator H5: Gross affordable housing completions

To show affordable housing delivery.

Social rent homes provided	Intermediate homes provided	Affordable homes Total
30	131	161

Affordable Housing Completions 2007/08 (source: Maidstone Borough Council) Figures reported to SEERA

	All dwellings completed (net)	Affordable dwellings completed (net)	Percentage of affordable dwellings completed
2004/05	816	114	13.97%
2005/06	758	56	7.39%
2006/07	714	147	20.59%
2007/08	992	205	20.66%

Affordable Dwellings Completed as a Percentage of All Completed Units (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

	No. all units (net) secured through new planning consents for sites of 15+ units	No. affordable housing units (net) secured on new planning consents for sites of 15+ units	Percentage of affordable housing units secured
2006/07	58	23	39.70%
2007/08	247	132	53.44%

Affordable Dwellings Secured as a Percentage of New Planning Consents determined according to Policy AH1 (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

Key Findings: The 161 affordable dwellings were completed during 2007/08. This figure includes new build homebuy and shared ownership (that might staircase up to 100%) if included in the planning applications Section 106 agreement. The 161 affordable completed dwellings do not include 12 first time buyer initiative units or 32 affordable dwellings completed on small sites that did not required

Section 106 agreements, as specified by SEERA guidance. When these 44 dwellings are included in the total number of affordable dwellings completed, 20.66% of all completed units provided for affordable housing in 2007/08, compared to 20.59% in 2006/07. These completed affordable dwellings were granted according to the former Local Plan affordable housing policy H24 which sought 25% affordable housing on sites of 25 units or more, or 1 hectare or greater. These figures do not include large Maidstone Housing Trust regeneration schemes at Bell Road or Coombe Road.

After the introduction of the new DPD policy in December 2006 the council seeks 40% affordable housing on sites yielding 15 units or more, or of 0.5 hectare or greater. On sites of 15+ units or 0.5+ hectare, 132 affordable dwellings (53.44%) have been secured in 2007/08 in accordance with the new policy.

Commentary: Maidstone's Housing Needs Survey (2005) demonstrated that local plan policies were not meeting its need for affordable housing. The Survey showed that affordable housing need represented 173% of the Borough's total housing supply at that time. In order to address this need, the Council has published the Affordable Housing DPD (2006), which replaces the adopted local plan policy for affordable housing.

81 new affordable dwellings in 2007/08 have been granted under the former policy compared to 132 affordable dwellings granted under the new DPD policy. In addition, 2 affordable dwellings have been granted during 2007/08 on sites of less than 15 units. Completion rates fluctuate according to market conditions and construction rates for property types. Often the affordable housing element of a larger site is associated with a particular phase of the development, so affordable units are not built evenly over the construction period. Consequently, to measure the success of the Council's affordable housing policy, the number of affordable housing units secured on new planning permissions will be monitored.

In 2007/08 two planning applications were granted under the Local Plan policy. The first was the 25% off-site provision for the an existing planning application at Springfield. The other application initially secured a Section 106 agreement for 25% affordable housing and then secured additional affordable housing at a later date. This application did not have to comply with the new DPD policy because the outline application secured 25% affordable housing before the new DPD was adopted. 53.44% of affordable dwellings were granted under the new DPD policy in 2007/08, exceeding the DPD target of 40%.

Six planning applications granted during 2007/08 complied with the Affordable Housing DPD target of 40% affordable, however three of these applications were subsequently acquired by Housing Associations who will be building 100% affordable dwellings on the site. The remaining three applications secured 39.79% affordable, virtually meeting the DPD target of 40%.

Core Indicator H6: Housing Quality - Building for Life Assessments

To show the level of quality in new housing development.

- 3.2** This information is not available for 2007/08. This indicator will be monitored once the council has an assessor or assessors trained by CAFE. CAFE plan to train Local Authorities over the coming three years, they are prioritising training in Growth Point areas. The South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) envisage there will potentially be a lack of data for the next three years. CAFE say that the Building for Life tool will be used to assess and score developments at the pre-planning discussion stage. Upon completion the site would be visited; at this stage the original assessment can be referred to and, providing the site has not changed from pre-planning discussions, the score will still apply. The site may require re-assessment and a new score upon completion.

Environmental Quality

Core Indicator E1: Number of planning permissions granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality

To show numbers of developments which are potentially located where (i) they would be at risk of flooding or increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and, (ii) adversely affect water quality.

Flooding	Quality	Total
5	0	5

Number of planning permission granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on either flood defence grounds or water quality (source: Environment Agency/Maidstone Borough Council)

Key Findings: In 2007/08 five planning permissions were granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency on flood defence grounds. All five permissions were granted subject to a condition in the interest of flooding. There were no objections to planning applications on the grounds of water quality.

Commentary: The Council will continue to monitor the number of planning permissions that are granted contrary to the advice of the Environment Agency, and will make conditions in the interest of flood defence where appropriate.

Core Indicator E2: Change in areas of biodiversity importance

To show losses or additions to biodiversity habitat.

Commentary: This information is not available for 2007/08. The Council will set up new monitoring systems that will provide data for this indicator when resources are available.

Core Indicator E3: Renewable energy generation

To show the amount of renewable energy generation by installed capacity and type.

	Wind Onshore	Solar photovoltaics	Hydro	Biomass						Total
				Landfill gas	Sewage sludge digestion	Municipal (and industrial solid waste combustion	Co-firing of biomass with fossil fuels	Animal biomass	Plant Biomass	
Permitted installed capacity in MWh	1 application granted for a small scale 12m wind turbine - 13.59MWh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Completed installed capacity in MWh	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Renewable Energy Developments/Installations granted planning permission during 2007/08

Key Findings: One application has been granted for renewable energy generation during 2007/08. This core indicator is designed to pick up planning permissions granted for large installations as specified in the table on the previous page. This core indicator excludes schemes installed under the General Development Order and does not incorporate measures under Code for Sustainable Homes and BRE Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) included as part of a larger planning applications.

Commentary: The Council has only started specifically monitoring planning applications for renewable energy this year. As the database of planning applications is built up, the methodology for monitoring this indicator will become more refined. In the future, planning applications granted for renewable energy generation will be surveyed to establish when the application is implemented. The Council will facilitate further schemes throughout the borough, particularly through planning conditions to secure additional provision. Policies and appropriate indicators will be developed through the Local Development Framework. These policies will respond to requirements set out in the Planning and Energy Act and the Regional Spatial Strategy when finalised.

Local Output Indicators

- 4.1** Local output indicators are used to assess the performance of local policies. Nine local policies have been reviewed, 7 of which are contained in the adopted Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan (2000), saved from 28 September 2007. These 7 are policies for the environment, employment, transport and community facilities. In December 2006 the Affordable Housing DPD and Open Space DPD were adopted, so the effectiveness of policies AH1 and OS1 are monitored in this chapter.
- 4.2** Like core output indicators, data availability can be limited and the Council will explore means of gathering and recording data for improved monitoring for future Annual Monitoring Reports. The policies that are the subject of monitoring in this AMR will be superseded by the Local Development Framework Core Strategy in future documents.

OS1 - Open Space Development Plan Document

The amount of Open Space that should be provided on residential developments.

Commentary: Policy OS1 delivers open space to achieve the objectives of the Green Spaces Strategy, as required by PPG17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation. The success of the policy is monitored by tracking the changes for 8 categories of open space provision within the urban and rural areas of the borough. Currently, there are no minimum standards set for Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces or for Green Corridors, so the Council will give consideration to the setting of standards for future monitoring purposes. The categories of open space provision were refined in 2006 and the tables below will set the base line for future monitoring years. During 2008/09 planning applications that require open space will be monitored to ensure that policy OS1 is working effectively. Where current provision is below standards set per 1000 population or hectareage, figures show a minus sign.

	Total population	Current provision (hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population	Local minimum standard	Above/below standard per 1000 population	Above/below standard (hectares)
Total urban	98,500	213.37	2.17	2.30	-0.13	-1.28
Total rural	45,000	0	0	0	0	0
Borough wide total	143,500	213.37	1.49			

Parks and Gardens (hierarchy: strategic significance) (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

	Hectares	Population	Hectares per 1000 population
Total urban	812.76	98,500	8.25
Total rural	2,095.44	45,000	46.57
Borough wide total	2,908.20	143,500	20.27

Natural and Semi-Natural Green Spaces (no standard set) (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

	Length	Population	Length per 1000 population
Total urban	16,688	98,500	169.42
Total rural	91,556	45,000	2,034.58
Borough wide total	108,244	143,500	754.31

Green Corridors (no standard set) (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

	Total population	Current provision (hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population	Local minimum standard	Above/below standard per 1000 population	Above/below standard (hectares)
Total urban	98,500	65.19	0.66	0.70	-0.04	-3.94
Total rural	45,000	68.65	1.53	0.80	0.73	32.85

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	Total population	Current provision (hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population	Local minimum standard	Above/below standard per 1000 population	Above/below standard (hectares)
Borough wide total	143,500	133.84	0.93			

Amenity Greenspace (hierarchy: neighbourhood) (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

	Total population	Current provision (hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population	Local minimum standard	Above/below standard per 1000 population	Above/below standard (hectares)
Total urban	98,500	6.98	0.07	0.12	-0.05	-4.93
Total rural	45,000	3.46	0.08	0.09	-0.01	-0.45
Borough wide total	143,500	10.44	0.07			

Provision for Children - Equipped Play (hierarchy: neighbourhood) (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

	Total population	Current provision (hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population	Local minimum standard	Above/below standard per 1000 population	Above/below standard (hectares)
Total urban	98,500	145.91	1.48	1.40	0.08	7.88
Total rural	45,000	119.90	2.66	2.70	-0.04	-1.80
Borough wide total	143,500	265.81	1.85			

Outdoor Sports Facilities (hierarchy: strategic significance) (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

	Total population	Current provision (hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population	Local minimum standard	Above/below standard per 1000 population	Above/below standard (hectares)
Total urban	98,500	19.86	0.20	0.21	-0.01	-0.99

	Total population	Current provision (hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population	Local minimum standard	Above/below standard per 1000 population	Above/below standard (hectares)
Total rural	45,000	10.59	0.24	0.18	0.06	2.70
Borough wide total	143,500	30.45	0.21			

Allotments and Community Gardens (hierarchy: middle order) (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

	Total population	Current provision (hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population	Local minimum standard	Above/below standard per 1000 population	Above/below standard (hectares)
Total urban	98,500	36.62	0.37	0.66	-0.29	-28.57
Total rural	45,000	19.88	0.44	0.59	-0.15	-6.75
Borough wide total	143,500	56.50	0.39			

Cemeteries and Churchyards (hierarchy: middle order) (source: Maidstone Borough Council)

In 2008 Clare Park was awarded a Green Flag. The Council is also seeking Green Flags at Whatman and South Parks.

AH1 - Affordable Housing Development Plan Document

40% affordable housing from residential development of 15 dwellings or more, or 0.5 hectare or greater. Not less than 24% of the total number of dwellings should be affordable rented housing.

Commentary: The Affordable Housing DPD was adopted in 2006. Under core output indicator H5 the Council has monitored the amount of affordable housing completed and secured through new planning consents. Apart from some exceptions all of the affordable housing secured on sites of 15+ was secured using policy AH1. The number of affordable dwellings secured this year has been increased because housing associations have secured sites to build 100% affordable. Only 20.66% of the dwellings completed during 2007/08 were affordable, this is because there will need to be a lead in period for the implementation of policy AH1 as some sites granted planning permission under the former policy could take several years to complete.

Policy AH1 requires 60% socially rented units from the total number of affordable dwellings. During 2007/08 only 18.63% of the affordable units completed were for social rent (30 of 161 affordable dwellings completed). This is because the completed dwellings were granted in accordance with the former local plan policy that did not require a minimum percentage for social rent.

ENV7 - Riverside Zone of Special Townscape
 To enhance the quality of the riverside.

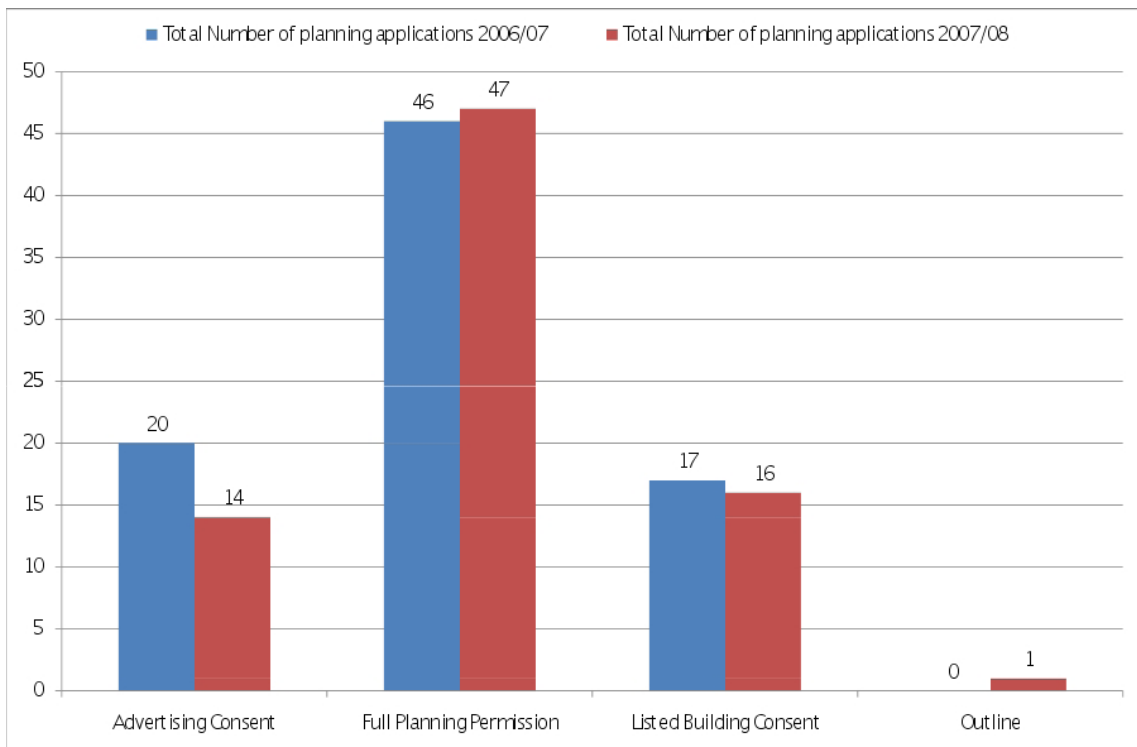


Figure 4.1 Total number of planning applications in the Riverside Zone of Special Townscape

Application Type	Total Granted		Total Refused		Total Split Decision		Withdrawn		Total Number of Applications	
	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08
Advertising Consent	15	11	3	1	1	0	1	2	20	14
Full Planning Permission	36	41	6	5	0	0	4	1	46	47
Listed Building Consent	15	14	1	2	0	0	1	0	17	16
Outline	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total:	66	67	10	8	1	0	6	3	83	78

Planning Applications Determined in the Riverside Zone of Special Townscape during 2007/08

4.3 Commentary: 78 planning applications were determined in the Riverside Zone of Special Townscape during 2007/08. Only one application went to appeal and this was dismissed. During 2006/07 one application also went to appeal. The appeal was for advertising consent and was allowed for five years. The graph shows that in 2006/07 and 2007/08 the number of applications granted in each year in the Riverside Zone is consistent.

ENV33 - Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

To resist development that would have a detrimental effect on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

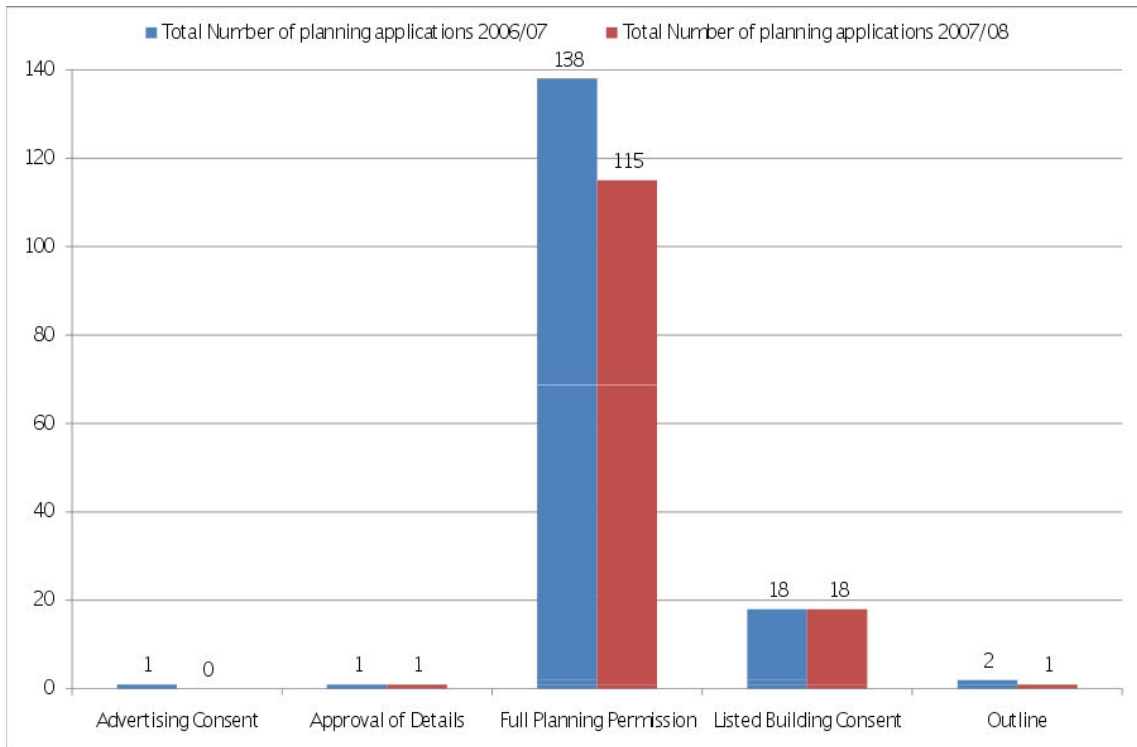


Figure 4.2 Total number of planning applications in the AONB

Application Type	Total Granted		Total Refused		Total Withdrawn		Total Number of Applications	
	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08
Advertising Consent	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
Approval of Details	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Full Planning Permission	93	85	35	22	10	8	138	115
Listed Building Consent	12	10	4	5	2	3	18	18
Outline Planning Permission	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	1
Total:	105	95	43	29	12	11	160	135

Planning Application Determined in the AONB during 2006/07

Commentary: 135 planning applications were determined in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty during 2007/08. This is 16% fewer than in 2006/07. 5 of the 29 refusals went to appeal, 3 were dismissed and 2 are still at appeal. This indicates that ENV33 is a robust policy which effectively resists development that would have a detrimental effect on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

ENV45 - Conversion of Rural Buildings for Residential Purposes

Criteria for the reuse and adaptation of rural buildings for residential purposes.

Total Granted		Total Refused		Total Number of Planning Applications	
2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08
5	11	11	8	16	19

Planning Applications determined during 2007/08 according to ENV45

Commentary: During 2007/08 11 rural buildings were granted planning permission for residential conversion. Two of the applications granted were originally refused before the 2006/07 period and then subsequently allowed at appeal during 2006/07. For the first appeal, the inspector acknowledged that no attempt had been made to secure an alternative suitable business use and that the unlisted building did not contribute towards the character of the countryside. However, the Inspector felt that the dwelling would be in keeping with its surroundings and the application complied with the other aspects of ENV45. The other application allowed at appeal was originally refused because the council considered that the building was of insufficient architectural or historic interest, but the inspector disagreed with this opinion. In contrast during 2007/08, zero planning permissions for residential conversions of rural buildings were allowed at appeal. Of the 8 conversions refused, 2 were dismissed at appeal during 2007/8, one less than in 2006/07. On the whole, ENV45 is an effective policy, although the subjective nature of the policy's criteria means that it can be challenged at appeal.

H32 - Replacement Dwellings in the Countryside

Replacement dwellings in the countryside should be no more visually intrusive than the original dwelling and the new dwelling should not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity.

	Total Granted		Total Refused		Total Withdrawn		Total Number of Applications	
	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08
Number in the whole of the Borough	18	16	9	7	1	3	28	26
Number in the Countryside	13	13	9	6	1	3		

Planning Applications Determined for Replacement Dwellings during 2007/08

Commentary: 26 applications for replacement dwellings were determined during 2007/08. Of the 16 granted over 80% were in the countryside. The majority of the replacement dwellings granted in the countryside have a condition which requires the original dwelling to be demolished. A condition was unnecessary for the remaining dwellings because they are either being built on the footprint of the existing dwelling, already destroyed by fire or it was clearly stated in the plans that the existing dwelling would be demolished. Significantly, all but one of the replacement dwellings refused were located in the countryside. Two of the 7 refused applications went to appeal, and both of these appeals were dismissed. Two planning applications for replacement dwellings in the countryside that were initially refused and one that was initially withdrawn during 2007/08 were subsequently granted planning permissions also during 2007/08 after new applications had been submitted. Reasons for the initial refusals were that the proposed dwellings were too visually intrusive. The new planning applications redesigned the proposed dwellings in accordance with policy H32 and other policies. The data collected demonstrates that policy H32 is being effectively implemented.

ED2 - Retention of Employment Sites

Designated employment land resists the loss of employment land to other uses, unless the retention of the employment use has been fully explored without success.

Commentary: During 2007/08 no planning consents have been granted for non-employment uses on employment land specified in policy ED2.

T1 - Integrated Transport Strategy

An Integrated Transport Strategy is followed. All new developments should be safely and securely related to movement networks.

Commentary: The Integrated Transport Strategy adopted in 2005, associated with the Local Plan, is currently being updated and expanded to encompass the Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework.

The same transport principles continue to apply, in that the emphasis is put on improving the standard and scope of public transport services, cycling and walking routes, and the encouragement of all measures that manage and reduce the need for travel. All new developments are expected to make an appropriate contribution to these aims.

In Maidstone, these measures include the Urban Traffic Management and Control Project, the Borough Council's Park and Ride services, the Quality Bus Partnership (between the Borough Council, County Council and Arriva), the cycle network (as identified through the Maidstone Cycle Forum), and the County Council's Car Club and Carshare website.

New developments are expected to be as sustainable as possible, both in location and in the measures that individual sites are required to fund. Travel Plans are now sought from both commercial and residential applications, along with appropriate contributions to facilitate and support sustainable transport.

The future transport strategy is being developed through traffic modelling work to assess the impact of the LDF Core Strategy Preferred Option, including a planned urban extension to be connected to the town centre, and will allow all developments to contribute to an overall strategy that aims to meet the targets being set by local, regional and central government.

The success of these measures will continue to be monitored through the Local Transport Plan process, by which the County Council, as local highway authority, bids for funds to central government and reports on their effectiveness.

R3 - Maidstone Town Centre

Maidstone town centre is identified as a regional scale comparison goods centre. Proposals for retail development which would undermine the strategy for, or the vitality and viability of, the town centre will not be permitted. The Borough Council will implement and support initiatives to enhance the attraction of the town centre.

