

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Wednesday 7 October 2020

Time: 6.30 pm

Venue: Remote Meeting - The public proceedings of the meeting will be broadcast live and recorded for playback on the Maidstone Borough Council website.

Membership:

Councillors D Burton (Chairman), Clark, English, Garten, Mrs Grigg (Vice-Chairman), McKay, Munford, Parfitt-Reid and Spooner

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

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Issued on Tuesday 29 September 2020
Over/:

Continued

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

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INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this remote meeting, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Monday 5 October 2020). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to submit a written statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Monday 5 October 2020). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to comment on.

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To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk.

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to the **Policy and Resources Committee**, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by **three** Councillors, to the **Head of Policy, Communications and Governance** by: **6 October 2020**

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present: Councillors D Burton (Chairman), Clark, English, Garten, Mrs Grigg, McKay, Munford, Parfitt-Reid and Spooner

Also Present: Councillors Blackmore, Brindle, Mrs Gooch, Kimmance, Perry, J and T Sams

192. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

193. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Perry was present as Substitute Member for Councillor Spooner until Councillor Spooner's arrival.

194. URGENT ITEMS

There were three urgent items which included a presentation to be given by the Head of Planning and Development under Item 14 – Council Response to the Government's Proposed Planning Reforms: 'Changes to the current planning system' and 'White Paper: Planning for the Future'.

Two urgent updates had been published prior to the meeting that included an urgent update to Items 15 - Local Development Scheme 2020-2022 (September 2020 edition) and Maidstone Statement Community Involvement, in the form of updated report recommendations, and Item 16 – Report on the Local Plan Review Evidence Base in the form of an updated Air quality Assessment Technical Note and Summary Conclusions Excerpt.

195. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Blackmore was present as a Visiting Member for Item 12 – Committee Work Programme.

Councillors Brindle, Perry and Kimmance were present as Visiting Members for Item 15 – Local Development Scheme 2020-2022 (September 2020 edition) and Maidstone Statement of Community Involvement September 2020.

Councillors Mrs Gooch, J Sams and T Sams were present as Visiting Members for Item 16 – Report on the Local Plan Review Evidence Base.

196. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

197. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Members were lobbied on all items that related to the Local Plan Review.

198. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

199. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2020

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed at a later date.

200. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

201. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were nine questions from members of the public.

Question from Ms Kate Hammond to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'The recent Stantec report highlights many of the difficulties and challenges that remain unknown with regards to the 'Heathlands' proposal. With particular regards to controlling the planning process and the risks to local finances, could this committee confirm that it would not submit a scheme into the consultation process that was patently uneconomic and full of as yet unknown outcomes?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Question from Ms Gail Duff to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'The stage 2 Stantec report for the Heathland's proposal critically appraises the travel to work patterns and assumptions that have been adopted. It states in this regard that 'we have concerns with this approach and consider that it gives a misleading 'picture' of travel to work patterns in the immediate Heathlands area.' Given the complexity of the scheme, the number of unknowns and the many instances where Stantec report that they have not received any information, can this committee be certain that it has the full picture, that nothing is being held back, and it be confident that it is able to make a fully informed and balanced decision?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Question from Ms Claudine Russell to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'Having waded through the evidence pack for this meeting I would just like to highlight a glaring omission in the "factual evidence". Within the Marden garden community proposal, a WW2 gas pipeline PLUTO is mentioned. This is an old oil pipeline and was decommissioned after the war. There is however no mention anywhere of the high pressure 4ft diameter Transco gas pipeline that runs through the site, other than on page 51 of our Marden Planning Opposition Groups Technical Report from May 2019. The route is not the same and the Transco pipeline is high pressure and a storage pipeline and would seem to cut across one of the areas marked as housing. As this pipeline will have an impact on the proposed area for housing, why has this not been highlighted or even mentioned in the evidence pack by Stantec?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Question from Ms Theresa Gibson to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

The Chairman read out the question on behalf of Ms Gibson.