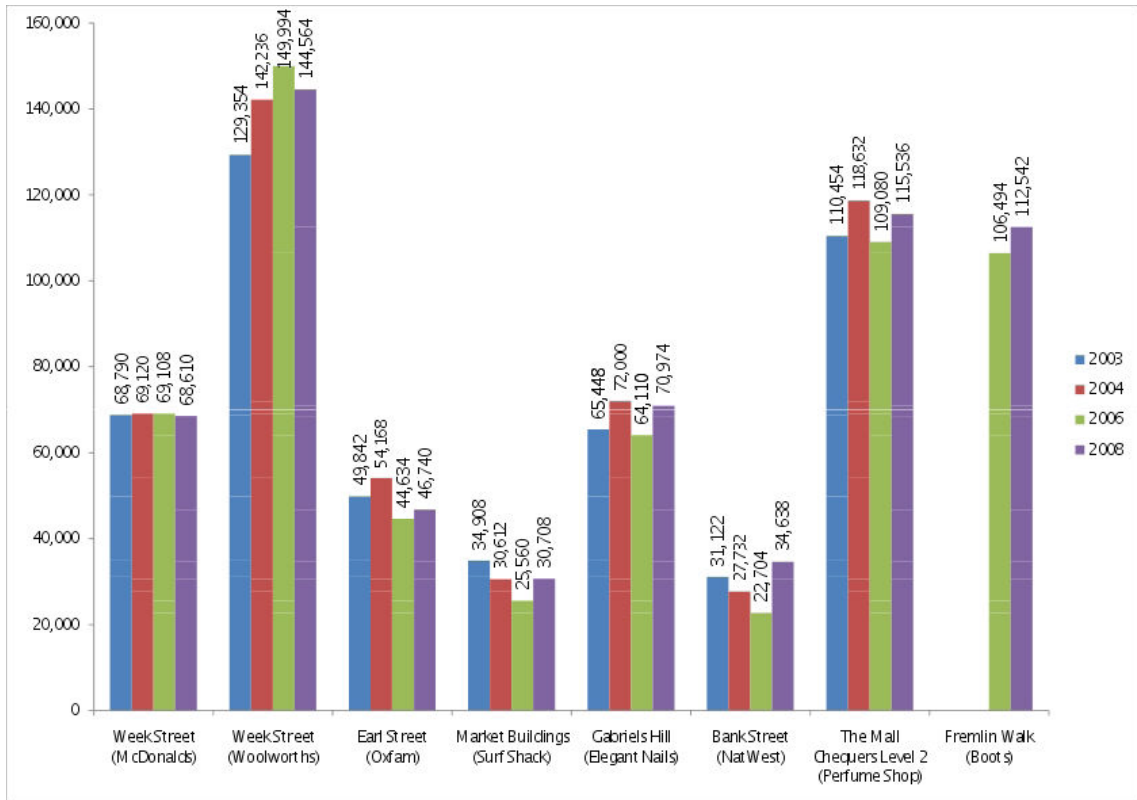


Figure 4.3 Results of the 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2008 Footfall Survey at 7 points in the Town Centre

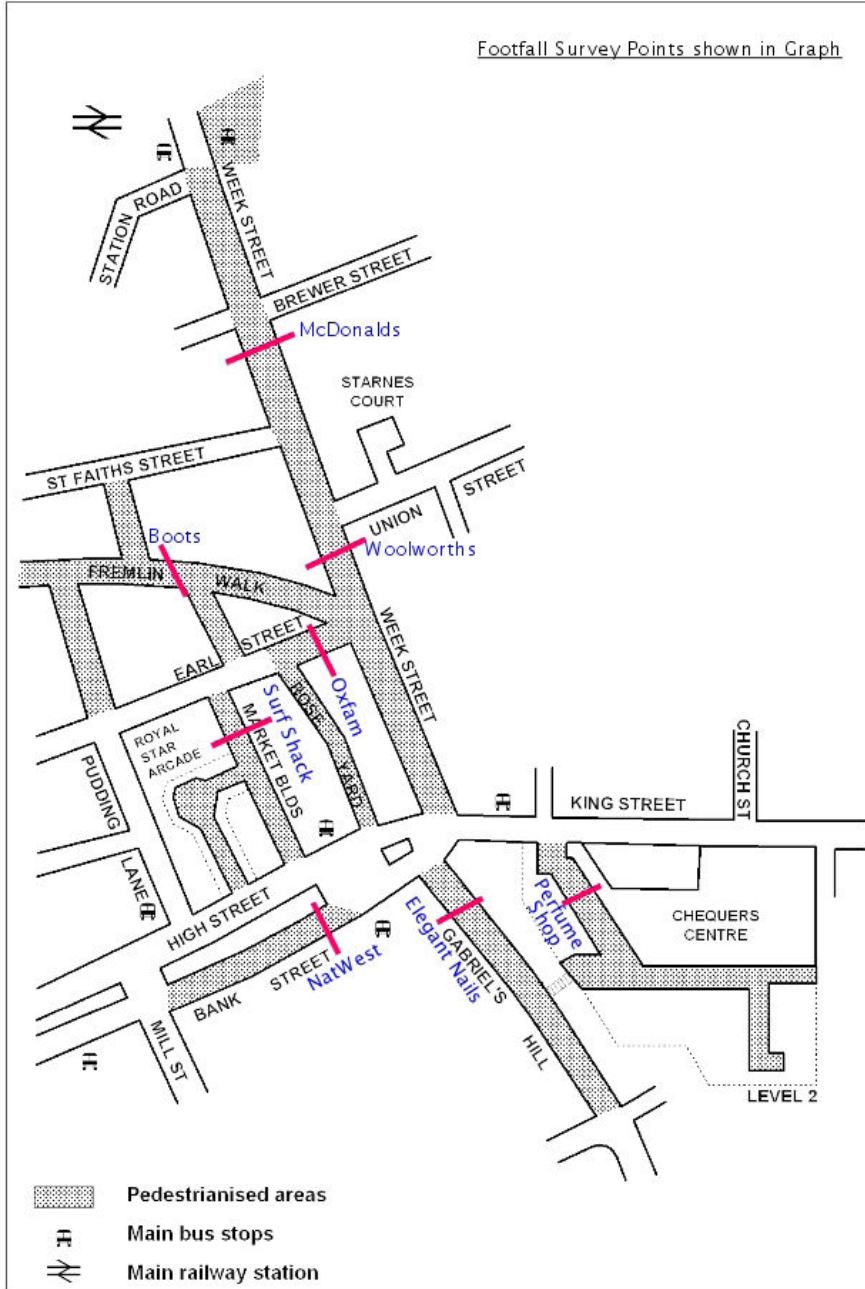


Figure 4.4 The 7 Footfall Survey Points shown in the graph above

Commentary: The level of pedestrian flow measured is used as an indication of the town centre's vitality and competitiveness. Jacobs carry out Footfall surveys for Maidstone Borough Council the most recent being July 2008. Figure 4.4 shows pedestrian flows at 7 of the busiest points out of a total of 27 points in the town centre for 2003, 2004, 2006 (a footfall survey was not undertaken in 2005 or

2007). Fremlin Walk was completed in 2005, providing an additional 28,000m² of high quality retail floorspace in the town centre. The 2006 footfall survey demonstrates an increase in pedestrian flows at Week Street (near its junction with Fremlin Walk) since the opening of Fremlin Walk and a decline in other areas of the shopping centre.

Jacobs concluded that overall there was a 31% increase in the estimated daily pedestrians flows between 2006 and 2008 showing sustained vitality of the town centre. However, the 2008 results showed a wide wage of changes across the 27 the individual sites, compared with 2006, some of which were quite large. Most of these changes are likely to be attributable to the new developments that have taken place in Maidstone since 2006, such as the new superstores along St Peters Street. Throughout 2008 there have been major gas main replacement works in the town centre and since 2006 new apartments have been built along Fairmeadow and Knightrider Street. In June Maidstone Borough Council moved into the temporary reception in The Mall Chequers shopping centre and extension works for the new Gateway reception were underway which may have had an impact on pedestrian movements.

CF1 - Seeking New Community Facilities

Secure community facilities by conditions or planning obligations on new residential developments.

Commentary: During 2007/08, 10 planning applications were granted for new sites of 10 dwellings or more. 5 of these 10 applications had conditions requiring a Section 106 legal agreement to secure provision or contributions towards open space, affordable housing, libraries, education, health care, green travel plans, CCTV and public art. The other 5 of the 10 consents already have draft or signed Section 106 agreements. These figures show that planning obligations and contributions are successfully being secured on residential developments of 10 dwellings or more. The statistics show that the objectives of policy CF1 are being achieved.

Local Development Scheme Review

Introduction to the LDS

- 5.1** The Council is required to produce a Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out, to all interested parties, the range of Local Development Documents (LDD) the Council proposes to produce, together with the work programme for these, over a minimum three year period. The LDS explains how the Council will manage the production of documents, the timescale within which they will be prepared, how documents are resourced, and what the main "risks" to the production timetable are and how these will be dealt with. The LDS must ensure that the LDF is kept up-to-date and that the community is actively involved in the process. Delivery of the programme must be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report, and the LDS amended as required.
- 5.2** The last revision to the Local Development Scheme was approved by the Secretary of State on 24 April 2007.
- 5.3** Under former plan making regulations, the Council received representations at the Preferred Options stage of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) seeking the inclusion of a strategic rail freight interchange (SRFI) allocation at junction 8 of the M20 motorway. The need for the Council to give due consideration to the representations through the appointment of a team of experts to examine proposals, coupled with the emergence of new government legislation and advice on the preparation of Local Development Frameworks (LDF), has considerably delayed the submission of the Core Strategy. This has resulted in a knock-on effect for the commencement of other DPDs in the LDS programme, most notably the Land Allocations DPD.
- 5.4** Clearly the LDS is now out-of-date and should be reviewed. However, the Council must be in a position to make a decision on the inclusion (or otherwise) of an SRFI allocation in the Core Strategy before it can revise its LDS timetable and, until such time, the Core Strategy programme cannot be confirmed or a revised LDS submitted to the Secretary of State. It is expected that this decision will be made in early 2009 and an updated LDS submitted in spring 2009.
- 5.5** Meanwhile, in the context of new plan making regulations and local priorities, the Council has taken the opportunity to consider its approach towards the documents it would prefer to prioritise in the LDS so, once a decision has been taken on the SRFI proposal, the revised LDS can quickly proceed to submission. This chapter of the AMR discusses those priorities in some detail.

LDS milestones and review

- 5.6** A review of progress towards the LDS milestones should be set out as part of the Annual Monitoring Report. However, whereas the monitoring period for reviewing policies in the AMR covers the period 1st April to 31st March, the review of LDS milestones relates to the calendar year (January to December). This section of the AMR therefore compares the actual documents that have been prepared during 2008 against the targets set out in figure 4.1 of the approved LDS (2007).
- 5.7** This chapter also includes a commentary on how the authority resourced the LDF work, and compares progress against project milestones used for the purposes of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG).
- 5.8** Earlier this year, the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) advised local authorities not to submit their revised LDS until new government legislation and advice had been published, which updated the LDF plan making process. These changes are set out in:
- Planning Policy Statement 12: creating strong safe and prosperous communities through Local Spatial Planning (June 2008)
 - Planning Manual (a continually updated web-based manual that accompanies PPS12)
 - Statutory Instrument 2008 No. 1371 Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2008 (June 2008).
- 5.9** PPS12 focuses on the Core Strategy as the key element of the LDF, emphasising the value of community engagement in the plan making process and the importance of a sound evidence base. However, the new regulations on how to carry out consultations with stakeholders and the community are much less rigid. The formal Issues & Options and Preferred Options stages for Development Plan Documents (DPD) have been replaced by a wider and continual form of consultation with stakeholders (Regulation 25) and the public (Regulation 27). The extent of public engagement should reflect the scale of the issues being addressed by the DPD and, following public consultation, objectors can appear at an Independent Examination into the DPD. The new consultation process gives local authorities much more flexibility in deciding the extent of consultation according to the complexity of the document and local circumstances.
- 5.10** There are minor changes to the process for producing Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) under the new Regulations, but the stages are essentially the same as before and there is still no requirement for an Independent Examination for an SPD.
- 5.11** Under the new Regulations, there are four project "milestones" for the production of Development Plan Documents that comprise:

- Consultation of the statutory bodies on the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal for the DPD
- Publication of the DPD for formal public consultation (Regulation 27)
- Submission of the DPD to the Secretary of State (Regulation 30)
- Adoption of the DPD (Regulation 36).

5.12 The adoption of a sound Core Strategy is a key milestone in securing Housing and Planning Delivery Grant, and its policies form the essential “hook” on which a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) can be prepared.

Progress made towards milestones

5.13 Whilst the Annual Monitoring Report submission target was achieved in December 2007, none of the Development Plan Document milestones set for January to December 2008 under former plan making regulations were successfully met.

Document	Stage	Target date	Date Achieved	Target met?
AMR	Submission	December 2007	December 2007	Yes
Land Allocations and Implementation DPD	Preferred Options (Regulation 26)	March 2008	To be rescheduled	No
SA/SEA	Draft SA Report for Land Allocations and Implementation DPD	March 2008	To be rescheduled	No
Core Strategy DPD	Examination (Regulation 34)	April 2008	To be rescheduled	No
Core Strategy DPD	Adoption (Regulation 36)	December 2008	To be rescheduled	No

LDS milestones (2008)

5.14 In addition to the documents that are measurable against the milestones, the Council planned to produce the following documents during 2008. The Residential Extensions SPD, originally programmed for 2009/10, was brought forward in order to address local priorities.

Document	Stage	Target date	Date Achieved
Loose Road Character Area Assessment SPD	Adoption (Regulation 19)	March 2008	Rescheduled for December 2008
London Road Character Area Assessment SPD	Adoption (Regulation 19)	April 2008	Rescheduled for December 2008
Shop Fronts and Advertisements SPD	Consultation Document (Regulation 17)	June 2008	To be reviewed
Shop Fronts and Advertisements SPD	Adoption (Regulation 19)	October 2008	To be reviewed
Residential Extensions SPD	Consultation Document (Regulation 17)	January 2010	November 2008

Non-LDS Milestones (2008)

- 5.15** As the two tables above demonstrate, over the past 12 months the Council has been unable to repeat its former success of previous years in meeting LDS milestones. However, there are a number of reasons for the postponement of target dates that were outside of the Council's control, the prime one being the representation seeking a Core Strategy allocation for a strategic rail freight interchange (SRFI).
- 5.16** Consideration was given to the submission of a revised LDS earlier in 2008 to reflect the delay to the completion of the Core Strategy programme, which could have updated the Council's milestones for the preparation of Local Development Documents. However, GOSE strongly advised local authorities not to submit their LDS until emerging government advice on plan making (PPS12 and the Plan Making Manual) had been adopted and the new Regulations (SI 2008 No. 137) published. Although it would have been a challenge for the Council to review its LDS in advance of a decision being taken on the SRFI proposal, an updated LDS would have been able to take on board a number of changes in the priorities the Council wished to adopt for the production of documents and could have reduced the number of missed milestones.
- 5.17** It is important to note that the Council has utilised this time to undertake a considerable amount of further work to augment its evidence base in response to a number of issues that were raised by the public during Preferred Options consultation. It is also addressing the requirements for additional material to support the Core Strategy evidence base set out in new government guidance. A number of these evidence base documents have already been published on the Council's website, and further

publications will be added as they become available. The additional supporting information will improve the soundness of the Core Strategy at Independent Examination stage.

- 5.18** The delay to the LDS programme has had implications for the production of the Land Allocations and Implementation DPD. The Council reviews its housing land availability position annually to ensure its housing provisions set by government are being met. Against targets of needing to provide 10,080 new dwellings for the 20-year period 2006 to 2026, the Council can demonstrate that it has a robust 5-year housing land supply in accordance with government guidance set out in PPS3: Housing (2006). Thus the Council currently has the necessary residential land supply to meet its short to medium term targets, a large proportion of which comprises brownfield sites, and it is highly likely that the Council will be allocating strategic greenfield housing land through the Core Strategy. Consequently, a delay in the production of the Land Allocations and Implementation DPD is not critical at this point. The position will be closely monitored, particularly in the current economic decline of the housing market. The Council's approach towards allocating new sites for housing is discussed further in paragraph 5.31.
- 5.19** In the 2007 LDS, the Council undertook to produce a number of Character Area Assessment SPDs. A decision was subsequently taken to prepare documents for two pilot schemes in the London Road and Loose Road areas. The production of both SPDs has been successful overall, but lessons on the resources and time scales necessary for the publication and consultation for this type of document were learned as a result of the production process. Hence the delay to the adoption targets. It expected that both SPDs will be adopted in December 2008, although SPD stages are not subject to LDS milestones. Should the Council resolve to prepare further Character Area Assessments, the time scales for production will be considerably shortened as a result of the lessons learned from the pilot schemes.
- 5.20** Despite delays, the Council's priority has been the progression of the Core Strategy. As such, during 2008, available staff resources were focused on the preparation of the evidence base for the Core Strategy rather than the publication of the Shop Fronts and Advertisements SPD. Again, SPD stages are not subject to to LDS milestones. The production of an SPD for Shop Fronts and Advertisements will be considered as part of the 2009 LDS review.
- 5.21** The Residential Extensions SPD was originally programmed to commence in 2009. However, the need for up-to-date guidance on design to determine planning applications became an increasingly pressing local issue. Given the delay to the Core Strategy and the resources available, the Council resolved to bring forward the preparation of the SPD and successfully published the document for public consultation in accordance with new Regulations in November 2008. The SPD will be adopted in 2009.

- 5.22** Staff resources have a major impact on the production of LDF documents. The Planning Policy team was expanded in December 2006 and comprises the posts of Manager (in part), Team Leader, 3½ Principal Planning Officers, 2½ Planning Officers, ½ Planning Support Officer and a ½ Technical Clerk. A Planning Consultant is also contracted 2 days per week to the team to March 2011 to focus on the Core Strategy, and a County Council Highways Officer is seconded 2/3 days per week for specialist advice on the Core Strategy and Growth Point funding. However, long term vacancies for 1½ Principal Planning Officers have proved very difficult to fill, and a Planning Officer commenced a one-year career break in July. Intermittent sick leave and maternity leave have also impacted on the team's resources during 2008. The Council has had recent success in filling vacancies and expects to have a near-full complement of staff by the New Year when the LDS will be reviewed. Clearly the recruitment and retention of staff is critical in reducing the risks to the Council's abilities to meet its revised LDS milestones, although the LDF process will always remain vulnerable to interruptions in staffing levels.

Main changes to timetable

Core Strategy DPD

- 5.23** The focus of the approved LDS (2007) was the production of the Core Strategy DPD. The priority for the adoption of Core Strategies has been confirmed in recently updated government policy (PPS12) and remains the focus of the Council's LDF. The Core Strategy sets the policy framework for determining planning applications, but it is also the linchpin on which further DPDs spring from and SPDs must be produced. The ability to rely on saved local plan policies and structure plan policies as the essential "hook" for further publications will diminish over time.
- 5.24** Whatever decision is taken in response to the SRFI representation, the Council will need to re-consult the public on the Core Strategy DPD. The programme will be dependent on the decisions taken and thus the Council cannot amend its Local Development Scheme (LDS) with certainty at this time, although it is expecting to be in a position to make a decision within the next few months. The Council therefore proposes to review its LDS and to set a new timetable for the production of the Core Strategy DPD and other LDF documents by spring 2009, and consultation on the Core Strategy would follow later in 2009.
- 5.25** In response to representations arising from the Preferred Options consultation and to meet the requirements of new government guidance, the Council has made best use of the delay in the Core Strategy programme to strengthen and supplement its evidence base. This includes master planning of the proposed urban extension, which will incorporate a refinement of the areas of search, include options for the creation and delivery of necessary infrastructure, and will address concerns raised about the proposed urban extension strategy.

Land Allocations and Implementation DPD

- 5.26** Work on land allocations was due to commence in 2007, with a view to publishing Preferred Options in March 2008. However, Preferred Options consultation for the Land Allocations DPD cannot be undertaken until the Core Strategy has been submitted, and submission of the Land Allocations DPD cannot take place until the Core Strategy has been adopted. Meanwhile, the Council can confirm that it has a robust 5-year housing land supply in accordance with government guidance, and that it will carefully monitor land availability to ensure a continued supply to meet set housing targets. The timetable and approach towards the production of the Land Allocations and Implementation DPD will therefore be reviewed in the LDS next spring.

Character Area Assessment SPDs

- 5.27** The two Character Area Assessment SPDs for the Loose Road and London Road areas are due to be adopted in December 2008. These pilot studies will set the framework for identifying further areas of special character that will be given consideration in the LDS next year.

Shop Fronts and Advertisements SPD

- 5.28** The most appropriate way in which detailed policy guidance is provided on the design of shop fronts and advertisements, and on free standing advertisements, will be considered as part of the LDS review.

Residential Extensions SPD

- 5.29** Work on the Residential Extensions SPD was originally programmed to commence in 2009. However, the opportunity to bring this document forward to address the need for up-to-date guidance in determining planning applications arose, and the SPD was published under new Regulations for public consultation in November 2008 with a view to proceeding to adoption in the early part of 2009. Given the experience gained by the team in implementing the new plan making system over the past 4 years, the Residential Extensions SPD has been produced speedily with very successful stakeholder input, and it has offered the opportunity to produce the first in-house Sustainability Appraisal.

DPD and SPD Production in 2009 and beyond

- 5.30** Whilst the Council's priority for the production of Local Development Documents (LDD) is its Core Strategy and supporting evidence base, there are clearly decisions to be made about the content of the LDS as a whole for the next 4 years in the context of existing and new staff resources, as well as budgetary constraints. Furthermore, there have been a number of

changes in the approach to the production of LDDs since the introduction of the Planning Act in 2004, not least new government guidance that recommends the production of fewer but more comprehensive DPDs. With this in mind, the Council gave initial consideration to its priorities for document production at meetings of the Local Development Document Advisory Group and Cabinet in October 2008. By identifying its priorities at an early stage, the Council expects to be in a position to produce a revised LDS more speedily once a decision on the inclusion or otherwise of an SRFI allocation in the Core Strategy is made.

5.31 The priorities that have been identified at this point include the production of the following documents. However, it must be emphasised that these documents and their time tabling will be subject to fuller consideration, justification and review during the production of the LDS itself in 2009. No final decisions have yet been made.

- **Core Strategy DPD:** To remain the Council's main priority, together with its evidence base. The Core Strategy will incorporate strategic land allocations, including the identification of sites for housing, business, retail, leisure, community, education, etc. for the growth area.
- **Gypsy & Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD:** To produce an early DPD allocating land for pitches in advance of the Core Strategy to meet identified need, and to address local pressures for additional pitches. A criteria base policy for determining planning applications on unidentified sites will be included in the Core Strategy.
- **Urban Regeneration AAP:** To define urban and suburban regeneration areas and provide a policy framework for the revival of defined areas. The AAP would allocate land for business, retail, leisure and residential use, and it would develop a policy framework for the enhancement of the vitality and character of the town. The AAP could incorporate generic policies for the defined areas, addressing issues on shop fronts, advertisements, high buildings, crime and disorder, licensing, parking, etc. The submission of the AAP should follow the adoption of the Core Strategy to ensure it accords with sound Core Strategy policies.
- **Land Allocations DPD:** To include site specific allocations for housing, business, retail, etc., and the designation of countryside and environmental protection areas. However, with the allocation of development sites in the Core Strategy growth area, the early production of an autonomous DPD for gypsy & traveller pitch allocations, and priority given to the preparation of an Urban Regeneration AAP, there is potential to programme the production of the Land Allocations DPD at a latter stage of the LDS timetable. The Council currently has

the necessary housing land supply to meet its short to medium term residential targets, so further greenfield sites adjacent to the urban periphery and larger villages could be allocated at a later stage, still within a year of the DPD's earliest date of adoption. In adopting this approach, it will be important to review the housing trajectory in advance of submission of the LDS to ensure delivery of medium to long term housing targets. It is also worth noting that, since the borough's land supply is continually monitored against residential targets, the DPD could be brought forward if a housing shortfall was predicted.

- **Kent Design Guide SPD:** The process of preparation and consultation of the revised Kent Design Guide has been designed to allow all partner authorities across Kent to adopt the document as SPD. GOSE has confirmed that the draft document met the criteria required for a full and extensive consultation process, which Maidstone Borough Council contributed to, so the Council can proceed straight to adoption. It is important that this document is adopted as SPD before the time limit on the Structure Plan expires.
- **Interim Planning Tariff SPD:** To set out the circumstances under which the Council will expect development contributions for strategic and local infrastructure and community facilities from windfall development. This will take the form of an interim SPD, or a guidance note setting out the Council's priorities for contributions, until such time as government guidance on community infrastructure levy is adopted.
- **Access for Disabled People SPD:** To set criteria to secure suitable access facilities for disabled people, and to assist in the determination of planning applications and building regulations. The recent Comprehensive Area Assessment for the Council highlighted the fact that Maidstone should have an up-to-date policy document on access for disabled people, so the production of this SPD is a local priority.
- **Air Quality SPD:** To provide technical guidance for developers, their consultants and other interested stakeholders, on the way in which air quality and air pollution issues will be dealt with through the planning system. However, it is of note that the "hook" for an SPD on air quality is Structure Plan policy NR5, which might not be "saved" next year. Otherwise it is reliant on Core Strategy policy. Further work in this area is required before proceeding with an SPD, so it would not be programmed early in the LDS timetable.

- **Urban Extension SPD:** To develop the policy framework and land uses for the urban extension, as defined in the Core Strategy. It is intended that the Core Strategy will define the strategic land allocations for the urban extension so, following adoption of the Core Strategy, an SPD setting out the finer details of the allocated sites will be required.
- **Landscape Character Area Assessment SPD:** To develop a “toolkit” for the determination of planning applications within identified landscape character areas. A Landscape Character Area Assessment is currently underway as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy. Once the Core Strategy is adopted, an SPD on the implementation of policy in defined landscape areas will be required.
- **Planning Tariff/Community Infrastructure Levy SPD:** It is envisaged that the Council will move to a new planning tariff based on Core Strategy policy and associated infrastructure plans. The SPD would be designed in such a way that it could be converted from planning tariff to community infrastructure levy if advantageous to the Council. A judgement for the way forward would be made once government legislation for a levy is published.
- **Parking Strategy SPD:** To address the parking needs of the borough, over and above County Council parking standards, having regard to the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (MITS) and Local Transport Plan (LTP). This SPD is crucial in developing detailed parking policy for the borough, but it is dependent on Core Strategy policies for sustainable transport provision and the completion of the MITS and LTP. It is therefore proposed to programme the SPD in the latter period of the revised LDS, as new standards emerge when new infrastructure is permitted.
- **Character Area Assessment SPDs:** To set detailed criteria for the protection and enhancement of a series of special character areas throughout the borough, following the completion of two pilot studies for the Loose Road and London Road areas. Consideration will need to be given to priorities for further Character Area Assessments in the context of competing SPDs for a planning tariff, air quality or access for disabled people.

5.32 In accordance with government guidance to reduce the number of DPDs included in the LDS, the Council is intending to produce four DPD/AAP documents under its revised LDS over the next 4 years. The content of the LDDs will be set out in detail in the LDS but, essentially, previously identified documents that no longer appear in the LDS will either be combined with

new LDDs or have been given a lesser priority. Within staff resources and budgetary constraints, the Council will also endeavour to produce a number of SPDs over the same period, although the timing of several of these will be dependent on the adoption of the Core Strategy.

- 5.33** In addition to producing a suite of DPDs and SPDs, the Council also plans to:
- Publish and submit its Annual Monitoring Report to the Secretary of State by 31st December
 - Update Maidstone's Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report in early 2009, in advance of revisiting the Core Strategy Sustainability Appraisal (SA) for public consultation
 - Consider a review of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement which, whilst still valid, is becoming outdated due to legislative changes.

Implications of changes to timetable

Housing and Planning Delivery Grant

- 5.34** The plan making element of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) is dependant on meeting milestones for the Core Strategy DPD, together with DPDs that allocate sites for more than 2,000 dwellings. Additional HPDG funding is available for demonstrating a 5-year housing land supply, and for the completion of Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments and Strategic Housing Market Assessments. The Council's land supply is monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report, and the latter two assessments are being produced as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy DPD.
- 5.35** The delay to the completion of the Core Strategy programme impacted upon the Council's ability to meet the plan making milestones set out in its Local Development Scheme (2007), which influenced the amount of Housing and Planning Delivery Grant secured. However, having taken legal advice, and on the recommendation of the Government Office for the South East, the Council concluded that the risk of proceeding to Independent Examination and having the Core Strategy DPD found unsound because full consideration had not been given to the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange proposal was too great. Such an outcome would carry its own financial implications, would set the plan production timetable back even further, and could undermine the Council's reputation for successful plan production under the LDF process.

Housing Delivery

- 5.36** Work on land allocations was due to start in 2007, with a view to undertaking Preferred Options consultation in March 2008, followed by submission in January 2009. An Independent Examination was programmed for July 2009, and adoption of the DPD was expected in April 2010. Clearly this timetable has not been met and it will be reviewed under the revised LDS in spring 2009.
- 5.37** Government advice makes clear that local authorities must demonstrate that they have a five year supply of deliverable sites available for housing, and should identify a further 10 years supply of developable sites suitable for housing. Local authorities must also illustrate the expected rate of housing delivery through a housing trajectory in their Annual Monitoring Reports. The housing trajectory for Maidstone is set out in chapter 3 of this AMR.
- 5.38** The Council's housing trajectory seeks to meet the housing targets set out in the draft South East Plan of 10,080 dwellings over a 20-year period from 2006 to 2026. In accordance with government advice, Maidstone's calculation of its supply excludes any allowance for windfall sites. The total land supply also excludes any contribution from adopted local plan greenfield housing allocations that Members resolved not to release for development following production of the Urban Capacity Study in 2002. The trajectory demonstrates that once land is allocated for housing through Local Development Documents, Maidstone will be able to meet 98.69% of its housing targets to 2026. Further land allocations to address any long term shortfall in residential supply will be made as appropriate.
- 5.39** The issue is therefore whether Maidstone can maintain a rolling 5-year supply of deliverable sites until such time as land allocations are adopted. The trajectory demonstrates that taking account of deliverable non-implemented planning consents and outstanding local plan residential allocations, the Council has 6.8 years of housing land supply at 1st April 2008. Deliverable sites are those that are readily available for development and are not subject to constraint. This figure takes no account of windfall sites, identified Urban Capacity Study potential, or local plan greenfield allocations. Even in the current climate of the housing market downturn, it is unlikely that at 1st April 2009 and subsequent years in the near future that the Council will find itself in a position of having less than 5 years supply of housing land. To illustrate this point, in the monitoring period 2006/07 previously unidentified sites (windfalls) yielded 539 dwellings, and for the period 2007/08 yielded 360 dwellings.
- 5.40** The Council is therefore confident that in the short to medium term it will be able to demonstrate a minimum 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites, until such time as housing land allocations are adopted. This is a position that will continue to be carefully monitored through future AMRs and annual Housing Land Surveys, so that action can be taken if there is a likelihood that a 5 year supply will not be maintained.

Providing for the Needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 5.41** The Government Office for the South East directed that Maidstone's local plan criterion-based policy for determining gypsy and traveller planning applications should not be saved because it was considered unduly negative and overtly restrictive. In the short term the Council must rely on national policy guidance in Circular 01/06, on Kent and Medway Structure Plan policy, and on local evidence, until such time as a policy is adopted in the Core Strategy.
- 5.42** The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2005/06) produced for Maidstone and three adjoining local authorities identified a clear need for additional pitch provision in the borough. The Council is keen to accelerate the development of policy and pitch allocations to address this local issue, and to step out of the current position of "making provision by appeal".
- 5.43** Consequently, under the LDS review, the Council intends to consider preparing a dedicated DPD for pitch allocations in advance of the Core Strategy and other land allocations. This way, land allocations for new pitches could be adopted more quickly, allocations would not be subject to further potential delays to the Core Strategy timetable, and this approach would respond to local pressures speedily and in a managed way. A criterion-based policy to determine planning applications on unidentified (or "windfall") sites would still form part of the Core Strategy.

Development Plan Framework

- 5.44** From 28th September 2007, the development plan for Maidstone Borough Council comprises:
- The Affordable Housing DPD (2006)
 - The Open Space DPD (2006)
 - Sustainable Construction: Using Water (2006)
 - Saved policies of the Maidstone Borough-wide Local Plan (2000)
 - The Kent and Medway Structure Plan (July 2006), which has been saved in its entirety
 - The saved policies of the Kent Minerals Local Plan: Chalk and Clay
 - The saved policies of the Kent Minerals Local Plan: Oil and Gas
 - The saved policies of the Kent Minerals Subject Plan: Brickearth Written Statement

- The saved policies of the Kent Minerals Local Plan Construction Aggregates Written Statement
- The saved policies of the Kent Waste Local Plan.

5.45 Planning applications are also determined in accordance with government policy guidance, in the form Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance. The Council therefore considers its development plan to be sound.

Risk Analysis

5.46 There are several considerations that are crucial if the Council is to keep on track with the revised LDS timetable in 2009 and beyond.

5.47 The prime risk associated with a review of the LDS is the Council's ability to be in a position to make a decision on the inclusion (or otherwise) of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange allocation in the Core Strategy. The LDS cannot be published until that decision is made because the production of the vast majority of Local Development Documents is dependent on the timetable for the Core Strategy. Further delays to the setting of a new LDS programme could have implications for the robustness of the Council's development plan framework and would impact further on the Council's ability to secure maximum Housing and Planning Delivery Grant.

5.48 A number of authorities continue to suffer major setbacks in LDF production, particularly with their Core Strategies, because of errors made, a lack of evidence prepared or difficulties in securing resources to adequately meet the demands of the new system. As a "front runner" in LDF production, Maidstone could be exposed to similar risks, which is why the Council is augmenting its evidence base for the Core Strategy so that such a risk is minimised.

5.49 The evidence base for the Core Strategy is, to a large extent, reliant on the expertise of various consultants. Deliverability within set time scales is a risk, although the risk is mitigated by the appointment of several consultants to carry out a variety of tasks as opposed to one or two major contributors.

5.50 The Council is proposing a departure from the normal LDS route of producing a Core Strategy closely followed by the Land Allocations DPD, by prioritising a Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD and an Urban Regeneration Action Area Plan in advance of the Land Allocations DPD. The LDS must have the support of the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) and be approved by the Secretary of State. Initial discussions with GOSE indicate that this is an approach that the Council could adopt, provided the approach is clearly justified in its revised LDS. The Council will also need to ensure that resources are not diverted from the production of the Core Strategy

as a result. To minimise the risk of the LDS being rejected by the Secretary of State, the Council will continue its discussions with GOSE in advance of submitting its finalised LDS in 2009.

- 5.51** Producing an early Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocations DPD carries risks in terms of the timing of the current consultation for the Partial Review of the South East Plan to identify district level pitch requirements. Ultimately, Maidstone's confirmed pitch requirement in the South East Plan could be lower or higher than currently estimated. However, this risk must be balanced against the risk of planning applications being granted on appeal rather than through planned provision with the community. The risk of under providing pitches against future targets can be mitigated by the allocation of additional pitches through a later Land Allocations DPD. The risk of over provision is clearly greater and will need to be addressed through the LDS review by an agreed approach to establishing a planning policy framework for the provision of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 5.52** Political and stakeholder co-operation is a critical component of successful partnership working and plan production. The LDS timetable always represents the "best case" scenario which is highly dependent on being able to secure agreement from all interested parties on draft policies and proposals.
- 5.53** Interruptions in staffing levels has affected the ability of the Council to meet LDS timetable deadlines in the past. Although the appointment of new staff over the next few months will considerably lower this risk, absences due to sickness, maternity leave or vacancy remain a risk in meeting the LDD milestones set in the LDS.
- 5.54** Finally, there is a possibility that major planning appeals could occur in 2009/10, particularly as a result of programming documents that will allocate land for housing, despite the Council being able to demonstrate that it has more than 5 years supply of residential land. The appeals could divert officer time away from the plan making process.

6.1 To follow.

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT ADVISORY GROUP

8TH DECEMBER 2008

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Report prepared by Anne-Louise Broome

1. LOOSE ROAD AND LONDON ROAD CHARACTER AREA ASSESSMENTS: LESSONS LEARNED

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To consider and agree the recommendations set out within the attached report on "Pilot Studies and recommendations for the future" (Appendix A) and refer comments to Cabinet Member for Regeneration.

1.2 Recommendation of the Assistant Director for Development and Community Services

That the Local Development Document Advisory Group:

- a) Considers the attached report on the lessons learned in the pilot Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).
- b) Refers the report and any comments to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration.
- c) Agrees the following recommendations, as set out within the attached report, numbered 1 – 13, and make comments in relation to recommendation 10:
 1. **Project Planning** – Maintain momentum throughout the project to ensure continuous community engagement and interest through careful project planning and following an agreed format for all future SPDs.
 2. **Engagement Process** – The engagement process used for the Loose Road and London Road SPDs be repeated in the development of future Character Area Assessment SPDs, subject to Recommendations 3-5 below.
 3. **Working Group** – Include as many relevant local groups as possible covering a range of interests e.g. historical groups, Parish Council (where relevant), residents associations, amenity groups, local pressure groups, schools, churches. Individuals, with particular local knowledge or relevant expertise should also

be invited. It is also important that all relevant councillors and Borough Council Officers attend. Aim for a minimum group size of about 8 (excluding consultants/officers) and maximum of about 16, depending on the size of the area, to ensure sufficient representation. Balance the number of representatives from each group to avoid dominance by one interest group. Programme all working group meetings as early as possible to give sufficient notice. (ideally 4 weeks)

4. **Walkabout** – Ideally have at least 2 people in each group who are neither consultants/Borough Council officers. Include one consultant or officer in each group to help keep things on track. Note all relevant features and identify on a map.
5. **Exhibition** - Ensure wide advanced publicity of the exhibition through as many means as possible, particularly through the residents groups, the column for the local area in the newspaper, local notice boards and shops, schools etc.
6. **Priority Areas** - Each part of the “stellar” shape of Maidstone town forms an appropriate area for a Character Area Assessment SPD. Rural Service Centres form appropriate areas for Character Area Assessment SPDs
7. **Conservation Area Appraisals and Character Area Assessment SPDs** - Either a Conservation Area Appraisal or a Character Area Assessment be prepared for each area selected. Dependent on the planning status of the area. In areas containing a Conservation Area(s), surveys and early public engagement for both Conservation Area(s) and character areas to be conducted as one exercise. The information to be used to determine the boundaries of the Conservation Area and the Character Area Assessment as well as the content of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Character Area Assessment SPD.
8. **Industrial and Warehousing Estates** – Exclude extensive purpose built industrial and warehousing estates from Character Area Assessment SPDs.
9. **Content of Character Area Assessment SPDs** – Each Character Area Assessment should comprise: contextual, positive and negative text boxes; annotated photographs; annotated Townscape Maps and policy criteria.
10. **Text Content** – Members are recommended to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the analytical and “walk-through” styles of textual presentation and conclude on the most appropriate style for future SPDs.
11. **Awareness** - Ensure officers and Members are aware of the purpose and content of the Character Area SPD, once adopted through a joint training event.
12. **Publicity** – Character Area Assessment SPDs be publicised to local agents following adoption.

13. **Use of the SPDs** – Following adoption, Character Area Assessment SPDs be used in negotiations with applicants and referred to in delegated and Committee reports in justifying approval or as a reason for refusal. Similarly, use the SPDs in appeal statements and publicise any successful outcomes.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 **Policy Context**

1.3.2 National planning policies and the Government's response to the South East Plan (particularly Policy BE1 – Management for and Urban Renaissance, which indicates the importance of improving the built environment based on local character and distinctiveness) confirm strong support for the preparation of Character Area Assessments.

1.3.3 The Character Area Assessment SPDs supplement Structure Plan Policy QL1 (Quality of Development and Design) which stresses the importance of development responding well to the distinct character of each settlement. However the Structure Plan is likely to expire on 9th July 2009 subject to the timetable for adoption of the South East Plan.

1.3.4 It has been pointed out by KCC that the QL1 development plan policy basis of the SPD is contained in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan and that it is the current expectation that this will cease to exist from July 2009. It had previously been understood from draft Government legislation and regulation associated with plan making that SPDs could be based on an RSS policy. However, latest indications are that Government has changed this provision although this matter is not settled as yet.

1.3.5 If the Government proceed on the current course then the policy basis of the SPD would be weakened until such time as Core Strategy policy is prepared or Structure Plan Policy QL1 is saved. Either would provide the necessary development plan policy basis for this series of SPDs

1.3.6 The Governments' response to the South East Plan contains a new policy which clearly indicates the importance of improving the built environment based on local character and distinctiveness (Policy BE1- Management for an Urban Renaissance). Should this policy be confirmed, the SPDs will be a key mechanism for its implementation in Maidstone Borough in the future, and the pilot studies will give the Council a head start in achieving improvements in design locally.

1.3.7 **Pilot Studies**

1.3.8 Two pilot Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have been prepared for the London Road Area and

the Loose Road Area. Both were subject to a 6 week period of public consultation which ended on 26th September 2008. It is intended that the methodology adopted in these pilot studies will be rolled out for further Character Area Assessments.

1.3.9 Lessons have been learned from these pilots and a report on "*Pilot Studies and Lessons for the Future*" is appended for Members' consideration.

1.3.10 The report concludes that:

- The process of developing the draft SPDs has been successful, following an appropriate methodology and good community engagement
- The pilot SPDs have been successful in engaging local stakeholders
- The published documents have been well received by Members and professional officers of the Council
- The draft documents are clear in their presentation and, despite the extent of the areas covered, have been easy to follow for users
- The content is detailed and interesting to local people
- Public response at the exhibitions and to the consultation has generally been supportive, and
- Stakeholders such as resident and amenity groups, as well as development control officers are already referring to the draft documents

1.3.11 **Recommendations**

1.3.12 The report sets out 13 numbered recommendations for the conduct of any future Character Area Assessment SPDs.

1.3.13 The first of these recommendations relates to project planning and the importance of maintaining momentum to ensure continuous community engagement. The engagement process itself, worked very well in the pilots and it is recommended that this process is repeated in any future Character Area Assessments.

1.3.14 With regard to working groups, the report recommends that as many relevant working groups as possible, with a broad range of interests, be included and the report suggests an optimum group size. These groups should meet as early as possible in the process.

1.3.15 It is recommended that for the walkabouts there are at least two people in each group, plus either a consultant or Borough Council Officer.

- 1.3.16 For the exhibitions it is recommended that advanced publicity is given as widely as possible and by as many means as possible.
- 1.3.17 It is recommended that each part of the "stellar" shape of Maidstone forms an appropriate area for a Character Area Assessment SPD. Rural Service Centres also form appropriate areas for assessment.
- 1.3.18 The report gives recommendations for the preparation of Character Area Assessments where Conservation Areas Appraisals have been or are to prepared, in order to prevent any conflict and duplication issues. It is recommended that each area only has a Conservation Area Appraisal **or** a Character Area Assessment, dependant on the planning status of the area.
- 1.3.19 The report recommends that extensive purpose built industrial and warehousing estates be excluded from Character Area Assessment SPDs.
- 1.3.20 The report sets out the type of content that should be included within the documents.
- 1.3.21 The report seeks Members comments on which textual style to use in future studies. The pilot studies used a "walk-through" style, which has enabled residents to closely identify with the documents. An alternative approach would be more analytical in style. This would be more effective for Development Control and potential developers and would be quicker to produce.
- 1.3.22 In terms of the way forward, it is recommended in the report that Members and officers are made aware of the purpose and content of the SPDs, that once adopted, they should be publicised to local agents, and that following adoption, the SPDs should be used in negotiations with applicants and referred to in delegated and Committee reports and in appeal statements.
- 1.3.23 There are high expectations that once approved, the SPDs will improve the quality of development within the areas studied. It would be helpful if the SPD documents were used promptly after adoption to achieve some "quick wins" to demonstrate the Council's successful use of the documents.
- 1.3.24 **Future Work Programme**
- 1.3.23 National planning policies and the Government's response to the South East Plan (particularly Policy BE1- Management for an Urban Renaissance which indicates the importance of improving the built environment based on local character and

distinctiveness) confirm strong support for the Character Area Assessments. During the streamlining of the planning system, culminating in the revised PPS12 earlier this year, it was anticipated that there would be the opportunity for local planning authorities to supplement national or regional planning policy directly with a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This has not materialised in the final regulations.

- 1.3.24 The Character Area Assessment SPDs supplement Structure Plan Policy QL1 (Quality of Development and Design) which stresses the importance of development responding well to the distinct character of each settlement. However, the Structure Plan policies expire on 6 July 2009 unless the South East Plan is adopted before then.
- 1.3.25 Supplementary Planning Documents should provide greater detail on the policies in its DPDs. The Core Strategy is the principal DPD but the timetable for the Borough Core Strategy has been delayed. From the summer 2009 there are therefore no DPDs to provide a 'parent' policy for the Character Area Assessments. A draft Core Strategy with an appropriate design policy would give some policy basis but would at this stage carry little weight.
- 1.3.26 There are only limited links to saved Local Plan Policies in ENV6 (Landscaping, Surfacing and Boundary Treatment) and ENV 21 (Strategic Transport Character) following the loss of Policy ENV2.
- 1.3.27 For the reasons set out above, Character Area Assessment SPDs will have limited weight from July 2009 until a Core Strategy with an appropriate 'parent' policy has been adopted. However, the Council is seeking to persuade Kent County Council and SEERA to "save" Structure Plan policy QL1, and the position on this point will be clearer at the end of January 2009 (prior to a review of the Local Development Scheme) when SEERA is due to submit saved policies to the Secretary of State.
- 1.3.25 The programme of any future Character Area Assessment SPD's should bear this matter in mind.
- 1.3.24 Members will have the opportunity to give consideration to including a proposed work programme for Character Area Assessments, which can be linked to a review of the current programme of Conservation Area Appraisals, in the context of the review of the Local Development Scheme.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 It is important to recognise the lessons that have been learned in the preparation of these pilot assessments, in order that further studies can be carried out in the most efficient and resourceful way.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

The preparation of the SPDs contributes towards the corporate objectives of quality living, and sustainable communities.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 There are no identified risks involved.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

1. Financial	X
2. Staffing	X
3. Legal	
4. Social Inclusion	
5. Environmental/Sustainable Development	X
6. Community Safety	
7. Human Rights Act	
8. Procurement	
9. Asset Management	

1.7.2 Financial

1.7.3 There have been planning consultants' costs for the preparation of the SPDs and the lessons learned report. These costs have been met within existing budgets. Depending on the size and complexity of documents, the cost of producing further Character Area Assessments by consultants is likely to be in the region of £12½k to £15k per SPD. Project management, together with resources to steer the documents through the LDF processes, would need to be managed through internal staff resources.

1.7.4 Staffing

1.7.5 The document was produced by planning consultants, due to a lack of the necessary expertise and staffing resources in-house at the time. The publication of future SPDs will be reliant on the availability of staff resources in the context of Members' priorities for document production, which will be determined through the Local Development Scheme review in 2009.

1.7.6 Environmental/Sustainable Development

1.7.7 Local Development Documents must have regard to the effects on social, environmental and economic objectives, which are key indicators in defining sustainability. The principal purpose of Character Area Assessments is to recognise, improve and enhance the character of the local environment.

1.8 Background Documents

1.8.1 Local Development Scheme 2007

1.8.2 Loose Road Character Area Assessment Draft SPD

1.8.3 London Road Character Area Assessment Draft SPD

1.8.4 Report on Pilot Studies and Recommendations for the Future

NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED

Is this a Key Decision? Yes No

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan? _____

Is this an Urgent Key Decision? Yes No

Reason for Urgency

[State why the decision is urgent and cannot wait until the next issue of the forward plan.]

Appendices

Appendix A: Maidstone Character Area Assessment Pilot Studies: Report on Lessons to date and Recommendations for the Future

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Maidstone Character Area Assessment Pilot Studies

Report on Pilot Studies and Recommendations for the Future



Tony Fullwood Associates
Chartered Town Planners

Contents

1. Overall Conclusion
2. The Process Towards Adoption
3. Stakeholder Engagement
4. The Areas Selected
5. Content of SPD
6. Recommended Way Forward

1.0 Overall Conclusion

- 1.1 Maidstone Borough Council are one of the leaders in developing Character Area Assessments as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) in the County and also nationally. For this reason, two pilot studies were undertaken for two parts of Maidstone town: the Loose Road area and the London Road area (see Appendix 1).
- 1.2 The general conclusion is that
 - the process of developing the draft SPDs has been successful following an appropriate methodology and good community engagement
 - the pilot SPDs have been successful in engaging local stakeholders
 - the published documents have been well received by Members and professional officers of the Council
 - the draft documents are clear in their presentation and, despite the extent of the areas covered, have been easy to follow for users
 - the content is detailed and interesting to local people
 - public response at the exhibitions and to the consultation has generally been supportive, and
 - stakeholders such as resident and amenity groups as well as development control officers are already referring to the draft documents
- 1.3 Clearly it has not been possible at this stage to test the effectiveness of the documents in terms of the Council's decision making or at appeal. The real test of the SPDs will be whether over time following adoption there are resultant improvements in the planning applications received, or negotiated by the Borough Council, and consequent improvements to the design of buildings in these parts of Maidstone town.
- 1.4 This evaluation provides some options for reviewing the process used to develop the SPDs, the type of areas included within Character Area Assessments and the content of the documents.

2.0 The process towards adoption

- 2.1 This report reviews the process from inception to the formal public consultation stage.
- 2.2 The Character Area Assessment SPDs were commenced in July 2007 and exhibitions of the draft documents were held in September 2008. The time taken for the pilot studies is a consequence of
- the deliberate use of an extensive community engagement programme
 - Members' request to amend the draft documents to ensure each character area had separate policy criteria
 - internal delays in the checking procedure
- 2.3 As a result, there was some loss of momentum with the project which may have had some impact on public involvement and interest.
- 2.4 In relation to the first point, it is a recommendation of this report that the stakeholder engagement programme be repeated for future areas (see below). This will have an impact on the time taken to produce the SPD.
- 2.5 Regarding the second point, the pilot exercise was deliberately designed to test the format of the draft SPDs. The report contains options for the content of future SPDs (see below).
- 2.6 In relation to the third point, dedicated staff resources to steer the SPDs through the LDF processes and regulations are crucial to ensure the publication programme is adhered to. However, there will always be an element of risk to the production timetable through staff vacancies, sickness or maternity leave.

Recommendation 1 - Project Planning

Maintain momentum throughout the project to ensure continuous community engagement and interest through careful project planning and following an agreed format for all future SPDs.