'I notice that on the Map of Marden in the Settlement Hierarchy Audit 2018 within your evidence pack, the housing development known as Highwood Green is again not shown. This seems to be a feature with the "factual evidence" that emanates from Maidstone Borough Council. I know that it exists as I live there, along with some nearly 300 other residents. I moved in in Aug 2016. Why does it never feature on your maps or within your numbers, as surely without it you are not looking at the true current factual picture of Marden village and its recent developments?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Question from Mr Peter Coulling to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'If the revised Housing Needs methodology comes into force before March next year, the proposed LDS will fail to forestall imposition of a much higher housing number; that is, the effort to forestall higher housing numbers will have failed. Especially as, perhaps surprisingly, it is reported in papers for this meeting that all documents required for the Evidence Base are already available (no doubt subject to refinement for as long as time permits) and while recognising attendant risks, would it not be prudent for this Committee to require Officers to be even more aggressive so as to establish an LDS with Regulation 19 consultation in March or April, rather than June?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Mr Coulling asked the following supplementary question:

'May we ask you to encourage your Committee to reflect on last week's choice of Option Two, which is the worst of all worlds, it's accelerating but not enough. Please stress to the Committee that if they want to avoid the higher number, they need a further truncation of the plan, recognising those risks and holding open the opportunity of subsequently revising the Local Development Scheme if regulations permit?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Question from Mr John Hughes to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'In view of the need for an earlier Regulation 19, but also the need for a proper long-term effective land use and transport/infrastructure strategy rather than a continuation of piecemeal allocations with mitigation, will this Committee request Political Group Leaders to agree interim decision processes, if necessary during purdah, rather than causing delay and risking the imposition of even higher housing numbers?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Mr Hughes asked the following supplementary question:

'Is it not the case, given that response, that the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee now need to ask officers, in co-operation with infrastructure providers to quickly work out practical, long-term land and infrastructure strategies, based on the extensive and recently updated Local Plan Review Evidence based for consideration by Members?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Question from Mr Peter Titchener to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'The proposed response to Government consultation to be presented at Item 14 of the agenda is not very robust and compelling when commenting on the proposed new algorithm to calculate a mandated Housing Needs figure. Given the deadline of 1st October for response, will you ask this Committee to agree that Officers should be instructed urgently to place more effort and creativity into robust answers to, at least, Questions 1 to 5 and to offer those to SPI members for urgent comment?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Mr Titchener asked the following supplementary question:

'Can we be confident that officers will push hard to get government proposals amended for the benefit of residents, including working with

KALC, Kent MP's and particularly Parish Councils, about the validity of existing and proposed neighbourhood plans, which now seem completely out of date?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Question from Ms Geraldine Brown to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'The sites submitted as a result of the Call for Sites have been segmented into Green and Red, excluding candidate Garden Communities. What is the total housing potential across all Green sites?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Ms Brown asked the following supplementary question:

'I was led to believe by officers that the figure was in the region of 11,529 and if that is the case, that would seem to be substantially more than is needed for the housing needs figure. There are still a number of sites that can be discarded for very serious reasons. Can you please tell me when those sites will be looked at again to see if they are able to be taken forward?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Question from Mr John Horne to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager read out the question on behalf of Mr Horne.

'This evening's proposal has taken six months out of the LDS timeline, but it still looks somewhat leisurely. Regulations require 6 weeks consultation, not 3. Taking steps to mitigate recognised risks, is there no other way to shorten the timeline and, in fact, shorten it even further, while being prepared, if the threatened new algorithm is not confirmed or is delayed, to once again extend the LDS timeline and even its consultation processes?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

The full responses were recorded on the webcast and were made available to view on the Maidstone Borough Council Website.

To access the webcast recording, please use the link below:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JM5iEFy_tM

202. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

203. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that the 10 November 2020 meeting of the Committee had been moved forward to the 9 November 2020, in the event that an adjourned date was necessary. An additional meeting of the Committee had been scheduled for 18 November 2020.

A Member request was made to add a Revised Integrated Transport Strategy as an item on the Work Programme.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

204. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

205. COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED PLANNING REFORMS: 'CHANGES TO THE CURRENT PLANNING SYSTEM' AND 'WHITE PAPER: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE'

The Head of Planning and Development provided a presentation to the Committee and noted that the 'Changes to the current planning system' consultation would close on 1 October 2020, whilst the 'White Paper: Planning for the Future' consultation would close on 29 October 2020. The draft responses for each consultation were shown in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report.

The 'Changes to the current planning system' consultation included four measures for implementation; a new standard methodology, that at least 25% first homes would be secured as affordable housing, an 18-month temporary increase in the small sites threshold from 10 to 40 or 50 and the extension of the current 'Permission in Principle' rule to major development. The new standard methodology would increase the government's housing target from 300k to 337k across England whilst the increase in the small sites threshold aimed to support Small-Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in recovering from the impacts of Covid-19.

With regard to the 'Planning for the Future: White Paper' consultation, the main five proposed changes were outlined.