3.0 Stakeholder Engagement

3.1 The process deliberately set out to be inclusive of a range of stakeholders from the earliest stage in the process for a number of reasons:

- Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing (DCLG 2006) advocates that Local Planning Authorities should develop a shared vision with their local communities of the type(s) of residential environments they wish to see and develop design policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the local area
- By Design – Urban Design in the Planning System (DETR, 2000) advocates wide public consultation as part of the methodology for assessing the character of a place
- the Borough Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) promises to provide early opportunities for people to put forward their ideas and views on issues through a range of methods and techniques used to try to reach as many people in the wider community as possible, including the network of various resident, community and specialist interest groups active in the area. Elected Borough Councillors, as part of their ward representation, and Parish Councils are also cited in the SCI
- best practice shows that early engagement builds trust in an open and transparent process and leads to an improved document
- when adopted, the document has increased ownership from the stakeholders who will use it

3.2 The Engagement Process

3.2.1 The process involved setting up a local Working Group for each area comprising local groups covering a range of interests eg historical groups, the Parish Council (in Loose), residents' associations, amenity groups and local pressure groups. The Working Group also included Borough Council ward councillors and Borough Council planning, conservation and landscape officers.

3.2.2 The Working Group met for a briefing on site at the outset of the project. The Working Group was subdivided into smaller groups to conduct a walkabout of the character areas previously identified by consultants, recording the local character and features of interest. Each group contained either consultants and/or Borough Council officers and at least 2 local stakeholders.

- 3.2.3 Next the Working Group met for a follow up workshop to discuss and confirm the recorded findings of the walkabout which were summarised on boards and townscape maps by the consultants. The consultants drafted the Supplementary Planning Documents based on the outcomes from the workshop.
- 3.2.4 The draft SPDs were discussed at a meeting with Borough Council planning, conservation and landscape officers and amended as necessary.
- 3.2.5 The draft SPDs were presented to LDDAG for discussion and approval for public consultation purposes and resultant amendments to structure and content made.
- 3.2.6 The formal consultation period was arranged for a 6 week period from 15th August to 26th September 2008.
- 3.2.7 Publicity was given to the formal consultation period, including the exhibitions, through advertisement in the local press, articles in Planning Viewpoint and on the Borough Council's website as well as direct contact with the Working Group members, all Borough Councillors and those registered on the LDF database.

3.2.8 Members of the Group, alongside all interested stakeholders, were invited to a staffed 3 hour Saturday morning exhibition in each area to view the document, discuss the draft SPDs with officers and consultants and make comment. Over 60 residents attended the Loose Road area exhibition and over 30 the London Road exhibition (a smaller area). The documents were also put on the website and on line opportunities to comment were promoted.



Loose Road Area Exhibition



London Road Area Exhibition

3.2.9 The engagement process was generally very successful in building trust in the process, creating an improved document through a wide input of knowledge and expertise and increased ownership from the stakeholders who will use it. There is opportunity to widen interest groups further to include other institutions within the area such as schools and churches. Properly handled it provides an opportunity not only to produce an SPD which will influence future initiatives but also to raise awareness locally of the positive role of planning and improve rapport between the planning authority and local interest groups. It also follows best practice advice. For these reasons it is recommended that the engagement process be repeated in the development of future Character Area Assessment SPDs.

Recommendation 2 - Engagement Process

The engagement process used for the Loose Road and London Road SPDs be repeated in the development of future Character Area Assessment SPDs, subject to Recommendations 3 - 5 below.

Recommendation 3 - Working Group

Include as many relevant local groups as possible covering a range of interests eg historical groups, Parish Council (where relevant), residents' associations, amenity groups, local pressure groups, schools, churches. Individuals with particular local knowledge or relevant expertise should also be invited. It is also important that all relevant councillors and Borough Council officers attend.

Aim for a minimum group size of about 8 (excluding consultants/officers) and maximum of about 16 depending on the size of the area to ensure sufficient representation.

Balance the number of representatives from each group to avoid dominance by one interest group. Programme all working group meetings as early as possible to give sufficient notice (ideally 4 weeks)

Recommendation 4 - Walkabout

Ideally have at least 2 people in each group who are neither consultants/Borough Council officers.

Include one consultant or officer with each group to help keep things on track.

Note all relevant features and identify on a map.

Recommendation 5 - Exhibition

Ensure wide advanced publicity of the exhibition through as many means as possible, particularly through the residents' groups, the column for the local area in the local newspaper, local notice boards and shops, schools etc.

4.0 The Areas Selected

4.1 Maidstone Urban Area

- 4.1.1 Two areas were selected for this exercise shown in Appendix 1. Some comments back from the London Road area remark on the exclusion of adjoining areas which it is considered form part of the character of the London Road area. The original proposal was for a wider area to be included within the SPD. However, Members wished to focus the pilot on a smaller area.
- 4.1.2 If Members are minded to continue with a programme of Character Area Assessments, the unique 'stellar' shape of Maidstone town with built up areas separated by green wedges, allows each 'limb' to form an appropriate area for a Character Area Supplementary Planning Document. In this way, all adjoining built up areas and identifiable communities are likely to be captured within an SPD. The treatment of the town centre is discussed below.

4.2 Maidstone Town Centre

- 4.2.1 For the purposes of the Core Strategy and subsequent DPDs, the town centre will need to be defined. Work is to be undertaken on Maidstone Town Centre Public Realm Improvements. In addition, part of the centre is defined as a Conservation Area and a Conservation Area Appraisal is in preparation (see below). For these reasons, it is not recommended that a separate Character Area Assessment be carried out.

4.3 Rural Service Centres

- 4.3.1 The purposes of producing the SPDs include providing design guidance on the appropriateness of, and potential for, types of development within an area and assisting the appraisal of particular proposals (allocations or planning applications) within an area.
- 4.3.2 As Rural Service Centres are identified in the Core Strategy Preferred Options as places to accept the most development after Maidstone town, it would be logical to complete Character Area Assessments for these settlements, as well as simultaneously producing separate Conservation Area Appraisals (see below).
- 4.3.3 As a result of the extensive stakeholder engagement and level of detail contained in each SPD, it is important that a manageable programme is identified for officers and Members to ensure sufficient quality control within, and consistency between, SPDs.

Recommendation 6 – Priority Areas

Each part of the 'stellar' shape of Maidstone town forms an appropriate area for a Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Document.

Rural Service Centres form appropriate areas for Character Area Assessment SPDs.

4.4 Conservation Areas

- 4.4.1 Conservation Area Appraisals cover areas of architectural or historic character. The designation and review of Conservation Areas is controlled by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment advises local planning authorities about the special protection afforded within conservation areas and there is specific guidance on the content of Appraisals from English Heritage. Conservation Areas are therefore determined through separate legislation and guidance from Character Area Assessment SPDs and there should be a distinct content to the documents.
- 4.4.2 The London Road area Character Area Assessment SPD contained a portion of the Rocky Hill Conservation Area within it. As this was part of the Character Area to be reviewed, the conservation area was included as part of the Character Area Assessment.
- 4.4.3 There is a potential conflict and duplication in content and process where Conservation Area Appraisals and Character Area Assessment SPDs overlap. For this reason, it is recommended that each area only has an Appraisal or an Assessment dependant on the planning status of the area.
- 4.4.4 Maidstone Borough has 41 designated Conservation Areas. It is important that Conservation Area Appraisals are kept up to date (Government targets previously indicated that Appraisals should be adopted or reviewed every 5 years) as these represent the most important areas of architectural or historic character in the Borough. So far six Conservation Area Appraisals have been approved (for Maidstone All Saints, Maidstone Holy Trinity, Detling, Linton, Boughton Monchelsea Green and Maidstone Ashford Road). One Conservation Area Management Plan has been approved, for Maidstone All Saints.
- 4.4.5 Given the statutory nature of their designation, it is important that the boundaries of conservation areas are reviewed before, or at

least in parallel with, Character Area Assessments. In this way, Conservation Area Appraisals will abut Character Area Assessments.

- 4.4.6 If Character Area Assessment SPDs are prepared ahead of Conservation Area Appraisals, there is a strong possibility that a subsequent review of the conservation area boundary will either be extended and therefore overlap a Character Area Assessment SPD or, because an area is removed from the conservation area, will leave an area excluded from either document.
- 4.4.7 The most practical solution for the preparation of Character Area Assessment SPDs in areas containing conservation areas is for the surveys and early public engagement for both areas to be conducted as one exercise. The information can then be used to determine the boundaries of the Conservation Area and the Character Area Assessment as well as the content of both distinctive documents.
- 4.4.8 Prior to the preparation of this report, the Borough Council approved a programme for the preparation of a further 15 Appraisals and 8 Management Plans over the next three years. There are no proposals to prepare Conservation Area Appraisals for the urban area of Maidstone other than the town centre. This could inhibit the production of further Character Area Assessments in the town. In 2009/10 it is proposed to conduct Conservation Area Appraisals for Marden and Lenham and in 2010/11, Staplehurst but there are currently no proposals to undertake an Appraisal for Headcorn Conservation Area.

Recommendation 7 - Conservation Area Appraisals and Character Area Assessment SPDs

Either a Conservation Area Appraisal or a Character Area Assessment be prepared for each area selected, dependant on the planning status of the area.

In areas containing a conservation area(s), surveys and early public engagement for both conservation area(s) and character areas be conducted as one exercise. The information to be used to determine the boundaries of the Conservation Area and the Character Area Assessment as well as the content of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Character Area Assessment SPD.

4.5 Industrial and warehouse estates

4.5.1 The Loose Road area Character Area Assessment SPD contained an industrial area within it (Area 21 – Depots). As this was part of the Character Area to be reviewed, the area was included as part of the Character Area Assessment.

4.5.2 There is an option to exclude clearly defined and extensive industrial and warehouse estates from the Assessment, so reducing the time/ cost of preparation.

4.5.3 The SPDs aim to

- identify the locally distinctive features that define the character of the area;
- provide design guidance on the appropriateness of, and potential for, types of development within an area;
- supplement adopted design policies for assessing development proposals within an area; and
- assist the appraisal of particular proposals (allocations or planning applications) within an area.

4.5.4 There are arguments that the SPD could influence the character of proposals within existing industrial/ warehouse areas, but the character of such areas is often not unified or distinctive. Nor is the character as 'fine grained' as residential areas. Finally, the use of the more extensive industrial and warehouse estates is unlikely to change in the short to medium term. For these reasons, there may be more difficulty in an SPD fulfilling its objectives in such areas.

4.5.5 Conversely, where pockets of business premises are dispersed within a predominantly residential area, there are strong reasons for including such sites within a Character Area SPD (as in the Loose Road area in particular). Firstly, these areas are an integral part of the character of an area and, secondly, if the use of the business site is to change, it is important that the character of the site, its surroundings and appropriate policy criteria are contained in the SPD.

Recommendation 8 – Industrial and Warehousing Estates

Exclude extensive purpose built industrial and warehousing estates from Character Area Assessment SPDs.

5.0 Content of SPD

- 5.1 It is important to assess the content of the SPD to provide a format for any future documents.

5.2 Summary Text Boxes

- 5.2.1 It is helpful to extract contextual, positive and negative features into text boxes to highlight key points.

5.3 Photographs

- 5.3.1 Extensive use has been made of photographs to illustrate different parts of each character area and residents have identified with this approach. There is an opportunity to be more selective in the use photographs to highlight points in the text and to bring out the differing character of each sub-area. Annotated photographs are efficient ways of capturing character. Superfluous photos add to document length, cost and down-load times.

5.4 Townscape Maps

- 5.4.1 Townscape maps have been used by residents and development control officers to identify key features of an area and are an important component of the SPDs. A further development of the maps would be to annotate the maps in more detail (eg 'View of North Downs' instead of an arrow on the plan requiring the reader to cross reference the text).

5.5 Text

- 5.5.1 The text is extensive and follows a descriptive 'walk through' style. Consequently, residents have closely identified with the documents. An alternative approach would be to follow a more analytical style and to rely more heavily on annotated photographs and townscape maps. The latter would be effective for development control officers, members and those wishing to develop in an area. This approach would be quicker to produce and result in shorter documents. The former approach may be more accessible to residents.

5.6 Policy criteria

- 5.6.1 A document in which each character area is self-contained with analysis and policy criteria seems most popular with Members and officers and for this reason, future documents should follow this format.

Recommendation 9 – Content of Character Area Assessment SPDs

Each Character Area Assessment should comprise:

- contextual, positive and negative features text boxes
- annotated photographs
- annotated Townscape Maps
- policy criteria

Recommendation 10 – Text Content

Members are recommended to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the analytical and 'walk through' styles of textual presentation and conclude on the most appropriate style for future SPDs.

6.0 Recommended Way Forward

- 6.1 National planning statements emphasise the commitment to protecting and enhancing the quality of the built environment and achieving high quality design which contributes positively to making places better.
- 6.2 By Design – Urban design in the Planning System (DETR, 2000) states:
"The central message is that careful assessments of places, well-drafted policies, well-designed proposals, robust decision-making and a collaborative approach are needed throughout the country if better places are to be created." This is the approach now being followed by the Borough Council.
- 6.3 Planning Policy Statement 3 - Housing (DCLG, 2006) affirms that good design should contribute positively to making places better for people and advocates that Local Planning Authorities should develop a shared vision with their local communities of the type(s) of residential environments they wish to see and develop design policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the local area.
- 6.4 The Government's response to the South East Plan contains a new policy which clearly indicates the importance of improving the built environment based on local character and distinctiveness (Policy BE1- Management for an Urban Renaissance):
- 6.5 *Local authorities and their partners will use opportunities associated with new development to help provide significant improvements to the built environment. They should:
i.e. Through their Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks, set out an overall strategy for enhancing the quality of life in each urban area which reflects a vision developed in consultation with local communities...
v. Promote and support design solutions relevant to context and which build upon local character and distinctiveness and sense of place, including the sensitive reuse of redundant or under-used historic buildings*
- 6.6 Should this Policy be confirmed, the SPDs are a key mechanism for its implementation in Maidstone Borough in the future and the pilot studies give the Council a head start in achieving improvements in design locally.
- 6.7 There is support in national and regional planning statements for the development of local development documents which promote and support design solutions relevant to context and which build on

local character and distinctiveness. Should the Council wish to pursue further Character Area Assessment SPDs for additional areas of the Borough, there are a number of recommendations derived from the two pilot areas contained in this report to form the basis for expanding the project.

- 6.8 There are high expectations that, once approved, the SPDs will improve the quality of development in the parts of Maidstone town covered. It would be helpful to achieve some 'quick wins' following adoption of the guide to demonstrate the Council's successful use of the Supplementary Planning Documents.

Recommendation 11 - Awareness

Ensure officers and Members are aware of the purpose and content of the Character Area Assessment SPDs, once adopted through a joint training event.

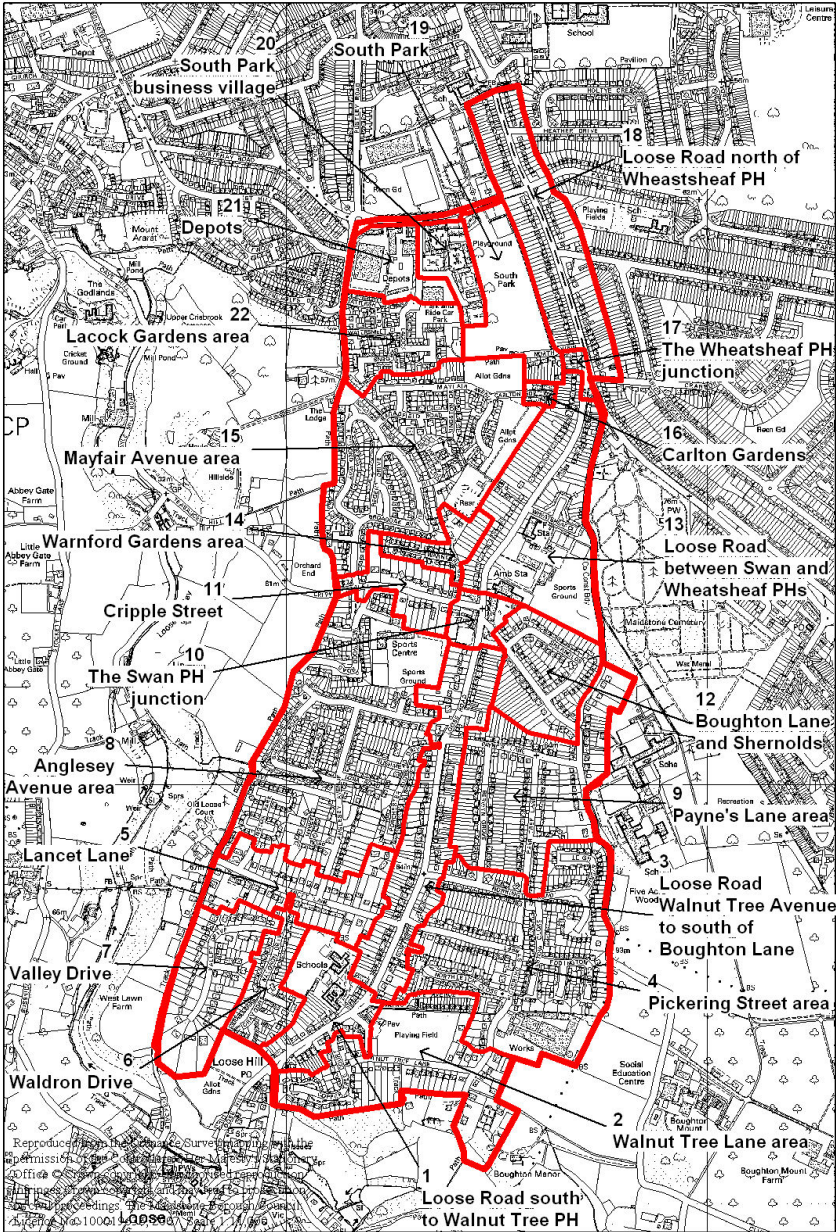
Recommendation 12 – Publicity

Character Area Assessment SPDs be publicised to local agents following adoption.

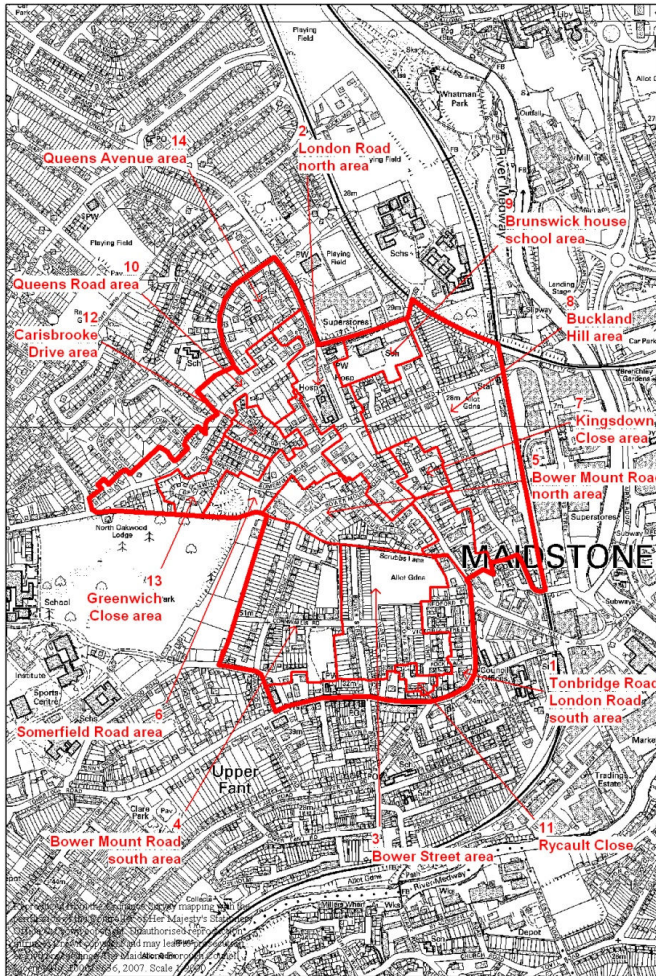
Recommendation 13 – Use of the SPDs

Following adoption, Character Area Assessment SPDs be used in negotiations with applicants and referred to in delegated and Committee reports in justifying approval or as a reason for refusal. Similarly, use the SPDs in appeal statements and publicise any successful outcomes.

Appendix 1



Loose Road Area



London Road Area

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT ADVISORY GROUP

8TH DECEMBER 2008

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Report prepared by Anne-Louise Broome

LOOSE ROAD AND LONDON ROAD CHARACTER AREA ASSESSMENTS: PROPOSED CHANGES FOLLOWING PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND ADOPTION OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

- 1.0 Issue for Decision
- 1.1 The Loose Road and London Road Character Area Assessment SPDs were published for public consultation between 15th August and 26th September 2008 in accordance with Local Development Framework regulations.
- 1.2 The issue for decision is to consider proposed changes to the documents in the light of the representations received and to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration for the adoption of the amended document.

NB. This report should be read in conjunction with the draft SPDs attached as Appendices 1 & 2 (circulated separately)

- 2.0 Recommendation of the Assistant Director for Development and Community Services
- 2.1 That the proposed amendments to the Loose Road and London Road Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD), made in response to representations are considered, together with the proposed responses to the representations received. See appendices 1 – 4.
- 2.2 That the documents as amended, and table of responses to the representations, are recommended to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration as the basis for the finalising of appropriate documentation and the formal process of adopting and publishing the Supplementary Planning Documents at the earliest opportunity.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 For the London Road document a total of 74 comments were received and for the Loose Road area, 63 comments were received. An exhibition was also held within each Character Area, and over 30 residents attended the London Road exhibition and over 60 attended the Loose Road exhibition. On the whole, the response to these documents, both at the exhibitions and to the consultation has been supportive. Appendices 1 & 2 attached to this report contain the Consultation Draft SPDs for the London Road and Loose Road areas. Appendices 3 & 4 contain a table showing details of all valid representations received, with consideration of each representation under the headings "Officers Response" and "Officers recommendation".

4.0 Proposed Changes to the Documents

4.1 In brief summary the main issues arising in the representations comments related to:

- widening the aims of the SPDs to include:
 - 'raising awareness' in order that the SPDs may be seen to influence changes which do not require planning consent, and
 - ensuring improved designs on the ground which enhance the character of the area.
- clarifying the status and role of the SPDs in the planning framework following consultation.
- adding further positive features to the SPDs, together with proposals to omit reference to some of the visual detractors.
- enhancing Loose Road by the addition of tree planting, where feasible, and the introduction of quiet road surface material to reduce the noise impact of traffic.
- adding the Southern Anti-coalescence Belt and Area of Landscape Importance to the Townscape Analysis Maps to the Loose Road CAA in addition to the Conservation Area boundaries already included.
- detailed amendments to both documents to add factual updates, wording/typographical corrections and additions of useful and more locally-specific (often historical) information into the document
- general suggestions to provide clarity, such as starting each character area on a new page.

- a variety of comments that fall outside the scope of the SPDs including the desire to extend the area covered by the SPDs, a number of concerns that the Borough Council would not use the SPDs in making decisions on planning applications, and seeking solutions to wider traffic issues.

5.0 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

5.1 Whilst Members have an option not to adopt the SPDs, the documents contribute towards achieving corporate objectives and will improve design quality in new development within the defined character areas.

5.2 The 2004 Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations set out how SPDs should be prepared. This document makes it clear that sound LDD production requires that consultation is conducted with stakeholders and the public and that consideration is given to the representations received.

2.1 Regulation (18)(4)) states: "A local planning authority shall not adopt an SPD until – (a) they have considered any representations made in accordance with paragraph (2) [made within the period and sent to the Council]; and (b) [they] have prepared a statement setting out (i) a summary of the main issues raised in these representations, and (ii) how these main issues have been addressed in the SPD which they intend to adopt".

6.0 Impact on Corporate Objectives

6.1 The documents will contribute towards the two objectives of Sustainable Communities and Quality Living, by encouraging developers to respect the recognized character of the areas, by identifying the locally distinctive features that define these areas.

7.0 Risk Management

7.1.1 One comment made by KCC is that the QL1 development plan policy basis of the SPD is contained in the Kent and Medway Structure Plan and that it is the current expectation that this will cease to exist from July 2009. It had previously been understood from draft Government legislation and regulation associated with plan making that SPDs could be based on an RSS policy. However, latest indications are that Government has changed this provision although this matter is not settled as yet.

7.1.2 If the Government proceed on the current course then the policy basis of the SPD would be deeply weakened until such time as Core Strategy policy is prepared that can provide the necessary development policy

basis for this series of SPDs. This matter is addressed further in the lessons learned report that is attached to the agenda for the meeting of this Group.

8.0 Other Implications

8.1.1

1.	Financial	
1.	Staffing	X
2.	Legal	
3.	Social Inclusion	
4.	Environmental/Sustainable Development	X
5.	Community Safety	
6.	Human Rights Act	
7.	Procurement	
8.	Asset Management	

8.1.2 Officers (particularly from Development Control) will benefit from some form of training as the SPD comes into force.

8.1.3 One of the principal aims of the document is to improve the quality of new development by ensuring that it fits in with the identified character of the area.

Appendices

1. The Loose Road Character Area Assessment SPD (draft)
2. The London Road Character Area Assessment SPD (draft)
3. Schedule of Representations and Recommended responses to the Loose Road Character Area Assessment SPD
4. Schedule of Representations and Recommended responses to the London Road Character Area Assessment SPD

NO REPORT WILL BE ACCEPTED WITHOUT THIS BOX BEING COMPLETED

Is this a Key Decision? Yes No

If yes, when did it appear in the Forward Plan? October 2008

Is this an Urgent Key Decision? Yes No

Reason for Urgency

N/A

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Schedule of Representations and Recommended Responses Loose Road Character Area Assessment

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
Mr David Knight			Observations	<p>The document is biased against employment. There is little employment opportunity within the area. Those that do exist are complained of eg. page 34 a) A commercial building on the western side of Loose Road detracts from the character of the area...</p> <p>page 74 8.11. unsightly car park to rear of bank and flat roofed premises opposite.</p> <p>Commercial premises need to be economic and not overlaborate. This bias will encourage loss of local employment (and probable replacement with housing). This does not meet government and sustainability objectives of providing more local employment with less travel</p>	<p>The SPD assesses the character of the area and sets out examples of negative features which detract from the</p> <p>Character. These are not exclusively employment uses, although there are some examples, as there are for residential uses. Conversely, some employment areas are described favourably (such as the South Park Business Village Character Area). There is no bias against employment uses and no intention within the SPD to see all employment sites redeveloped for housing development.</p>	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr David Knight			Observations	<p>The document attempts to incorporate the need to safeguard various views to protect the character of the area. The views mentioned are generally actually outside the area and it is not reasonable for the document to presume to control development within views that reach, for example, Bluebell Hill, Coxheath and Wrotham. The views are of other areas (including parts of Tonbridge and Malling) and which should properly be controlled only by their own assessments if such assessments are appropriate. There is no comment on what changes to the views would be enhancements. It seems likely that such a broad selection of views will eventually fail on appeal and so does not achieve its intended purpose.</p>	<p>The protection of views from the public domain which form an important part of the character of the area is controlled from the source of the view within the planning control of Maidstone Borough Council. Decisions about whether a view would be blocked or adversely affected by development within the character area will be within the jurisdiction of the Borough Council. The countryside beyond Maidstone town is protected by a number of designations within, and beyond, its boundaries and by the general protection of the countryside. The Government's overall aim is to protect the countryside for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and so it may be enjoyed by all (PPS7).</p>	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr Julian Dipper		Kent County Council (County Planning Authority)	Observations	<p>This section should explain why SPDs have been produced for only 'London Road, Bower Mount Road and Buckland Hill area' and 'Loose Road Area'. Is the intention to cover the whole of the urban area (and larger villages) with similar studies and if so, are these pilot studies for that longer term objective?</p>	<p>The SPDs are self-contained documents produced for the areas selected by Members who will decide on any future programme of SPDs based on the feedback report.</p>	No changes required to the Assessment.

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
Mr Julian Dipper		Kent County Council (County Planning Authority	Observations	The four objectives are supported. However, these are a somewhat limited. Rather than just as an aid to providing design policies/guidance and development control decisions, the report could be more useful to the LDF as a whole if the conclusions on each of the character areas were to indicate the scope for change within them i.e. whether the character attributes of a character area are positive overall (implying emphasis on conservation), neutral, or negative (implying the need for enhancement or change of character which new development could bring). Such conclusions might be used to complement or reinforce the findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Employment Land Review in indicating the scope for development/redevelopment in significant parts of settlements. The evidence base for the LDF, about the choices made on the scale and distribution of development in particular parts of the main urban area or smaller individual settlements, might thus be strengthened.	Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr Julian Dipper		Kent County Council (County Planning Authority	Observations	KCC notes that the SPD is to supplement Policy QL1 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan. Whilst this is perfectly in order it should be noted that the Structure Plan now has a limited life as it will be superseded by the Regional Spatial Strategy ; 'The South East Plan' within a few months.	Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mrs Jan Capon		Loose Parish Council	Observations	The Loose Parish Council fully supports the document but wish to bring to your attention the following inaccuracies and observations; please also note that the following comments are confined to the area within the Loose Parish. It is felt that the documents position and role in the planning framework could be made clearer. It is important that the status and linkage of the document is strong. We could not find a reference to the Loose Road being the A229 Hastings Road. It is felt that the document would benefit from each Character Area being given a new page.	<p>The section What is the Supplementary Planning Document? in the SPDs should be updated following the consultation process and should also refer to the A229.</p> <p>There are advantages for clarity in beginning each Character Area on a new page.</p> <p>Most references have been made to ragstone throughout the document but two additional references are proposed.</p> <p>Comments on the levels of traffic are less appropriate in the section on the location, landscape setting and evolution of the area than in the section on the character area assessments where they currently appear.</p>	<p>Page 1: Amend to: Government guidance (PPS3) advocates that Local Planning Authorities should develop a shared vision with their local communities of the type(s) of residential environments they wish to see and develop design policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the local area.</p> <p>This supplementary planning</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				<p>Loose is proud of its association with ragstone. A material contributing to much of the character of the area. Please could 'stone' be referred to as 'ragstone' where appropriate?</p> <p>The playing field north of Walnut Tree Lane should be referred to as King George V Playing Field. There are several wrong versions in the document.</p> <p>Page 9: Reference needs to be made to the Loose Road now being the main 'Hastings' Road and the ever increasing volumes of traffic to and from Maidstone.</p> <p>Page 11: Areas not clear; increase size of Map 2.</p> <p>Page 12: It is felt that the three design principles are unclear.</p> <p>Page 13 para 3: Refers to the triangle of grass which is known as the 'Loose Village Green'. 'red letter box' should read 'red telephone box'. Also there are two memorial seats on the green which could be mentioned. Para 6 should read 'on the left' not 'on the right'.</p> <p>Page 14 para 3: This tree is on private property and does not constitute much of the landmark. Not worth mentioning.</p> <p>Para 5: word missing 'Leads up to the Public House'.</p> <p>Page 16, map 8.1: There are long views southwards from the properties backing onto the path along the south side of Copper Tree Court. Show arrow.</p> <p>Page 18: 'Loose Road Conservation Area' should read 'Loose Valley Conservation Area'.</p> <p>Page 19 part a: Not sure of the meaning 'set back'.</p> <p>Page 20: Line one col 2 typo error: 'restthe' should be 'rest of the'.</p>	<p>Map 2 is only for general reference as each area is illustrated by a larger scale map. However, improved cross-referencing to the relevant large scale map should be added to Map 2.</p> <p>Typographical error has led to some lack of clarity in the Design Principles. This and a number of other typographical errors should be corrected.</p> <p>Amend references to Loose Village Green and King George V Playing Fields.</p> <p>The tree at the entrance to Walnut Tree Lane is part of the character and is worthy of mention.</p> <p>Only views from public view points are shown in the Townscape Analysis as private views are not protected by the planning system.</p> <p>Appendix 1 is an extract from a Government publication and cannot therefore be changed.</p>	<p>document (SPD) develops design policies through extensive community involvement and has been adopted as part of Maidstone Borough Council's Local Development Framework. It provides further detail about how planning policies will be applied in a specific part of Maidstone town: the Loose Road area (see Map 1) which extends either side of the A229 Hastings road.</p> <p>The SPD is a material consideration in determining planning applications in the Loose Road area. Developers, householders and the Borough Council should refer to the document in formulating proposals and in determining planning applications.</p> <p>The document aims to raise the standard of design of new proposals such that they fit well with the locally distinctive character of an area. Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area, should not be accepted.</p> <p>Ensure a page break for each new Character Area.</p> <p>Page 29:</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				<p>Page 21 para 1: Add five a side football/basketball pitch and youth shelter to list. Para 4 :Hedge is not overgrown. The gate is not in this area perhaps it may be better if it is referred to in the next paragraph. Para 5 : Grove Cottage is 18th Century.Is 'works' the best description of Leonard Goulds? 'Commercial, Industrial' may be better?Para 6 :Insert Loose Valley before Conservation Area.</p> <p>Page 22 :'North east' should be 'north east'.Para 1 'sports ground' is a playing field. Heading to photo.....from Loose Area should be from Loose Road.</p> <p>Page 23:'predominantly' is misspelled.</p> <p>Page 24: Map. Show long view to the south.</p> <p>Page 25:(b) Split sentence after.....parking.The need.....</p> <p>Page 26 para 4: Typo Loose Valley para 4 & Para 1 'plotfor' should be 'plot for'.</p> <p>Page 29 para 2: Insert 'large' before'detached inter-war'. Para3: Terrace only includes one shop not two.Standarise whether "Celsius" is an Industrial or Commercial unit.</p> <p>Page 33: Negative Features. The Commercial unit has unsightly, unfinished front elevation.</p> <p>Page 35 para 4: "With the exception of....."would be better as"With the notable exception of....."</p> <p>Page 36:'At the entrance to' doesn't need the word 'of'.</p> <p>Page 37 para 5:'The works site.....P 37 & 38 'Eddington' not 'Edderington'.</p> <p>Page 41 pen para 1 : After the first sentence add 'The spacious development is unique to the area'</p> <p>Page 125 para 2: Not sure what 'toolkit' means in this context. Could it be explained some other way?.</p>		<p>Amend to:</p> <p>The Victorian cottages are yellow stock brick with red brick detail, stone faced with ragstone or rendered and painted with tile or slate roofs.</p> <p>Page 63:</p> <p>Amend to:</p> <p>The junction with Pheasant Lane is attractive with a triangle of grass, red post box and ragstone clad rustic style house.</p> <p>Page 14:</p> <p>Amend to:</p> <p>From the entrance the faded weatherboarding of Hope Cottages can be glimpsed together with the entrance to the King George V Playing Field.</p> <p>Page 20:</p> <p>Amend to:</p> <p>This area comprises Copper Tree Court,</p> <p>St King George's V Playing Field, Walnut Tree Lane, Pickering Street (south) and</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
						<p>Walnut Tree Avenue.</p> <p>The only buildings at that time were some cottages on the section of Walnut</p> <p>Tree Lane adjoining the Loose Road and Grove Cottage on Pickering Street. Walnut Tree Avenue did not exist but</p> <p>the footpath which today runs to the north of St King George V Playing Field is clearly visible.</p> <p>Page 21:</p> <p>Amend to:</p> <p>St King George V playing field serves Loose Village.</p> <p>Page 22:</p> <p>Amend to:</p> <p>They face away from the road looking over the footpath and</p> <p>St King George V Playing Field.</p> <p>Page 23:</p> <p>Amend to:</p> <p>Houses in Walnut Tree Avenue</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
						<p>viewed from St King Georges V Playing Field</p> <p>Page 25: Amend to:</p> <p>Open space is present in the form of St King George's V Playing Field and landscape features around the playing field and in front gardens give a strong landscape structure to the area and partially or completely screen development.</p> <p>Page 26: Amend to:</p> <p>The entrance and parking area of St King Georges V Playing Field could be upgraded or better screened.</p> <p>Page 11: Map 2:</p> <p>Improve cross-referencing to the relevant large scale map.</p> <p>Page 12: Separate the 3 design principles.</p> <p>Page 13:</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
						<p>Amend to:</p> <p>At the junction, just outside the Character Area but within the Loose</p> <p>Village Conservation Area, a large oak</p> <p>tree commemorating Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee stands on a small triangle of grass, which is known locally as the 'Loose Village Green', in front of the post office.</p> <p>Adjacent to the post office a recent development has been sympathetically designed in terms of scale, vernacular materials, boundary treatment and detailing to reinforce local distinctiveness and enhance the character of the area. A red letter telephone box, two memorial seats and old mounting block stand on the green. This attractive ensemble is marred by the volume of traffic on the Loose Road, railings and overhead telephone wires.</p> <p>Old Loose Hill disappears off to the left right</p> <p>steeply down towards the centre of the</p> <p>old village giving long views to the</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
						<p>Greensand Ridge.</p> <p>Page 14: Amend to: On the eastern side, an estate agent occupies the former builders yard and a row of terraced cottages leads up to the Public House.</p> <p>Page 18: Amend to: Given that the Loose Road area is built on higher ground set above the Conservation Area, the impact of development could have greater impact on the surrounding area and it is important that any development preserves or enhances the character of the Loose Road Valley Conservation Area.</p> <p>Page 20: Amend to: The rest of the development in the area is post war.</p> <p>Page21: Amend to: St George's playing field</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
						<p>serves Loose Village. It is well maintained and equipped with a modern pavilion, five a side football/basketball pitch, youth shelter, play equipment, picnic tables, CCTV and lighting.</p> <p>Several spacious detached houses in large plots are set back behind verdant frontages including the 18 19th century Grove Cottage.</p> <p>The street ends at the impressive gates of Old Lakenham and a footpath leading south into the Loose Valley Conservation Area.</p> <p>Page 22: Amend to: North east</p> <p>Amend title of photograph: Entrance to Walnut Tree Avenue from the Loose Area Road</p> <p>Page 29: Amend to: The row of terraced cottages and semi-detached cottages up to the industrial commercial unit all date from before</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
						<p>1840. The terrace includes two a shops.</p> <p>A bulky industrial commercial unit and wide access road devoid of soft landscaping forms an intrusive element at this point.</p> <p>Page 37:</p> <p>Amend photograph caption to:</p> <p>Halstow Close, Eddington Close</p> <p>and Braddick Close, Norrington Road and Leigh Avenue</p> <p>The tall trees to the north of the Pickering Street works provide a strong green framework at the southern end of Halstow, Eddington and Braddick Close.</p>
Mrs Jacqueline Day		North Loose Residents Association	Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
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Mrs Jacqueline Day		North Loose Residents Association	Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Ms Lorraine Smith		Natral England South East Region	Support	<p>Natural England welcomes the aim to protect and enhance landscape features within both the Loose Road Area and the London Road Area, in particular ensuring that tree belts, individual trees and open spaces are protected from loss through future development.</p> <p>In addition Natural England welcomes the aim to protect views of, and connections to, the open countryside as outlined in the Loose Road Area SPD. Measures to encourage people to access the countryside, such as retaining and enhancing existing or new footpaths, should be encouraged. Within the London Road SPD we note the aim to protect views of the open countryside. Natural England would encourage that this is expanded to encourage connections to and from the open countryside through retaining and enhancing existing or new footpaths. Links to other green networks or rural urban fringe areas should also be explored to help promote the creation of a wider green infrastructure.</p> <p>Natural England believes green infrastructure should be at the heart of all development and recommends that such multifunctional greenspaces should be integral to all housing developments proposed within the Borough. We would draw the Council's attention to the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt). These standards recommend that people living in towns and cities should have:</p>	<p>The Council has already adopted green space standards in the Open Space DPD.</p>	No changes required to the Assessment.

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An accessible natural greenspace less than 300 metres from home; Statutory, Local Nature Reserves at a minimum of one hectare per thousand of population; At least one accessible, 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home; one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home and one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home. <p>A recent study has looked at accessible natural greenspace across the South East. You may find it useful to make reference the following publication "An Analysis of Accessible Natural Greenspace in the South East" which is available from this link. http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-7d4mgd</p>		
Mrs Jacqueline Day		North Loose Residents Association	Support	<p>We were happy with the methods used to draw up this document, and note that the resulting document is well laid out and easy to read.</p> <p>Page 5 gives a wrong name – this should read Pear Tree Lane, not Pear Tree Avenue, and the map on page 11 has the wrong title.</p> <p>Apart from the above, we will only comment on the main principle of the document, as we will rely on our members to add their own comments about their immediate neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Our first main point is that although the document states that traffic is outside the remit of this report, we feel it should nonetheless be mentioned as the increase in traffic has great significance for all residents. The amount, frequency and type of traffic has changed over the years – for example we now have huge lorries using roads that were not built for them – and this increase has the ability to change the character of the area, as identified in expressions such as “the quality of country</p>	Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mrs Jacqueline Day		North Loose Residents Association	Object	<p>It is assumed that the respondent is referring to page 64 which requires correction.</p> <p>The issue of traffic on the principal roads (noise, pollution and severance) is mentioned throughout the document. In relation to traffic noise, the character of part of the Loose Road has improved through the installation of a new quiet surface road. Additional reference to this option is to be made throughout the document (see response to lse 25).</p> <p>There are no plans to review the document at this stage. Once adopted, the document will be a material consideration in considering planning applications and the North Loose Residents Association will also be able to draw the Council's attention to relevant sections of the document as part of its scrutiny of planning applications.</p>	<p>Page 64: Amend text to Pear Tree Lane</p>	

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				<p>life". One example is that KCC are now very likely to install traffic lights at the Boughton Lane/Loose Road/Cripple Street junction – stating these are now required due to the increased traffic. These traffic signals will therefore change the character from predominantly rural to urban. We therefore think it is reasonable to include a note of traffic concerns when identifying key features of an area.</p> <p>Our second point is to query where this document will fit into planning policy in the future and whether it will actually have any influence, and who will monitor its effectiveness.</p> <p>Lastly, we would like to know when and how this document will be reviewed within the planning cycle.</p>		
Ms Susan Luckhurst			Object	<p>I have to comment that their is a fantastic view missing from the document. If you walk along the footpath from the bottom of Lancel Lane travelling towards Maidstone as you come past the hedgerow dividing the field at the bottom of Cripple Street to the field owned by a connected company of Hilreed Homes (Middlefields Ltd?) a brilliant 180 degree view opens up across the Loose valley to the west and over Maidstone through to the North downs to the North. Please can this be noted and marked on the plan.</p> <p>In addition just for historical context Lancel Lane used to be a single track lane with a gated entrance at the top. The lane was widened due to the developments in the 60's and the front gardens to the left hand side (looking down the lane) were shortened. The feature of the gable ends giving some rhythm to the lane is included in the narrative of Lancel Lane but not marked on the plan of the lane. In addition the narrative mentions semi detached houses in Lancel Lane and I believe that all the houses on Lancel Lane are detached.</p>	<p>Reference is already made to the extensive views in the Anglesey Avenue Character Area text but additional reference to the footpath could be made.</p> <p>Additional history of Lancel Lane would be informative within the SPD.</p> <p>Whilst the gable ends give some rhythm to the street scene, this is not sufficiently strong to capture on the Townscape Analysis Map due to the distance between properties and the partial screening given by vegetation in front gardens.</p>	<p>Page 55: Amend to: Importantly, as a result of the topography, proximity of the countryside and gaps between development, the area has retained views from a large number of vantage points including the footpath to the west of the character area. Views are of the Loose Valley and beyond and the North Downs.</p> <p>Page 42: Amend to: In 1875, Lancel Lane was a single track lane with a gated entrance leading through farmland from Loose Road to Old Loose Court. It was developed in the period between 1908 and 1936. As a</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
						<p>result of development in the 1960's, the lane was widened and the front gardens of properties on the south side were shortened.</p> <p>Lancet Lane is relatively wide and straight, sloping gently westwards.</p>
				<p>Boughton Lane/Paynes Lane:</p> <p>There is no mention of the substantial houses present in boughton lane from Paynes Junction to the far exit of Oldborough School (presumably the reviewers moved on to paynes lane at this point given the way the text flows). These are of similar quality to many listed in Lancet lane and have sizeable frontage behind tree/hedge cover. The following would be appropriate here:</p> <p>The substantial detached 2 storey 1930's houses are set in substantial plots. Frontage treatment includes white render and brick, hung tiles, hardwood doors and vertical black timber apex treatment. Boundary treatments include fences, hedges and trees.</p> <p>Also there are 3 turn of last century period houses between pheasant lane and paynes lane junction (on the left) with redbrick frontage and yellowbrick sides (these are the oldest properties in this part of the lane besides the pair of stone cottages close to pheasant lane junction).</p> <p>It seems appropriate to mention these along with the substantial bungalow opposite the pheasant lane junction in boughton lane (the plot of which has been reduced in the past and developed into the 2 adjoining properties on the right of the bungalow).</p> <p>Also Old Loose Court (in Old Drive) should have more mention - this is a very substantial Georgian House with a sizeable plot (of key interest to the area as it's grounds used to take in most of the surrounding area which is now developed).</p>	<p>Page 43: Amend to: Old Drive provides access to Old Loose Court, a very substantial Victorian House with a sizeable plot various former estate buildings and a small number of detached 1970s properties.</p> <p>Page 63: Amend to: To the south, Boughton Lane is more heavily landscaped by hedge and tree front boundaries to properties. The lane also narrows and has no pavement south of the school entrance. On the western side of Boughton Lane south of Payne's Lane, the large detached 2 storey 1930's houses are set in substantial plots. The houses are fronted with white render, brick, hung tiles and mock Tudor</p>	
Mr Brian Clark			Object		<p>Not every individual plot can be mentioned in the SPD but there is merit in adding reference to the row of houses to the west side of Boughton Lane, south of Paynes Lane.</p> <p>The pair of stone cottages close to Pheasant lane junction are already mentioned on page 62.</p> <p>Additional historic detail could be added to Old Loose Court.</p>	

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						wooden gable ends.
Mr & Mrs Stephen and Janet Crowther			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Stephen and Janet Crowther			Observations	Representatives of the individual areas should have been invited at a far earlier stage.	Representatives of the area were invited through the Borough Council at the beginning of the process of preparing the document and there has been extensive community engagement.	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Stephen and Janet Crowther			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Stephen and Janet Crowther			Object	<p>Page 35 - shows a photo captioned "Paved/concrete frontages Pickering Street" whilst in the main text it states "The houses are set back behind landscaped front gardens with boundaries of brick walls, wooden fences, hedges and shrubs". Surely a photograph of a typical house should be used?</p> <p>There are 3 photographs of Northleigh and none of Eddington or Braddick. A more balanced view of this area is required showing the detached and semi detached houses of these two roads. At the moment it only shows terraced housing and a garage block! This a very biased view of the estate as you have used the only terraced blocks on the estate. The remainder are all detached or semi detached. Even the view of the detached housing in Norrington you have managed to make look like terraced!</p> <p>Will this be in place prior to the Leonard Gould planning application acceptance?</p>	A greed	<p>Pages 35 – 37:</p> <p>Add additional photographs showing the typical front garden curtilages from a selection of Pickering Street; Eddington and Braddick Closes and detached housing in Northleigh Close.</p>
Mrs Christine Holland			Observations	<p>The commercial unit between Norrington Road and Paynes Lane is an eyesore.</p> <p>The bus stop outside 538 Loose Road could benefit from a rubbish bin.</p>	<p>The commercial unit between Norrington Road and Paynes Lane is marked as a detractor in the SPD.</p> <p>The installation of additional rubbish bins is beyond the scope of this SPD.</p>	No changes required to the Assessment
Mrs Christine			Support	Loose Road 8.3 Negative Features (Traffic) - In July 2008 a short section of Loose Road - from Lancel Lane	Since the draft SPD was published, a quiet road surface has been laid on Loose Road from Lancel	Since the draft SPD was published, a quiet road

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Holland				towards but not as far as Post Office and Village - was resurfaced. This new road surface has greatly reduced traffic noise. PLEASE can more resurfacing with some special surface be done on Loose Road from Lancet Lane towards Cripple Street. Thank you.	Lane southwards towards but not as far as the Post Office and Loose village.	surface has been laid on Loose Road from Lancet Lane southwards towards but not as far as the Post Office and Loose village.
Mr W.C. Dunk			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr W.C. Dunk			Support	Penultimate paragraph does not list the community and special interest groups consulted. Were Loose Amenities Association and the North Loose Residents Association consulted. Also perhaps the Loose Valley Conservation Society.	The special interest groups listed by the respondent were consulted. The section on community engagement should be revised to list those groups who have participated in producing the SPD.	Section 5: Revise and update to list those groups who have participated in producing the SPDs.
Mr W.C. Dunk			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr W.C. Dunk			Observations	<p>Page 11 Map 2 - Says "London Road Area Character Area". Surely this should be Loose Road.</p> <p>The proposals made in this document are commendable if they are enforced when developers submit their applications for planning permission.</p> <p>Page 17 bottom paragraph - "Following such clues...no local references". This is the very substance that was ignored (in spite of objections) to the planning consent for the YMCA ground redevelopment.</p> <p>Page 34 (a) - This would be excellent if it could be implemented.</p> <p>Page 66 Map - 472 Loose Road (corner of Anglesey Avenue) is shown with a square marked on the roadside corner. Can you say what this represents. This also shows up on map page 31.</p> <p>Page 48 - I can't agree that the fences at the entrance to Lancet Lane are a detracting feature. They ensure the privacy of the owners' properties, especially from headlights.</p> <p>Page 57 - You may find that some of the trees bordering</p>	<p>Correct the title of Map 2</p> <p>Previous planning decisions within this area, such as that in relation to the Y Centre, were made in the absence of the SPD. Future decisions should be influenced by the document. Development Control staff have participated in the production of the SPD and a training event is proposed with them to launch the adopted document.</p> <p>The cross shape is part of the Ordinance Survey map and not the Assessment.</p> <p>The visual impact of the fences is correctly stated. It is appreciated that defined boundaries are important to create defensible space around a building but there are other ways of achieving this which are more characteristic of the area such as hedges and walls.</p>	<p>Page 11: Amend title of map to Loose Road Area Character Areas</p>

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				<p>the Y Centre are disappearing in the current ugly development.</p> <p>Page 61 - Y Centre is currently being redeveloped. The paragraph at the foot of the page referring to the redevelopment is utter rubbish. See planning consent.</p> <p>Most of the maps need to be in much sharper focus.</p>		
Mr W.C. Dunk			Support	<p>8.7 Valley Drive:</p> <p>The 5 properties at the southern end of Valley Drive were not built by the developer but privately built and are not of the same design.</p> <p>Townscape Analysis Map - The anti-coalescence belt running from the large shed on the allotments across the rear gardens of the southern properties to Kirkdale is NOT shown on the drawing. NOR is the Area of Local Landscape Importance.</p> <p>Positive Features - The low density. This was insisted on by the Council in the 1960s to protect the Conservation Area and the Valley.</p> <p>The Negative Features does not carry substance because of the strict conditions applied by the Council in the 1960s to protect the Conservation Area.</p>	<p>The sharpness of focus of the maps is the clearest which could be produced and has not been an issue with other respondents.</p> <p>Amend the text in relation to the five properties.</p> <p>The Southern Anti-coalescence Belt and Area of Landscape Importance are designations in the Local Plan and these policies have been saved until superseded in forthcoming DPDs. The decision on whether to include the designations within the SPD and the Townscape Analysis Map depends on whether they affect the aims of the document and contribute to the purpose of the map respectively.</p> <p>In relation to the current (and any future) Character Area SPDs, the areas covered are within the built up parts of the Borough. Thus, all aims relate to the locally distinctive features of the defined built up area. However, there is clearly an inter-relationship between the built up area and the surrounding countryside and where relevant this is noted in the Character Area Assessments.</p> <p>In relation to the content of the Townscape Analysis Maps, the purpose is to record the features within each character area (and to note the relationship with the surrounding countryside).</p> <p>As a result of the important interrelationship between the built up area and the countryside it is recommended that the designations relating to the surrounding countryside (including the Conservation Area) are shown on the Townscape Analysis Maps.</p> <p>The features of the area may well have been a response to the setting of the Conservation Area in</p>	<p>No changes required to the Assessment.</p> <p>Page 52: Amend to: Tall conifers screen the five individually designed properties at the southern end and terminate the vista. Add the Southern Anti-coalescence Belt and Area of Landscape Importance designations to the Townscape Analysis Maps for the Loose Road Character Area Assessment.</p>
Mr & Mrs Nigel and Jennifer Slocombe			Object			

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				8.1 Boughton Lane/Pheasant Lane/Warnford gardens/Cripple Street Area: Appropriateness and potential for development (section 2) - I have concerns regarding the FURTHER development of Loose as a whole, e.g. Fire Station land and YMCA land being developed with what I would consider to be very high density dwellings - 3/4 storey blocks of flats on YMCA land. Hardly in keeping with the area. Also Leonard Gould Factory site is up for development. Contextual features table all clearly laid out. Townscape Analysis Map - Not all feature trees are being recorded. Tree screens have not been included in Boughton Lane map from peoples gardens. "Enclosure of Space" on Boughton Lane marked from second Shernolds entrance up to bend on Boughton Lane - why? Boughton Lane - No mention of development of the Oldborough Manor School site opposite the Paynes Lane exit onto Boughton Lane. Development at Fire Station land backing ONTO Pheasant Lane. Negative Features - Overdevelopment - Warnford Gardens area - Runnymede Gardens - Oaklands. Congestion/cars parked/lack of spaces for cars on properties. Only negative feature is the car park behind the bank! Pheasant Lane - No negative/positive comments stated in document. Hightlight rubbish/broken fencing along wooded areas - flytipping IS a problem. No reference to applications for redevelopment (YMCA/Fire Station land/Leonard Gould) which WILL change the character of the area as both developments are of high density with flats being included which are not present in the area as reported in the document.	the 1960's but today appear as negative features of standard architecture lacking in local references in terms of form, design or materials. The SPD cannot prevent development as a matter of principle, rather the aim is to provide design guidance on the appropriateness of, and potential for, types of development within an area and to help in the assessment of future proposals. Future decisions should be influenced by the document. Development Control staff have participated in the production of the SPD and a training event is proposed with them to launch the adopted document. Enclosure of Space is marked on the Townscape Analysis Map along Boughton Lane from second Shernolds entrance to bend on Boughton Lane to denote the narrow, curved lane enclosed on both sides by tall hedges and trees. Additional garden trees along Boughton Lane are significant enough to be included on the Paynes Lane Townscape Analysis Map. The Oldborough Manor school is located outside the Character Area. Any development of the Fire Station site would back onto the Pheasant Lane (this section of which is not included within the Character Area), rather it is considered in the Local Plan to be within the countryside at this point. Whist flytipping may be a problem in this location, it does not significantly affect the overall character of the character area for the purposes of this document. It is not considered that all of the development listed at Warnford Gardens area, Runnymede Gardens and Oaklands comprise negative features.	Page 66: Paynes Lane Townscape Analysis Map; Include additional garden trees along Boughton Lane.
Mrs Catherine Pearce			Object			

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Mr Robin Smith			Support	<p>8.7 Valley Drive:</p> <p>Fair and reasonable description of the area and agree with contextual features table.</p> <p>Negative Features Box - General comments are fair but the points made do not constitute a major issue.</p>	Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mrs A Moorekite			Object	<p>The whole length of Loose Road:</p> <p>Trees should be planted along the whole area of Loose Road.</p> <p>Some form of barrier to stop vehicles from parking on the pavement causing pedestrians to walk into the road.</p> <p>Trees shown just before Plains Avenue junction do NOT exist on pavement area. there are some in a garden near there. We have lived in this area over 40 years. During that time the trees which lined the pavement have gradually disappeared. Trees are essential to help combat some of the traffic pollution.</p> <p>All pavements where possible should be sectioned with a line through the middle designating separate usage for pedestrians and cyclists. Cyclists using the road cause danger for both themselves and other vehicles.</p> <p>Pavement parking by vehicles - the law against this should be rigorously enforced (or made impossible). It is extremely dangerous for pedestrians to walk into the road to pass these obstructions.</p>	<p>Where feasible, the re-introduction of large scale street trees, or trees in front gardens, could be pursued along Loose Road with the exception of the two commercial nodes where a more urban character is sought. This would act as a unifying feature, a deterrent to on street parking and help mitigate pollution. The traffic management measures proposed are beyond the scope of the SPD.</p> <p>The trees shown on page 105 are in private gardens and are sufficiently large to contribute to the character of the street.</p>	<p>Page 19: Amend to:</p> <p>b) Reinstating or reinforcing positive features</p> <p>Through the development process there will be opportunities to reinstate or reinforce the positive features which contribute to the character of the area. In the Loose Road South area this would mean reinforcing the character with a limited palette of locally prominent materials which are well represented along Loose Road such as yellow stock bricks (with red brick detailing), red or light painted bricks or ragstone for the building or boundary wall. Where feasible this could also mean the reintroduction of large scale street trees or trees in front garden.</p> <p>c) Seeking streetscape enhancements</p>

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						<p>Opportunity should be taken as part of development proposals to ameliorate the negative features of an area noted in this Supplementary Planning Document. Reductions in street clutter of signs, the introduction of street trees, where feasible, or improvements to street furniture or footway/ road surfaces, would contribute to improving the character of the area.</p> <p>Page 34: Amend to:</p> <p>c) Reinstating or reinforcing positive features</p> <p>Through the development process there will be opportunities to reinstate or reinforce the positive features which contribute to the character of the area. In this character area this would mean</p> <p>reinstating some of the original features to historic buildings and reinforcing the verdant landscape character, in front gardens and/or through the introduction of street trees, where feasible, with substantial specimen trees and ragstone boundary walls.</p> <p>d) Seeking streetscape enhancements</p>

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						<p>Opportunity should be taken as part of development proposals to ameliorate the negative features of an area noted in this Supplementary Planning Document. Reductions in street clutter of signs, the introduction of street trees, where feasible, or improvements to street furniture or footway/road surfaces, would contribute to improving the character of the area.</p> <p>Page 87: Amend to:</p> <p>When assessing development proposals within the Loose Road Character Area between the Swan and Wheatshaf Public Houses, the Borough Council will seek improvements to the character of the area by:</p> <p>a) Focusing on areas of opportunity</p> <p>Enhancement should be achieved along this strategic route by using a limited palette of locally prominent materials which are well represented along Loose Road such as yellow stock bricks (with red brick</p>

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						<p>detailing), red or light painted bricks or ragstone for the building or boundary wall. Where feasible this could also mean the reintroduction of large scale street trees or trees in front garden.</p> <p>The use of vernacular materials in enhancing local distinctiveness and a sense of place is particularly important along the strategic route. If the buildings are set well back from the road, there may be an opportunity for greater scale to create a sense of enclosure.</p> <p>Page 107: Amend to:</p> <p>b) Reinstating or reinforcing positive features</p> <p>Through the development process there will be opportunities to reinstate or reinforce the positive features which contribute to the character of the area. In the Loose Road north of Wheatsheaf</p> <p>Public House Junction Character Area this would mean reinforcing the landscape character in front gardens and/or through the introduction of street trees, where feasible, with substantial specimen trees and ragstone boundary walls.</p>

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Mr Michael Tillet			Support	<p>Congratulations on producing such an informative detailed document, greatly enhanced by the many photographs. I hope the MBC Planning Department will study it closely and act upon your suggestions and recommendations.</p> <p>I take great exception to the central paragraph in the right hand column on page 81 – “There is an example of a sensitively developed backland development at Hazlitt Place”. NOT SO! This, the first example of back-garden development in this section of the Loose Road (between the Wheatshaf and The Swan) was approved by MBC planning department in spite of strong opposition from individuals and local organisations who saw it as the first move in a once-started, inevitable on-going building process in this area. Moreover, after a new 4-bedroom detached house and a separate triple garage had been built in my next-door neighbour’s garden (no. 380), permission was subsequently given by a “delegated officer” to squeeze into the same garden a perfectly hideous bungalow that looks like a public convenience at the sea-side. So, instead of my back garden (no. 382) being bordered on each side by gardens of the same length running parallel with it, with “open” land beyond the bottom of the garden (making a wonderful quiet area, greatly enhanced by the now blotted out wonderful panoramic view of the North Downs) the whole nature of the area has been destroyed for ever. I do not consider this to be a “sensitive development”. As far as I know, before giving their approval, no representative of the planning department came to see what the effect might be going to be for the next door resident and his property, and for other near neighbours. Why, incidentally, is this development (in the gardens of 380, 378 + 376) referred to as “backland” rather than (private) “backgarden” development?</p>	Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr Michael Tillet			Object	<p>The SPD states that the Hazlitt Place development is an example of sensitively developed backland development as a result of a low key access road and its successful relationship in terms of scale and materials to the surrounding development. The planning term backland development is used as one which describes one development located behind another. Planning decisions are not able to protect views from private property. The visual impact of the development is correctly stated.</p>	<p>The SPD states that the Hazlitt Place development is an example of sensitively developed backland development as a result of a low key access road and its successful relationship in terms of scale and materials to the surrounding development. The planning term backland development is used as one which describes one development located behind another. Planning decisions are not able to protect views from private property. The visual impact of the development is correctly stated.</p>	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs D & C Creasey			Object	<p>Section 8.2 page 21 paragraph 5 – “the 19th century Grove Cottage” – Grove Cottage was in existence in the 18th century, ref. the deeds of Boughton Mount in the Centre for Kentish Studies.</p> <p>Section 8.4 page 35 paragraph 3 – “The substantial Pickering House no longer remains” – Where was this? I</p>	<p>Amend reference to Grove Cottage</p> <p>The listing details 1 & 2 Peartree Cottages describe the cottages as ‘C15 with C17 and C18 alterations’ and this information is included in the Assessment.</p> <p>Additional history and character of Pickering Lane</p>	<p>Page 21: Amend to: Several spacious detached houses in large plots are set back behind verdant frontages including the 18th century Grove Cottage.</p>

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				<p>have been interested in local history for years and never heard of it! Please let me have any reference you have found for it.</p> <p>Page 35 paragraph 8 "Grade II Listed 1 and 2 Peartree Cottages...this 15th century building" – The Royal Commission of Historic Monuments of England gave these a date of 1380.</p> <p>Page 36 paragraph 1 "The works site" – At present this is a factory site, destined for redevelopment as housing, but if you compare your map on page 39 with my enclosed map dated 1918 you can see that the factory buildings facing the road are actually remnants of Olive Farm. The oast has become Kiln Cottage, the curving wall shapes the road, the mature walnut tree gives pleasure to all of us. None of these features are mentioned in your survey! The farmhouse lies to the south of the farmyard.</p> <p>Originally called Olive House (Slade House since the 1950s) it was built around 1840 from local Ragstone and has impressive old conifers at the front. There is no mention of it in the survey. I enclose a picture. No mention either of the two great sweet-chestnut trees alongside the footpath opposite the factory. The footpath follows the alignment of an outlying linear earthwork associated with the Iron Age camp in Quarry Wood.</p> <p>These things tell the story of Pickering Street, which is just as important as its visual appearance. It is an ancient lane, at least as old as Peartree Cottages, and probably older, as it serviced the quarries in the valley which date from Roman times.</p> <p>Page 36 paragraph 3 (Northleigh Close) "a communal garage block in a poor state of repair" – These garages belong to the first phase of 1960s housing, which had no adjacent garages. We live in one of these houses in Pickering Street itself. We rely on off-road parking in this narrow lane because of lorry traffic to the factory, and in the future extra traffic from the new houses to be built opposite.</p>	<p>and the works site would be informative within the SPD.</p> <p>The chestnut trees are captured on the Walnut Tree Lane Townscape Analysis Map as part of a tree screen.</p> <p>The SPD refers to the garage court in Northleigh Close as an area of opportunity for future development and visual improvement but the document makes it clear that this is subject to the impact on car parking provision.</p>	<p>Page 35: Add: 8.4 Pickering Street Character Area</p> <p>This area comprises Norrington Road, Leigh Avenue, Halstow Close, Eddington Close, Pickering Street (north), Northleigh Close and Braddick Close.</p> <p>Pickering Street is aligned along an ancient lane which serviced quarries in the valley.</p> <p>With the exception of some properties in Pickering Street, much of the development in this area dates from the late 1960s and 1970s.</p> <p>Page 36: Amend to: Parts of the works site to the south which face the road represent remnants of Olive Farm. The oast has become Kiln Cottage, and the curving red brick and then ragstone wall with pillars shape the road. The ragstone farm house, Slade House (originally called Olive House) was built around the late 1830's to early 1840's and is located to the south of the works.</p>

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Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support	The area includes allotments often rich in reptile and invertebrate life and a number of parks, school grounds; a reservoir and open space which could be enhanced for biodiversity. The Trust would suggest identifying areas that could be enhanced be stated within this section.	The SPD is concerned with matters of design and other documents in the Local Development Framework will deal with wider development issues such as the incorporation of SUDs and biodiversity. The Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Maidstone Borough Biodiversity Action Plan which are both in preparation for publication next year are more appropriate vehicles for the suggestions provided, including areas of opportunity which will be examined in relation to the latter document.	No changes required to the Assessment.
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support	The Trust recommends that consideration of biodiversity, permeability or enhancement is included within the methodology. The site survey mentions the open spaces present and the Trust would recommend that consideration be given to their potential for biodiversity enhancement. The key characteristics, habitats have been mapped and the Trust welcomes the retention of the network of tree lines and hedges. Although important to wildlife they are not the only factor which can be enhanced for biodiversity. There is much potential within the open spaces for the incorporation of corridors and stepping stones and permeability could be requested within all new development and where possible within the built environment present.	The SPD is concerned with matters of design and other documents in the Local Development Framework will deal with wider development issues such as the incorporation of SUDs and biodiversity. The Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Maidstone Borough Biodiversity Action Plan which are both in preparation for publication next year are more appropriate vehicles for the suggestions provided, including areas of opportunity which will be examined in relation to the latter document.	No changes required to the Assessment.
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support	Consideration should be given to biodiversity maintenance, enhancement and permeability. The Trust welcomes the retention of the hedges, trees and tree lines	The SPD is concerned with matters of design and other documents in the Local Development Framework will deal with wider development issues	No changes required to the Assessment.

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				<p>and the aim to retain the rural nature of this area. There are more opportunities for wildlife that can be worked in to the design of new development which will attract wildlife into the built environment increasing species range and providing the opportunity for the population to experience biodiversity on their own doorsteps. The Trust would suggest that enhancement of open spaces by providing natural corridors or stepping stones will flower rich verges and enhancement of green space and gardens be incorporated into the design of new development.</p> <p>BIODIVERSITY AND PERMEABILITY FEATURES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>This should include :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to increase biodiversity as laid out in The Kent Design Guide Biodiversity Technical Appendix to be found at http://www.kent.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/559D0301-726C-440E-A77E-0F989AD8368C/0/Biodiversity.pdf. <p>Designs to increase biodiversity within open spaces such as playing fields, parks, school grounds, churchyards, allotments, roadside verges and country lanes</p> <p>Positive biodiversity features and habitats could be identified within the document.</p> <p>If the built environment is to be intensified it is highly likely that green spaces, gardens, waste ground and verges will be lost to wildlife. The Trust would wish to refer Maidstone Borough Council to Let Our Gardens Live whose aims the Trust fully endorse http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/campaigns/breathingplaces/Docs/garden-manifesto.pdf.</p> <p>AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFIED FROM THE LOOSE ROAD CHARACTER ASSESSMENT</p> <p>8.1 playing fields , Loose primary School</p>	<p>such as the incorporation of SUDs and biodiversity. The Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Maidstone Borough Biodiversity Action Plan which are both in preparation for publication next year are more appropriate vehicles for the suggestions provided, including areas of opportunity which will be examined in relation to the latter document.</p>	

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				<p>8.2 St Georges playing field, Copper Tree Court green space</p> <p>8.3 Wooded area to South Payne Rd</p> <p>8.4 Protected Woodland</p> <p>8.5 Loose Infants School</p> <p>8.8 Rushmead Drive Residential Home</p> <p>8.13 Reservoir and allotments</p> <p>8.15 Open space and Wide Grass verges</p> <p>8.19 South Park</p> <p>8.21 Open Space</p> <p>OFF SITE MITIGATION AND LANDSCAPE ENHANCEMENT</p> <p>The Trust would feel that for the developer to fulfil their duty under PPS9, in mitigation for any habitat lost by intensification of development in the urban area and to ensure that the spatial planning model encapsulated within the Draft South East Plan MRM5, developers should be required to fund off site biodiversity enhancement within the more rural areas.</p> <p>The Trust would respectfully suggest that Loose Valley LWS be enhanced to increase the condition of the habitats contained within it and increase its value to the many rare and protected species it contains. This valley is extremely valuable containing habitats of ancient woodland with 52 ancient woodland indicators being present, chalk grassland and network of mill ponds. Management to the mill ponds is labour intensive and funding would be very welcome for this habitat, the management of the ancient woodland and possibly to commence a grazing project within the chalk grassland habitats. The Valley contains 7 of the 18 British species</p>		

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Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Observations	<p>of bat and a colony of badgers. Habitats may also support reptiles and invertebrate species.</p> <p>Sustainability Appraisal and Sustainability Environmental Appraisal</p> <p>The Trust would suggest that Maidstone borough council consider formulating a number of positive features within the area and expectations relating to the increase of biodiversity</p> <p>Sustainability Objectives</p> <p>Objective 2 Flood Alleviation</p> <p>The Trust would suggest that Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) be supplied within new development</p> <p>From an environmental standpoint this would increase permeability within the area and could alleviate flood risk.</p> <p>Objective 12 Climate Change</p> <p>Permeability within the built environment will assist species to move as a result of climate change. This would strengthen the Borough's resilience to the effects of climate change</p> <p>Objective 13 to conserve and enhance biodiversity</p> <p>Enhancements and permeability could be included within the SPD attracting wildlife into the urban environment bringing positive benefits for biodiversity and the population alike.</p> <p>Objective 14</p> <p>Research has proved that access to wildlife within the urban environment increases population health and quality of life. For increased biodiversity to become a reality the SPD should include expectations of development as specified in question 8 and the Technical Biodiversity Appendix.</p>	<p>The SPD is concerned with matters of design and other documents in the Local Development Framework will deal with wider development issues such as the incorporation of SUDs and biodiversity.</p> <p>The Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Maidstone Borough Biodiversity Action Plan which are both in preparation for publication next year are more appropriate vehicles for the suggestions provided, including areas of opportunity which will be examined in relation to the latter document.</p>	<p>No changes required to the Assessment.</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
Mr & Mrs Peter and Anne Rigby			Object	The area indicated fails to include Oldborough Manor School (now known as NLL) which is currently subject to significant development and therefore is an influential factor on the Loose Road and its infrastructure.	The Pilot area was selected by Members as the appropriate area for the SPD. There may be an opportunity for the adjoining area to be included in a future SPD should Members decide to extend the pilot to other parts of Maidstone.	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Peter and Anne Rigby			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Peter and Anne Rigby			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Peter and Anne Rigby			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Peter and Anne Rigby			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Peter and Anne Rigby			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Peter and Anne Rigby			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Peter and Anne Rigby			Support	The map is labelled London Road, but shows Loose Road.	Correct the title of Map 2	Page 11: Amend title of map to Loose Road Area Character Areas
Mr & Mrs Peter and Anne Rigby			Support	A red telephone box not letter box stands on Loose Green. 8.6 Waldron Drive: As far as we are aware we have an original garage, so it is untrue to say that car ports have been replaced by garages. Bray Gardens has become Gray Gardens.	There is an error in referring to a letter box at Loose which should be corrected. The reference to car ports should be amended. The reference to Gray Gardens should be amended	Page 13: Delete letter and substitute telephone Page 48: Amend 'On several properties the original car ports have been replaced by garages' to: There is a mix of car ports and garages.

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
Mr & Mrs Peter and Anne Rigby			Object	<p>Negative Features - Don't agree that fences are detracting in Waldron Drive and Bray Gardens. Contrary to the impression given in the document the majority of parking on pavements occurs with householders visitors and tradesmen, wishing not to create an obstruction to the flow of traffic.</p> <p>The document envisages potential for development which cannot realistically exist if the spirit of the SPD document is to be upheld. It also seems to have unrealistic expectations of enhancements that might be made in the area without outlining how these can be achieved within the current environment.</p> <p>Both Waldron Drive and Valley Drive (area 8.7) have no street lighting yet this is not remarked upon. To some this may be regarded as a positive feature given the SPD's enthusiasm for retaining a rural feel to this area of Maidstone. However others would see this as a negative point on the grounds of safety.</p>	<p>The visual impact of the fences is correctly stated. It is appreciated that defined boundaries are important to create defensible space around a building but there are other ways of achieving this which are more characteristic of the area such as hedges and walls.</p> <p>Parking on frontages and pavements has a negative impact on the character of the area even if caused by residents and tradesmen and is correctly stated.</p> <p>The SPD accepts that areas such as the Waldron Drive character area are likely to remain largely unchanged over time but there may be opportunities for new development. If development were to come forward, the SPD gives appropriate guidance. The document acknowledges the possibility of residential extensions in such areas and cross-references the appropriate SPD. If development does not come forward it is accepted that there are limited opportunities for enhancement.</p> <p>In relation to the Waldron Drive and Valley Drive character areas, the absence of street lights is noteworthy in relation to the character of the area. Whilst this is mentioned in relation to Valley Drive, reference should also be added to Waldron Drive.</p>	<p>Page 48: Amend to: Cars are parked on the pavements, drives and some paved frontages. There are no street lights. Attractive ornamental trees enhance the townscape.</p>
Mr & Mrs Peter and Anne Rigby			Observations	<p>The preparation of the SPD document is a worthy exercise and the consultation of interested parties and involvement of the local community must be applauded. However, the entire exercise and its credibility risks being undermined if the Council continues to cite national government policy and its dictates as a reason to override or overrule the considered opinions of the local community and their representatives.</p> <p>The Borough Council has an opportunity to adopt this document and the responses to it as a blueprint for its planning policy in this area. To fail to do so risks exposing the exercise as another example of a local authority paying lip service to a consultation process which it then finds excuses to ignore at the expense of much public time and money.</p>	<p>Previous planning decisions within this area were made in the absence of the SPD. Future decisions should be influenced by the document. Development Control staff have participated in the production of the SPD and a training event is proposed with them to launch the adopted document. Local residents will also be able to draw the Council's attention to relevant sections of the document as part of its scrutiny of planning applications.</p>	<p>No changes required to the Assessment.</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
Mr Robin Smith			Object	<p>8.7 Valley Drive:</p> <p>Townscape Analysis Map - The Southern Anti-coalescence Belt between the Valley Conservation Area and the properties nos. 54, 56, 39 and 41 should be indicated on the plan.</p> <p>I would disagree with the suggestion of insisting on a limited palette of locally prominent materials. Good architecture should be able to accommodate modern materials and styles providing the overall scale and context is observed without it looking incongruous. It could, in fact, enhance the appearance and quality of a property.</p> <p>As can be seen from the plan (and particularly when Anti-coalescence Belt is included) this area is fully developed and no future development could be absorbed without overriding the criteria set out in the assessment document. The comment regarding "areas of opportunity" is not applicable apart from minor extensions or like-for-like replacements.</p> <p>The area should retain its character of being a low density transitional area linking the higher density developments of Bray Gardens and Waldron Drive with the Valley Conservation Area.</p> <p>Generally the recommendations set out are laudible as long as they are implemented. I do, however, have concerns over recent applications for a development at the southern end of Valley Drive that were passed by your Planning Officers (but rejected by the Planning Committee) that would have fallen foul of all the suggested recommendations (out of scale, out of context, highly prominent from the Valley Conservation Area, removal of trees, lacking cohesion with the Conservation Area, and not respecting the quiet residential character).</p> <p>Whilst appreciating that the document has a bias toward development I do feel that the current policy to identify and develop every spare scrap of land is detrimental to the area as a whole. Green corridors used to be</p>	<p>The Anti-coalescence Belt is a designation in the Local Plan and the policy has been saved until superseded in forthcoming DPDs. The decision on whether to include the designation within the SPD and the Townscape Analysis Map depends on whether it affects the aims of the document and contributes to the purpose of the map respectively.</p> <p>In relation to the current (and any future) Character Area SPDs, the areas covered are within the built up parts of the Borough. Thus, all aims relate to the locally distinctive features of the defined built up area. However, there is clearly an inter-relationship between the built up area and the surrounding countryside and this is noted in the Character Area Assessments.</p> <p>In relation to the content of the Townscape Analysis Maps, the purpose is to record the features within each character area (and to note the relationship with the surrounding countryside).</p> <p>As a result of the important interrelationship between the built up area and the countryside it is recommended that the Anti-coalescence Belt designation relating to the surrounding countryside is shown on the Townscape Analysis Maps.</p> <p>The aim of the SPD is to set the overall context for any new development and the text stresses the importance in this character area of scale and materials. The Borough Council is keen to enhance local distinctiveness and these two aspects have an important role to play in this respect.</p> <p>The SPD cannot prevent development as a matter of principle, rather the aim is to provide design guidance on the appropriateness of, and potential for, types of development within an area and to help in the assessment of future proposals. Green infrastructure and the surrounding countryside are identified in the SPD as important features to protect and enhance. In relation to Valley Drive, the</p>	<p>Add the Anti-coalescence Belt designation to the</p> <p>Townscape Analysis Maps for the Loose Road Character Area Assessment.</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				<p>encouraged by planners as being beneficial to both people and wildlife but the relentless tide to "urbanise" suburbia diametrically opposes this view.</p> <p>One way that the landscape character could be reinforced would be to have trees within the footpaths of Valley Drive. It would prove apposite that such a tree lined drive towards the Valley would be appropriate for the epithet "Valley Drive".</p>	<p>document anticipates that the area is likely to remain largely unchanged. It also anticipates the potential for applications for residential extensions in criterion (e) by cross-referencing the Council's Residential Extensions SPD.</p> <p>No other respondents have suggested the inclusion of street trees as an enhancement to Valley Drive and most residents have retained open frontages to their gardens. Whilst trees may give a greater sense of enclosure to this street, the character of the area is currently open with long views. The suggestion, for which there has been no strong local support, would change the character of the area.</p> <p>Previous planning decisions within this area were made in the absence of the SPD. Future decisions should be influenced by the document. Development Control staff have participated in the production of the SPD and a training event is proposed with them to launch the adopted document. Local residents will also be able to draw the Council's attention to relevant sections of the document as part of its scrutiny of planning applications.</p>	

Schedule of Representations and Recommended Responses London Road Character Area

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
Mr Ian Walsh		Bower Mount Residents Association	Observations	<p>Following consultation with our members concerning this assessment, we have the following comments for your consideration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are concerned at the lack of teeth for the document, in the face of developers' reluctance to accept conditions that will put up costs, leading to expensive appeals. A large number of the recommendations concerning, for example, scale, period features, maintenance of views and trees, will impose costs and it is important for the planning approvals process to be robust in defending the key features of the areas identified in the report. The changes to planning regulations that make roofline and window amendments simply development control matters, will also prevent implementation of the recommendation that the 'form, materials and character of historic buildings' should be respected even in small scale detailing. The boundaries of the area have been drawn to exclude the Kent County Council owned land in Oakwood Park. Whilst we can speculate on the possible reasons for this, the assessment of character should be blind to ownership. Oakwood Park is the dominant environmental feature of this part of Maidstone, with its mature trees, stone boundary walls and open vistas. In particular we are concerned that the boundary between Bower Mount Road and Oakwood Park has been too finely drawn to exclude the belt of trees running alongside the boundary and worth protecting. The map/text should be amended. The emphasis on the requirement for development to reinforce the particular character of the area and the quality of 	<p>Noted. Development Control staff have participated in the production of the SPD and will be responsible for implementing the document, which, once adopted as part of the Council's Local Development Framework, will be a material consideration when dealing with planning applications. The Bower Mount Residents Association will also be able to draw the Council's attention to relevant sections of the document as part of its scrutiny of planning applications.</p> <p>In relation to small scale planning applications, the SPD cross references the need to refer to the Borough Council's Residential Extensions SPD which the respondent would not have had the benefit of seeing at the time of making this response.</p> <p>The Pilot area was selected by Members as the appropriate area for the SPD. There may be an opportunity for the adjoining area to be included in a future SPD should Members decide to extend the pilot to other parts of Maidstone.</p>	No changes required to the document

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				<p>the surface of roads and footpaths is to be welcomed. It is hoped that Kent Highways will find the funds to maintain the degraded surfaces soon.</p> <p>We would also suggest that, on completion and approval of the report, the guidance therein is issued to residents by publication of a leaflet, including examples of good and poor practice and photomontages of what may be done. Residents are very aware of the benefits of improving their local environment, not least because of the effect on the value of their properties, and I am sure such information would be well received and ensure that the benefits of the money spent on the consultants' reports was maximized.</p>		
Ms Lorraine Smith		Natural England South East Region	Support	<p>Natural England welcomes the aim to protect and enhance landscape features within both the Loose Road Area and the London Road Area, in particular ensuring that tree belts, individual trees and open spaces are protected from loss through future development.</p> <p>Natural England believes green infrastructure should be at the heart of all development and recommends that such multifunctional greenspaces should be integral to all housing developments proposed within the Borough. We would draw the Council's attention to the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) . These standards recommend that people living in towns and cities should have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An accessible natural greenspace less than 300 metres from home; • Statutory, Local Nature Reserves at a minimum of one hectare per thousand of population; • At least one accessible, 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home; one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home and one accessible 500 hectare site within ten 	<p>The Council has already adopted green space standards in the Open Space DPD.</p>	<p>No changes required to the Assessment.</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				<p>kilometres of home.</p> <p>A recent study has looked at accessible natural greenspace across the South East. You may find it useful to make reference the following publication "An Analysis of Accessible Natural Greenspace in the South East" which is available from this link. http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infid-7d4mgd</p>		
Mr David Mill			Object	<p>We note that Oakwood Court is not covered by this proposal while Pembury Gardens in a similar position is. When driving down Bower Mount Road Oakwood Court appears to be an extension of this important road.</p> <p>We should be included due to large expanse of ragstone walling which is adjacent the Methodist church and continues to 130 Tonbridge Road, also the backdrop of trees which enhance the view of the Methodist church and St Michaels.</p>	<p>The Pilot area was selected by Members as the appropriate area for the SPD. There may be an opportunity for the adjoining area to be included in a future SPD should Members decide to extend the pilot to other parts of Maidstone.</p>	<p>No changes required to the Assessment.</p>
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Observations	<p>Sustainability Appraisal and Sustainability Environmental Appraisal</p> <p>The Trust would suggest that Maidstone borough council consider formulating a number of positive features within the area and expectations relating to the increase of biodiversity.</p> <p>Sustainability Objectives</p> <p>Objective 2 Flood Alleviation</p> <p>The Trust would suggest that Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) be supplied within new development From an environmental standpoint this would increase permeability within the area and could alleviate flood risk.</p> <p>Objective 12 Climate Change</p> <p>Permeability within the built environment will assist species to move as a result of climate change. This would strengthen the</p>	<p>The SPD is concerned with matters of design and other documents in the Local Development Framework will deal with wider development issues such as the incorporation of SUDs and biodiversity. The Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Maidstone Borough Biodiversity Action Plan which are both in preparation for publication next year are more appropriate vehicles for the suggestions provided, including areas of opportunity which will be examined in relation to the latter document.</p>	<p>No changes required to the Assessment.</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				<p>Borough's resilience to the effects of climate change</p> <p>Objective 13 to conserve and enhance biodiversity</p> <p>Enhancements and permeability could be included within the SPD attracting wildlife into the urban environment bringing positive benefits for biodiversity and the population alike</p> <p>Objective 14</p> <p>Research has proved that access to wildlife within the urban environment increases population health and quality of life. For increased biodiversity to become a reality the SPD should include expectations of development as specified in question 8 and the Technical Biodiversity Appendix.</p>		
Mrs Susan Atkins			Support	We congratulate the Borough Council on commissioning this work, which seems to have been carried out very professionally and painstakingly. We hope it will be taken seriously as Supplementary Planning guidance to flesh out the LDF.	Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Ms Kirsty Lidington	David Hicken Associates		Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs David and Penny Harris			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr Jack Atkins			Support	Support the production of the Character Assessment and its use as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.	Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr Jack Atkins			Object	Object to omission of land north of Leafy Lane and between London Road and the railway line as far north as the Queens Avenue junction. The omitted area is an integral part of this stretch of the London Road and is in urgent need of planning guidance in view of the impact of its users on the character of a	The Pilot area was selected by Members as the appropriate area for the SPD. There may be an opportunity for the adjoining area to be included in a future SPD should Members decide to extend the pilot to other parts of Maidstone.	No changes required to the Assessment.

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				<p>busy and important route into the town. The adverse impact of the omitted area is mentioned on page 28 so why not formally include it as part of the Assessment Area.</p> <p>Oakwood Park is a very important open space in this part of the town and is also in urgent need of planning guidance in view of the impact of its various users on the character of the area. It should either be included within the Assessment Area and a response made to the impact of its use or it should be the subject of a separate assessment. In addition to its impact on its surroundings its own character is being progressively eroded by continuing development which should now be curtailed.</p>		
Ms Lesley Cooke			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Nigel and Helen Davison			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr James Forster			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr Julian Dipper		Kent County Council (County Planning Authority)	Observations	I suggest that this section should explain why SPDs have been produced for only 'London Road, Bower Mount Road and Buckland Hill area' and 'Loose Road Area'. Is the intention to cover the whole of the urban area (and larger villages) with similar studies and if so, are these pilot studies for that longer term objective?	The SPDs are self-contained documents produced for the areas selected by Members who will decide on any future programme of SPDs based on the feedback report.	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr Julian Dipper		Kent County Council (County Planning Authority)	Observations	The four objectives are supported. However, these are a somewhat limited. Rather than just as an aid to providing design policies/guidance and development control decisions, the report could be more useful to the LDF as a whole if the conclusions on each of the character areas were to indicate the scope for change within them i.e. whether the character	Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				attributes of a character area are positive overall (implying the emphasis on conservation), neutral, or negative (implying the need for enhancement or change of character which new development could bring). Such conclusions might be used to complement or reinforce the findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment and Employment Land Review in indicating the scope for development/redevelopment in significant parts of settlements. The evidence base for the LDF, about the choices made on the scale and distribution of development in particular parts of the main urban area or smaller individual settlements, might thus be strengthened.		
Mrs Susan Atkins			Object	Many of the character features identified both positive and negative, are of course the result of decisions made by property owners outside planning control. So surely one of the objectives of the SPG should also be to raise the awareness of the public, inspire and persuade them to make decisions which enhance the character (and the value of their property), also hopefully to shame them into avoiding, reversing or rectifying negative features. Otherwise the Borough Council can only preserve features or achieve enhancement when development requiring planning permission occurs, or where they are protected by Conservation Area designation or listing. This approach is surely within the spirit of the Government Guidance summarised in the next section which exhorts planning authorities to engage with local communities.	The aims of the SPDs should be widened to include raising awareness (to cover changes which do not require planning consent) and to ensure successful outcomes on the ground.	Page 3: Amend the second aim and add a further aim to both SPDs: • To raise the awareness and provide design guidance on the appropriateness of, and the potential for, types of development within an area • To deliver improved designs on the ground which enhance the character of the area
Ms Kirsty Lidington	David Hicken Associates		Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs David and Penny Harris			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr Jack Atkins			Support	Support, particularly the aim for it to assist in the appraisal of planning applications and future proposed allocations (substitute planning policies for allocations).	Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
Ms Lesley Cooke			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Nigel and Helen Davison			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr James Forster			Support	In general I consider this to be a helpful document providing useful background to the assessment of future development proposals within the study area.	Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support	The Trust recognises that much of this area is urban and built up, but the area also includes allotments often rich in reptile and invertebrate life and a number of parks, school grounds; church a railway line and the river Medway which could be enhanced for biodiversity. The Trust would suggest identifying areas that could be enhanced be stated within this section.	The SPD is concerned with matters of design and other documents in the Local Development Framework will deal with wider development issues such as the incorporation of SUDs and biodiversity. The Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Maidstone Borough Biodiversity Action Plan which are both in preparation for publication next year are more appropriate vehicles for the suggestions provided, including areas of opportunity which will be examined in relation to the latter document.	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr Julian Dipper		Kent County Council (County Planning Authority)	Observations	KCC notes that the SPD is to supplement Policy QL1 of the Kent and Medway Structure Plan. Whilst this is perfectly in order it should be noted that the Structure Plan now has a limited life as it will be superseded by the Regional Spatial Strategy ; 'The South East Plan' within a few months.	Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mrs Susan Atkins			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs David and Penny Harris			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Ms Kirsty Lidington	David Hicken Associates		Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
Ms Lesley Cooke			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Nigel and Helen Davison			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr James Forster			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mrs Susan Atkins			Support	The general approach and level of detail are such as to engage the public in good design decision making. A more technical or overly analytical approach might be off-putting.	Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs David and Penny Harris			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Ms Kirsty Lidington	David Hicken Associates		Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Ms Lesley Cooke			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Nigel and Helen Davison			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr James Forster			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support	The Trust recommends that consideration of biodiversity, permeability or enhancement is included within the methodology. The site survey mentions the open spaces present and the Trust would recommend that consideration be given to their potential for biodiversity enhancement.	The SPD is concerned with matters of design and other documents in the Local Development Framework will deal with wider development issues such as the incorporation of SUDs and biodiversity. The Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Maidstone Borough Biodiversity Action	No changes required to the Assessment.

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				<p>The key characteristics, habitats have been mapped and the Trust welcomes the retention of the network of tree lines and hedges. Although important to wildlife they are not the only factor which can be enhanced for biodiversity within the urban environment. There is much potential within the open spaces for the incorporation of corridors and stepping stones and permeability could be requested within all new development and where possible within the built environment present.</p> <p>The consultation exercise has left a good deal to be desired. I became aware of it from a LDF email, from 'Downsmail' and from political parties' newsletters. Well and good, but when I set out to look at a paper copy of the Assessment, (97 pages on screen is too much) the new Borough Council reception desk knew nothing of the documents, nor did the person sent down from the Planning Department to talk to me. In fact she admitted she had never heard of it. The Planning Officer I was referred to had had evidently had to obtain a very rapid briefing from someone in Policy. No paper copy seemed to be available, and I was urged to access it online. When I later rang up the contact number given, I only ever got a voicemail. Eventually I was offered a free copy, but it took several days to arrive, and then the package only contained the Sustainability Report! I found a copy of all the papers in Allington Library and after another phone call was presented with a copy at the exhibition, but a less persistent resident might have given up.</p> <p>The point of repeating all this is that if even the Borough Council's own staff are not aware of the exercise, what are the prospects for informing and engaging the general public, and secondly, what are the chances of the SPG being taken seriously in the control of development? Will DC officers receive good briefing on and required to refer to the SPG when considering planning applications?</p> <p>Street enhancement will require the co-operation of utility companies and the highway authorities - I trust they have are</p>	<p>Plan which are both in preparation for publication next year are more appropriate vehicles for the suggestions provided, including areas of opportunity which will be examined in relation to the latter document.</p>	
Mrs Susan Atkins			Object		<p>Noted. Development Control staff have participated in the production of the SPD and a training event is proposed with them to launch the adopted document.</p> <p>Street enhancements will be implemented through negotiations with developers and detailed discussions with utility companies would occur where relevant.</p>	<p>No changes required to the Assessment.</p>

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				aware of the exercise and are on board? The document could clarify this.		
Mr & Mrs David and Penny Harris			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Ms Kirsty Lidington	David Hicken Associates		Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Ms Lesley Cooke			Observations	Information is getting through to public, but something concise and clear to explain project and encourage general public involvement would have promoted participation.	Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Nigel and Helen Davison			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr James Forster			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mrs Susan Atkins			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs David and Penny Harris			Object	We feel the Oakwood Park area has historically been important influencing the Bower Mount Road. For example, we believe the mature trees along the fronts of houses on Bower Mount Road West, backs of the gardens and elsewhere around Oakwood Park were all part of the old estate.	The Pilot area was selected by Members as the appropriate area for the SPD. There may be an opportunity for the adjoining area to be included in a future SPD should Members decide to extend the pilot to other parts of Maidstone.	No changes required to the Assessment.
Ms Kirsty Lidington	David Hicken Associates		Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Ms Lesley Cooke			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
Mr & Mrs Nigel and Helen Davison			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr James Forster			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mrs Susan Atkins			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs David and Penny Harris			Object	We think this document is very useful. It would have been great to have had it some ten or twenty years ago. Also we feel one is needed to cover the area of Oakwood Park as it is under severe development pressure. And it has a direct bearing on the character of Bower Mount Road, from the point of view of the height of the land - overlooking Bower Mount Road and the trees.	The Pilot area was selected by Members as the appropriate area for the SPD. There may be an opportunity for the adjoining area to be included in a future SPD should Members decide to extend the pilot to other parts of Maidstone.	No changes required to the Assessment.
Ms Kirsty Lidington	David Hicken Associates		Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Ms Lesley Cooke			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr & Mrs Nigel and Helen Davison			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr James Forster			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr Julian Dipper		Kent County Council (County)	Object	8.2 KCC property Group wishes to make the following points. The Baptist Church site is in the London Road North Character	The remarks appear somewhat contradictory. Nothing in the document prescribes designs – rather the key visual cues which provide the	No changes required to the Assessment.

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		Planning Authority		<p>Area. (There is an adjacent area that includes Brunswick House School).</p> <p>The assessment of character of the London Road North area does not specifically mention the Baptist Church site, although views to the N. Downs are mentioned, from the adjacent leafy Lane/A20 junction and across the top of the retail warehouse units opposite. The bank of trees on the Leafy Lane side of the KCC site are shown on the SPD reference plan.</p> <p>We should support the proposal on Pp 26 that development will be expected to respond to the scale, height, form, mass alignment, materials and character of historic buildings. The reason is that the ABC site has capacity to accept 3-4 storey development and is currently an unsightly feature making no contribution to the character that has been evaluated in the document as being worth retaining.</p> <p>Generally however we regard the references to the detailed design of existing historic buildings as too limiting to designers for new buildings, stifling modern design and initiatives. We support the intention to reinforce the ragstone walling on London Road and appreciate that there is a predominance of yellow stock brick in the area of course, but nothing should be done to prescribe the type of designs that are regarded as capable of responding to the context.</p> <p>Omissions:</p> <p>I am mainly concerned here with Queens Road and London Road. Along with Queens Avenue, Bower Mount Road, Buckland Hill and Somerfield Road these character areas are all more important than the other minor character areas in terms of defining the wider area's special character and providing local distinctiveness, not just for local residents, but for the wider public and to the character of the town as a whole. They are much more vulnerable to loss or erosion of</p>	<p>distinctive local character and context for new development are set out and appropriate responses to that context are for the designer.</p>	
Mrs Susan Atkins			Object		<p>The document deliberately does not distinguish between the importance of the character of some areas in comparison with others. Rather, each area has a distinct character to which new development will be expected to respond and, where possible, enhance. Other than this respondent, local residents have not responded that the named areas were more important than others.</p>	<p>Pages 43 and 50: For areas 8.4 Bower Mount Road South Character Area and 8.5 Bower Mount Road North Character Area, add the following additional bullet point to the Negative Features</p>

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				<p>character than modern cul de sacs and estates.</p> <p>Whilst the consultants have picked up on most of the existing features which are important to the character of the areas surveyed, as a long term resident I am aware of some omissions. I realise that the Assessment can only be a snapshot in time, and of course the surveyors will not necessarily be aware of some past changes and current trends affecting the area's character, which worry residents.</p> <p>Most residents will be worried about traffic and parking issues which I agree are to some extent matters which can only be addressed in the wider planning context. However there are problems specific to this area, particularly those caused by over-development of Oakwood Park, drawing in excessive amounts of school and other traffic and university parking. This could be noted.</p> <p>Even more important to the areas' future character is the threat of losing the remaining large Victorian and early 20th century villas set in large gardens, with their ragstone and brick walls - often 6 feet high, mature front gardens and trees. Several have already been completely lost and replaced with standardised flats and houses. Notable examples include two beautiful ragstone villas at the London Road end of Queens Road (one was called 'Akiva'), now replaced with Greyfriars Close; Etom House on Queens Road near Warden Close; now replaced with a block of flats; Brunswick House in Buckland Road; and the property adjacent to 'Pippins' on London Road. Efforts to retain the front walls and trees have been appreciated, but in some cases the walls have ended up lower than previously, exposing ugly car park areas and rubbish bins instead of gardens, and some important trees have been lost. The development at 'Cedardale' in Queens Road is current example.</p> <p>While the retention of many larger properties as old age care</p>	<p>Traffic matters are noted as negative features in 8.1 Tonbridge Road/ London Road South; 8.2 London Road North and 8.8 Buckland Hill Character Areas. Additional text in relation to traffic in the Bower Mount Road Character Areas is proposed.</p> <p>Large Victorian and early 20th century villas set in large gardens, with ragstone and brick walls mature front gardens and trees are mentioned in the contextual and positive features and appropriate policy criteria are included in the SPD. In relation to ragstone walls, the text could clarify that the retention of traditional boundary treatment of walls and mature landscape refers to loss or reduction of these features.</p> <p>In relation to extensions, the SPD cross references the need to refer to the Borough Council's Residential Extensions SPD which the respondent would not have had the benefit of seeing at the time of making this response. The Borough Council is now preparing a Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document which, in addition to the Character Area Assessment SPDs will be available on the website and also seeks to raise awareness of good design.</p> <p>There is a distinct break in the character of London Road between the Rocky Hill Conservation Area and the area being proposed as a conservation area (as defined by different character areas). Most of the buildings fronting London Road in the area proposed are either listed buildings or are modern development and not in keeping with the character of the historic</p>	<p>text box:</p> <p>Traffic associated with school or cutting between London Road and Tonbridge Road</p> <p>Pages 44 and 50:</p> <p>Add an additional paragraph on Traffic:</p> <p>Traffic</p> <p>The issue of traffic, whilst affecting the character of the area, is beyond the scope of this SPD. Wider proposals will be brought forward by the relevant authorities which should aim at improving the residential amenity within the area.</p> <p>Amend each section of the SPDs:</p> <p>Retain traditional boundary treatment of walls and mature landscape</p> <p>Development should not erode this unique feature along this strategic approach to the town through the loss, or reduction, of walls, hedges/ trees or the use of</p>

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				<p>homes has helped to retain the spacious leafy feel in the street scene, extensions into their rear gardens has in some cases resulted in a threat to the character of neighbouring properties. Examples include buildings at the rear of Bower Mount Road properties which now threaten the viability of Somerfield Road's spacious character, and at the care home near the junction of Queens Road and Langdale Rise.</p> <p>Suggested Conservation Area:</p> <p>Bearing in mind my point made under Section 2, that loss of important character features and unsympathetic alterations by property owners can occur any time, without any planning or other control, there are surely some features which are identified as so important as landmarks, not just to the survey areas but to the town as a whole that need more formal protection. In particular, I feel that the remaining unlisted large villas on London Road should be protected. If they do not qualify for listing, or even if they do, the existing Conservation Area at Terrace Road should be extended at least to Somerfield Hospital and Fanum House,(listed building on the corner of London Road and Queens Road now part of Brachers) -with possible extensions also considered, for instance along Bower Mount Road north.</p> <p>Perhaps the only way to preserve our ragstone walls is to list them all? The ragstone barn and wall in Oakwood Road at the former school farm, important landmarks just outside the survey area, are now neglected and partially demolished either by KCC or the developers - an example of what can happen.</p> <p>Other Detailed Omissions:</p> <p>Trees - in the roadside verge on Queens Road between Court Drive and Warden Close should be marked as feature and subject to a TPO, if not already. They are extremely important to the leafy character of the road. Also there has been a loss of</p>	<p>buildings. Other areas lack sufficient cohesive architectural or historic character to justify Conservation Area status. For these reasons, there is no justification for an extension of the conservation area.</p> <p>Trees - in the roadside verge on Queens Road between Court Drive and Warden Close are an important feature which should be added to the Townscape Analysis Map.</p> <p>The Pilot area was selected by Members as the appropriate area for the SPD. There may be an opportunity for the adjoining area to be included in a future SPD should Members decide to extend the pilot to other parts of Maidstone.</p>	<p>unsympathetic boundary treatment such as close boarded fences or brick walls.</p> <p>Page 74:</p> <p>Add trees - in the roadside verge on the north side of Queens Road between Court Drive and Warden Close to the Queens Road Townscape Analysis Map.</p>

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				<p>trees in front gardens of large houses lower down Queens Road - re-instatement would be good.</p> <p>Queens Ave - the boundary of the character area is illogical. The special character of this road applies to both sides equally. Far too few feature trees are shown in Queens Ave. The threat of further plot subdivision and loss of character buildings applies to both sides of the road.</p> <p>Somerfield Road is part of an important pedestrian route and its spacious leafy character has been subject to much pressure over the years. There are several large older character properties in addition to the old Vicarage and other landmark features identified. 'Rockstow' is as important as the Vicarage, and perhaps should be listed, if it not already. Possibly this road should be included in the Conservation Area suggested above.</p>		
Mr Ian Walsh		Bower Mount Residents Association	Object	<p>In Bower Mount Road South Character Area in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The characteristic 'Retain or create defensible space', present in the North Character Area, has been left out. We believe this to be an error rather than a deliberate omission. For example Cornwallis Park could be significantly affected by this oversight. The absence of any mention of the allotments behind Cornwallis Road/Bower Mount Road/Bower Street. This is an important feature in the Area; well used, well respected and providing a delightful green enclave that is under pressure from developers for infilling. Whilst the trees at the south end on the corner with Oakwood Road and those opposite the Cornwallis Road junction are singled out as important, as well as, surprisingly, the Leylandii adjacent to Scrubbs Lane, the remaining belt of Douglas fir trees along the west side of Bower Mount Road are not 	<p>The Bower Mount Road South Character Area contains some open plan frontages and it would be appropriate to add an additional criterion to cover this point.</p> <p>The allotments behind Cornwallis Road/Bower Mount Road/Bower Street are not visually prominent from the public domain and are consequently not highlighted as a key feature which should be retained.</p> <p>The Leylandii is not a native tree characteristic of this area and is not specifically included as a feature worthy of protection.</p> <p>The remaining belt of Douglas fir trees along the west side of Bower Mount Road are important to the character of the area and have been added to the Townscape Map.</p>	<p>Page 43:</p> <p>Add additional criterion:</p> <p>When assessing development proposals within the Bower Mount Road South Character Area, the Borough Council will expect development to:</p> <p>Retain or create defensible space</p> <p>Clear definition of space enables residents to exercise control over their environment and to know who should or should not be there. There are examples</p>

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				<p>mentioned and should be added to the map. Some of these are the subject of protection orders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The highlighting of 18A Cornwallis Road as a detractor in the report seems harsh, even though the property it is actually rather bland. <p>In Bower Mount Road North Character Area in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no mention of 'Seeking streetscape enhancement'. This would appear to be an omission as the poor streetscape in Bower Close is commented on. Many residents are more than happy with the open layout of Whitchurch Close, although the report author criticises it for reducing 'defensible space'. The public areas seem to be well overlooked by properties and the presence of strangers on foot is readily visible. The attractiveness of the ragstone boundary wall on the west side at the north end is noted, as it has been at risk. <p>Whilst the Association welcomes the descriptions and analysis, we think that some recommendations are unrealistic. For example the space available for planting specimen trees, e.g. Page 44 b) is very limited. It could be better rephrased as 'replace existing mature trees with similar approved tree species when they reach the end of their current lives'. Maidstone Borough Council may like to consider tree grants for this purpose.</p>	<p>It is important that 18A Cornwallis Road is not used as a precedent for future designs and therefore a specific mention is justified.</p> <p>There are no specific examples of public realm improvements identified which would merit seeking streetscape enhancement other than through the criteria already set out in the SPD.</p> <p>The Borough Council is keen to see replacement of specimen trees wherever possible.</p>	<p>where open frontages are created to the road leaving no definition of the space, reducing security and privacy.</p> <p>Wherever possible, private space should be defined by a boundary – characteristically a ragstone wall topped by hedge or trees in this area.</p> <p>Page 41:</p> <p>Add Douglas fir trees along the west side of Bower Mount Road to the Townscape Map.</p>
Ms Kirsty Lidington	David Hicken Associates		Object	<p>KCC - Property Group currently own the Allington Baptist Church site at the corner of London Road and Leafy Lane and therefore have an interest in the SPD in terms of the way in which it may influence future development potential for their site. As framework consultants for KCC Property Group, we therefore make the following comments on the draft SPD on</p>	<p>Nothing in the document prescribes designs – rather the key visual cues which provide the distinctive local character and context for new development are set out and appropriate responses to that context are for the designer.</p>	<p>Page 23:</p> <p>Add a paragraph after the Kingsgate reference:</p> <p>The Allington Baptist Church</p>

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				<p>behalf of our client.</p> <p>The Allington Baptist Church site is not mentioned specifically within the SPD which we address below when considering the SPD proposals, yet the site is the one readily available development opportunity in the area, containing only temporary buildings in poor condition. Its corner position also means that it is potentially important in reinforcing the areas character. The site is however shown on the Townscape Map at Page 25 as containing a tree screen along the northern boundary with Leafy Lane. This bank of trees is subject of a number of TPO's and its importance in screening and landscape effect is noted and supported.</p> <p>The area around the Queens Road/Leafy Lane/London Road crossroads is of particular interest as it provides the context of built form for the Allington Baptist Church Site. At page 23 the SPD recognises the Kingsgate development on the corner of Queens Road and London Road, opposite the Allington Baptist Church site as a landmark building and it is acknowledged that at four storeys its scale and height are appropriate to its prominent position. 1-4 storey development is recognised as being a contextual feature and this is supported as it provides confirmation of the scale and height context to which future development can compare.</p> <p>At Page 26 it is proposed at sub paragraph a) that new development in the London Road North Character Assessment Area be required to respond to the scale, height, form, mass, alignment, materials and character of historic buildings. The Allington Baptist Church site currently presents modern development that does nothing to respond to these broad contextual aspects and makes no contribution to the historic character evaluated in the SPD as being worth retaining. The site presents the opportunity to provide a more appropriate and harmonious development and the proposed requirement is therefore welcomed.</p>	<p>The loss of enclosure on Queens Road junction, and reference to some modern buildings on London Road lacking height are already listed as negative features within the character area. However, specific reference should be made to the important site of Allington Church and the opportunity for enhancement.</p>	<p>site currently presents a low rise modern development which is out of scale with surrounding development and does not respond to contextual features such as the prominent building materials or boundary treatment.</p> <p>Add detractor symbol to the site on the Townscape Analysis Map.</p> <p>Page 28:</p> <p>Amend as follows:</p> <p>a) Replacing or screening features which detract</p> <p>Road junctions form nodal points for the area where development is often given greater scale to signify the importance of the intersection. Opposite Kingsgate, at this important junction, there is a void of space formed by a large sunken car park set well below the road level. Although some trees are growing on the slope down to the car park, it will be a long time before they enclose the junction at this point.</p>

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				<p>Having said this however, there are numerous references made to individual listed and historic buildings along the northern part of London Road and in particular to their detailed design. Whilst the protection and enhancement of the character and integrity of the historic environment in this location is supported and should be respected it is considered that to adhere rigidly to these existing historic aspects of design would be limiting for designers when creating new buildings and would stifle modern design initiatives. Referring in such detail to the various architectural merits of the historic buildings, promotes pastiche development which does not allow for progression and goes against basic urban design principles. It is felt that the role of the SPD should not be to prescribe the type of designs that are regarded as capable of responding to context.</p> <p>At sub paragraph b) on page 27 it is recognised that ragstone walls are a prevalent feature along London Road and later on at page 29 sub paragraph c) it is proposed to reinforce the landscape character of this area with ragstone boundary walls. This is supported.</p> <p>At page 28, subparagraph a) it is proposed that the Borough Council will seek improvements to the character of the North London Road area by replacing or screening features that detract. In particular the void of space that is formed by the sunken car park of the retail outlets opposite Kingsgate is identified as an area in need of development to enclose the space at the junction. Whilst this corner is desirable for development of a landmark building to signify the importance of the intersection, it is unlikely to become available. It is considered that the Allington Baptist Church site on the corner of Leafy Lane should also be included in this section as it is equally suitable for development of a landmark building and I available. The site is currently under-developed with small scale development that does not contribute to the grander forms</p>		<p>Enhancement would be brought about if the space were to be developed (provided sufficient alternative parking was available and the new development was well designed and respected the character of the area). Similarly, the site of Allington Church is a low rise modern development which is out of scale with surrounding development and enhancement could be brought about by the redevelopment of the site provided the new development was well designed and respected the character of the area. The location at this junction makes these sites appropriate for new landmark buildings.</p>

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				<p>of development at this intersection which the Borough Council considers are appropriate. Furthermore, development of the Allington Baptist Church Site has the ability to bring the footbridge over London Road into better scale with the townscape generally and with the substantial trees already identified near the site. We would therefore request that the Allington Baptist Church site be specifically identified at this section as constituting a site that detracts from the streetscene but which is appropriate and capable of accommodating a landmark style development.</p>		
Mr Jack Atkins			Support	<p>Page 15: Strongly support the requirement that proposals should be accompanied by a design statement that explains how those proposals respond to the assessment.</p> <p>Page 75: Strongly support the identification of Ragstone walls as a positive feature in Queens Road (and in other parts of the Assessment Area) and the need for this unique feature not to be eroded. This protection should also include the prevention proposals to lower the wall as has occurred at the property between Littleton and The Knoll Queens Road.</p>	<p>Pages 15 and 75: Noted.</p> <p>In relation to ragstone walls, the text could clarify that the retention of traditional boundary treatment of walls and mature landscape refers to loss or reduction of such features.</p>	<p>Amend each section of the SPDs:</p> <p>Retain traditional boundary treatment of walls and mature landscape</p> <p>Development should not erode this unique feature along this strategic approach to the town through the loss, or reduction, of walls, hedges/trees or the use of unsympathetic boundary treatment such as close boarded fences or brick walls</p>
Mr Jack Atkins			Object	<p>Page 23: In addition to the poor quality street furniture, the frequent attachment of advertising banners to the railings which border the highway at this point also adds to the clutter which disfigures this prominent location on a major route into the town. The Assessment should refer to this and set out the Council's intention to take enforcement action against illegal advertising.</p> <p>Page 35: The Assessment identifies the open space of the</p>	<p>Page 23: The temporary use of advertising does not significantly affect the overall character of the London Road North area.</p> <p>Page 35: The allotments between Bower Mount Road and Bower Street are not visually prominent from the public domain and are consequently not highlighted as a key feature which should be retained. However, the Scrubbs</p>	<p>Page 35:</p> <p>Within Positive Features text box:</p> <p>Amend text to Open space of the Scrubbs Lane allotments.</p> <p>Page 36:</p>

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				<p>allotments to the rear of Bower Mount Road and Bower Street as a positive feature but contains no commitment to protect this feature. This omission should be rectified.</p> <p>Page 50: The Nursing Home curtilage is listed as a negative feature but is not identified on the map as a detractor.</p> <p>Page 53: The requirement that development should not erode these features through the loss of trees or the generation of traffic should add that the glass houses or the wall mentioned in the previous paragraph will also be protected.</p> <p>Page 74: The map does not include the trees in the grass verge on the north west side of Queens Road between Court Drive and Warden Close. These are important to the character of Queens Road and should be shown and protected by a Tree preservation Order if they are not already.</p> <p>Page 76: The box of negative features should include the large tarmaced car parks in the frontages of the property referred to in the previous paragraph and 327 Queens Road, the latter including a large unsightly refuse bin prominently located on the frontage boundary. The policy response should make it clear that such car parking will be resisted as harmful to the character of the area and also that proposals for the change of use of family homes to institutional uses such as residential care establishments will be resisted because they are likely to result in pressures for large areas of car parking to the detriment of the character of the area.</p> <p>The paragraph on traffic should give some indication of what these wider proposals are, who is preparing them, when they will be published and when we will be consulted on them.</p>	<p>Lane allotments are such a feature, offering long views from this compact residential area to open countryside to the north east. This area of open space should be protected and text should be amended to clarify.</p> <p>Page 50: The Nursing Home curtilage should be shown on the Townscape Analysis Map as a detractor.</p> <p>Page 53: The value of the glass houses is mentioned as part of the low key buildings set well back from the road which contribute to the character of this area and further clarification about the character of any new development should be added to the text.</p> <p>Page 74: trees in the grass verge on the north west side of Queens Road between Court Drive and Warden Close should be added to the Townscape Analysis Map.</p> <p>Page 76: Agree addition of the negative feature to the text box.</p> <p>It should be clear from the text that such car parking is a detractor and should not set a precedent for future development. The SPD cannot prevent the change of use of family homes to institutional uses such as residential care establishments as a matter of principle. However, any conversions should comply with the criteria in the SPD which include protecting traditional boundary treatment of walls and mature landscape and landscape features.</p>	<p>Add additional criterion in 8.3 Bower Street Character Area:</p> <p>When assessing development proposals within the Bower Street Character Area, the Borough Council will expect development to:</p> <p>Protect Landscape Features</p> <p>The appraisal identifies a number of individual trees and open spaces, including the Scrubbs Lane allotments which are visible from the public domain (shown on the Townscape Analysis Map) which perform an important function within the Character Area and which should be protected.</p> <p>Page 47:</p> <p>Add The Nursing Home curtilage as a detractor on the Bower Mount Road North Townscape Analysis Map.</p> <p>Page 53:</p> <p>Amend text in 8.6 Somerfield Road Character Area:</p> <p>When assessing development</p>

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						<p>proposals within the Somerfield Road Character area, the Borough Council will expect development to:</p> <p>b) Respect the informal rural character of Somerfield Road</p> <p>The character is created through the informal layout of the road, with no pavements for lengths of the road, low key buildings set well back, often behind trees, and retained historic buildings such as glass houses and a coach house topped with a weather vane next to an old brick wall which forms the rear boundary of a Victorian house in Bower Mount Road.</p> <p>Development should not erode these unique features through the loss of trees, or the generation of substantial additional traffic that would cause the erosion of the boundary features. New development should comprise unobtrusive buildings set well back from the road.</p> <p>Page 47:</p> <p>Add trees on the north west side of Queens Road between</p>

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						<p>Court Drive and Warden Close to the Bower Mount Road North Townscape Analysis Map.</p> <p>Page 76:</p> <p>Add: Large tarmaced car parks in the frontages of properties to the Negative Features Text box</p>
Mr & Mrs David and Penny Harris			Object	<p>A distinction should be made between historic (the mass of Edwardian and Victorian) properties in Bower Mount Road and developments of buildings within the last 2 decades. Section (b) refers to clues in new designs (paragraph 2) being used as reference for future development. We are concerned that some of the newer developments, e.g. Beaverbrook Mews and Oakwood Court, are OUT of character with the majority of Edwardian and Victorian housing in terms of height and density and architectural style. We are concerned that these should not be used as a model for future developments.</p> <p>The Douglas Firs should be picked out on the street plan as character trees. They run along the west side of Bower Mount Road South from the corner of Oakwood Road to Scrubs Lane and are situated in many, but not all, of the front gardens of these properties (see picture on page 37 which shows these Douglas Firs). There are also many character trees bordering the Bower Mount Road South area where it joins Oakwood Park KCC land.</p> <p>On page 39 in the first paragraph, Beaverbrook Mews is described as fitting in well in terms of bulk and height. However this is not our assessment of this recent development. From the back of the houses on the east side of Bower Mount Road the height is imposing. From the rear of houses on</p>	<p>The SPD expects development to respond sensitively to the positive features listed in the SPDs, including the character of historic buildings and states that following clues from past developments in new designs will help retain local distinctiveness and guard against development with no local references. The SPD distinguishes between positive and negative features. Far from setting a precedent for future development, isolated properties which are out of keeping with the general character of the area are noted as areas of opportunity which, over time, may provide an opportunity for more sensitive redevelopment. However, it is proposed to clarify the text further to remove any ambiguity.</p> <p>The Douglas Firs and other mature garden trees which include holly and silver birch should be added to the Bower Mount Road South Townscape Analysis Map along the west side of Bower Mount Road South</p> <p>The SPD is concerned with the character of an area from the public domain. From the sloping Cornwallis Road, the bulk, height and other</p>	<p>Amend text throughout the SPDs. Replace:</p> <p>‘Following such clues in new designs will help retain and enhance local distinctiveness...’</p> <p>with</p> <p>“Following such clues when designing new development will help retain and enhance local distinctiveness...”</p> <p>Page 41: Add Feature trees to the Bower Mount Road South Townscape Analysis Map along the west side of Bower Mount Road South.</p>

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				<p>Pembury Gardens, they are completely out of scale where the bedrooms are on the same level as the ground floor of the Beaverbrook development. Also the density of houses and miniscule garden space is far from in keeping with the surrounding area.</p>	<p>features of Beaverbrook are considered broadly acceptable in relation to the general character of the street.</p>	
Ms Lesley Cooke			Object	<p>Page 28 Re: buildings lacking height. I disagree that development should be 3 storeys and pitched roofs, etc. E.g. Kingsgate is too high and too close to the road, creating an overwhelming, monolithic structure. Also, the newer development (where there was a single bungalow in a dip, surrounded by lawn and trees) is now overdeveloped with particularly unprepossessing flats of similar height. Apart from the unappealing look of these developments, the infrastructure in terms of roads is not designed to cope with increase in rush-hour traffic the increase in residents brings.</p>	<p>Most of the grander historic buildings located along London Road are 3 storeys high - some with tall steeply pitched roofs with gable ends facing the road giving greater scale.</p> <p>Within a document which aims to identify the distinctive features that define the local character, and seeks high quality designs which place emphasis on the local context, it is important to record such features.</p> <p>The scale of buildings is appropriate for this strategic route into town, reflecting the importance of the road and the imminence of the town centre.</p> <p>In townscape terms a landmark building is appropriate at the junction which forms an important intersection of routes. Kingsgate has responded to visual clues from existing development in terms of height, steep gable ends and materials. The bulk of the building is not monolithic. The location of the flats may be outside the pilot area.</p> <p>The SPD is concerned with matters of design and other documents in the Local Development Framework will deal with the impacts of development on local infrastructure.</p>	<p>No changes required to the Assessment.</p>
Mr & Mrs Eric and			Observations	8.7 - Tree symbol should be moved to garden of no. 2 Kingsdown Close, i.e. two properties N and in W top L.H.	Agreed.	Page 56: Amend Kingsdown Close Townscape Analysis

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Marion Churchyard				corner. Contextual features - Age of buildings should read "1938 to present day".		Map to move the tree symbol to the garden of no. 2 Kingsdown Close. Page 55: Amend Contextual Features - Age of Buildings to 1930s to present day.
Mr & Mrs Nigel and Helen Davison			Support		Noted	No changes required to the Assessment.
Mr James Forster			Support	As a resident of Bower Mount Road I believe the principal features of the road have been identified, although it appears that the document attached no great significance to the mature trees in the front gardens of houses. The Townscape Analysis Map identifies feature trees at the Oakwood Court junction but other individual trees provide additional definition to the character of the area. Whilst I understand the document is concerned with development within the study area this does have the drawback of excluding guidance on the assessment of proposals immediately outside this area. Specifically any further development at Oakwood Park (which lies on the boundary of area 8.4) could potentially have a much more significant impact on the character of Bower Mount Road than development within the study area itself. In a number of character areas (e.g. areas 8.8 and 8.14) reference is made to the adverse effects of traffic. There is no such reference in relation to Bower Mount Road although there are already significant traffic movements from outside the study area either accessing the schools at Oakwood Park or running between London Road and Tonbridge Road. I believe traffic represents the greatest risk to the character of Bower Mount Road, and that it would therefore be helpful to include the effect of traffic as a consideration in the assessment of	The mature trees in the front gardens facing Bower Mount Road should be added to the Townscape Analysis Map along the west side of Bower Mount Road South. The Pilot area was selected by Members as the appropriate area for the SPD. There may be an opportunity for the adjoining area to be included in a future SPD should Members decide to extend the pilot to other parts of Maidstone. Traffic associated with school or cutting between London Road and Tonbridge Road is a local issue which could be mentioned in the negative features text box. The SPD cannot prevent conversion of single properties into flats as a matter of principle. However, any conversions should comply with the criteria in the SPD which include protecting traditional boundary treatment of walls and mature landscape and landscape features.	Page 41: Add Feature trees to the Bower Mount Road South Townscape Analysis Map along the west side of Bower Mount Road South Pages 43 and 50: For areas 8.4 Bower Mount Road South Character Area and 8.5 Bower Mount Road North Character Area, add the following additional bullet point to the Negative Features text box: Traffic associated with school or cutting between London Road and Tonbridge Road Pages 43 and 50:

Contact Full Name	Agent Name	Organisation	Nature Of Response:	Representation/Comment	Officers Response	Officers' Recommendation
				<p>future planning proposals.</p> <p>The character of other parts of the study area has been adversely affected by splitting relatively large houses into separate flats. Hopefully any proposals for this form of development in Bower Mount Road could be resisted.</p>		<p>Add an additional paragraph on Traffic:</p> <p>Traffic</p> <p>The issue of traffic, whilst affecting the character of the area, is beyond the scope of this SPD. Wider proposals will be brought forward by the relevant authorities which should aim at improving the residential amenity within the area.</p>
Miss Debbie Salmon		Kent Wildlife Trust	Support	<p>Consideration should be given to biodiversity maintenance, enhancement and permeability. The Trust acknowledges that this is an urban area and welcomes the retention of the hedges, trees and tree lines, but there are more opportunities for wildlife that retaining the hedge system enhancement of open spaces by providing natural corridors or stepping stones will flower rich verges and enhancement of green space and gardens within new development, which will attract wildlife into the urban setting providing contact with nature for the population.</p> <p>DESIGN PRINCIPLES</p> <p>Within the design principles the Trust would recommend that permeability and enhancement be mentioned as a design principle of new development.</p> <p>BIODIVERSITY AND PERMEABILITY FEATURES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>This should include :-</p>	<p>The SPD is concerned with matters of design and other documents in the Local Development Framework will deal with wider development issues such as the incorporation of SUDs and biodiversity. The Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Maidstone Borough Biodiversity Action Plan which are both in preparation for publication next year are more appropriate vehicles for the suggestions provided, including areas of opportunity which will be examined in relation to the latter document.</p>	<p>No changes required to the Assessment.</p>

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				<p>• Opportunities to increase biodiversity as laid out in The Kent Design Guide Biodiversity Technical Appendix to be found at http://www.kent.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/559D0301-726C-440E-A77E-0F989AD8368C/0/Biodiversity.pdf.</p> <p>Designs to increase biodiversity within open spaces such as playing fields, parks, school grounds, churchyards, allotments, roadside verges and country lanes</p> <p>Positive biodiversity features and habitats could be identified within the document.</p> <p>If the built environment is to be intensified it is highly likely that green spaces, gardens, waste ground and verges will be lost to wildlife. The Trust would wish to refer Maidstone Borough Council to Let Our Gardens Live whose aims the Trust fully endorse</p> <p>http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/campaigns/breathingplaces/Docs/garden-manifesto.pdf</p> <p>AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFIED FROM THE LONDON ROAD CHARACTER AREA ASSESSMENT</p> <p>8.1 Tonbridge Road and London Road South</p> <p>St Michaels Churchyard</p> <p>All Angels Churchyard</p> <p>Spiritualist Church grounds</p> <p>Methodist Church grounds</p> <p>Rocky Hill Terrace</p> <p>Community Gardens</p> <p>Cordwallis Park</p>		

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				<p>Grassed bank west London • Road</p> <p>8.3 Bower Street</p> <p>White Rock Place •</p> <p>Allotments, • Especially those disused</p> <p>8.5 Bower Mount Road South</p> <p>Road • verges along Whitchurch Close</p> <p>8.6 Somerfeild Road</p> <p>Somerfeild • Lane</p> <p>Ivy clad hospital wall •</p> <p>East Somerfeild Road •</p> <p>8.7 Buckland Hill</p> <p>The Railway Line •</p> <p>The Playing Fields •</p> <p>8.8 Brunswick House School</p> <p>Playing Fields •</p> <p>Large • areas of open space.</p> <p>This list is not exhaustive</p>		

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