The first was to streamline the planning process through increased democracy within the plan-making stage. This would occur through the categorisation of land into one of growth, renewal or protection areas, with allocation to growth areas having equated to an outline permission, with specific rule-based policies enforced within growth and renewal areas. General and strategic policies would be contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and digital engagement would be promoted. The duty to co-operate would be abolished, with the tests of soundness to be replaced with a single Sustainable Development Test. A time limit of 30 months would be enforced for the creation of Local Plans and the Reviews.

The second was to adopt a digital-first approach to modernise the planning process.

The third involved an increased focus on design and sustainability, of which proposals of 'beautiful design' would be fast-tracked. New energy efficiency standards would be set out within building regulations, and policies to achieve carbon neutral development would be outlined within the NPPF. The environmental assessments being conducted would be made simpler, with the responsibility to deliver within the design guidance placed with the planning authority.

The fourth proposal was that the Community Infrastructure Levy would be replaced by a Consolidated Infrastructure Levy (CIL) that included affordable housing, the removal of CIL exemptions and greater flexibility for Local Authorities in spending the monies.

The fifth would ensure that more land would be available for development, with housing requirements to be set nationally. Any Local Authority that failed to deliver the required housing figure would be faced with government penalties.

Reference was made to the financial and resources implications, increased centralisation, the lack of time for Local Authorities to respond, effect on house prices within Maidstone and the susceptibility of the amended CIL to fluctuations in house building.

The Committee expressed general support for the draft responses presented, with amendments suggested during the debate. There were concerns that the proposed increase to the small sites threshold would enable larger developers to submit more applications to negate the affordable housing contribution responsibility. Several Members expressed concern over the government's proposals, with reference made to the increased housing figure arising from the new standard methodology, the penalties for Local Authorities that failed to meet the housing requirements and loss of local control through centralisation.

During the debate, consideration was given to whether the response drafted by the Chair of the Council's Biodiversity and Climate Change Working Group (BDCCWG) should be considered by the Committee. It was felt that as the response had not yet been approved by the BDCCWG, it would not be appropriate for consideration within the draft responses shown at this time.

RESOLVED: That

1. Delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning to submit the responses as shown within Appendix 1 to the report, inclusive of the comments provided by the Committee, to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government with regard to the 'Changes to the current planning system consultation (2020)'; and

2. The draft responses to the 'White Paper: Planning for the Future' as shown within Appendix 2 to the report, be amended by the Head of Planning with consideration given to the Committee's comments, after which the responses would be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee, be agreed.

Note: During this item the Committee adjourned for a period of 13 minutes due to technical difficulties, from 7.57 p.m. to 8.10 p.m.

206. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2020-2022 (SEPTEMBER 2020 EDITION) AND MAIDSTONE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SEPTEMBER 2020

Prior to the introduction of the report Ms Claudine Russell addressed the Committee.

The Planning Policy Officer introduced the report and referenced the urgent update that had been published in relation to the item. The report resulted from the Committee's decision on the 8 September 2020 to update the Local Development Scheme (LDS) to include a streamlined Regulation 18b consultation to take place in December 2020 and a Regulation 19 consultation to take place no later than June 2021. The updated LDS was shown in Appendix 1 of the report. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) had to be updated to allow a reduced Regulation 18b consultation period and was shown in Appendix 2 of the report.

The Interim Local Plan Review Director reconfirmed that there was no definitive date for the new standard methodology's implementation and referenced the four options presented to Members at the previous meeting of the Committee.

The Committee discussed the option previously chosen with several Members having expressed a preference to move straight to Regulation 19. The risk and impact of the Local Plan being deemed unsound by the Inspector during the submission process was mentioned, with reference made to several other Local Authorities that had experienced failure during their Local Plan Review process. The Committee showed support for a consultation period longer than 3 weeks if possible.

RESOLVED: That

1. Full Council be recommended to approve the Local Development Scheme 2020-2022 (September 2020 edition);
2. Full Council be recommended to approve the Maidstone Statement of Community Involvement (September 2020);
 - a. The Statement of Community Involvement Covid-19 Temporary Addendum (May 2020) adopted by the Committee on 9 June 2020 forms an Addendum to the Statement of Community Involvement (September 2020), be agreed;

- b. The Head of Planning and Development be granted delegated powers to reverse the changes within the Maidstone Statement of Community Involvement Covid-19 Temporary Addendum (May 2020) adopted by the Committee on 9 June 2020 as soon as Covid-19 restrictions allow, and whilst this Addendum remains in place, the Council will endeavour to provide paper copies of consultation documents referred to in the Statement of Community Involvement (September 2020) to any resident when requested.
3. The Head of Planning and Development be given delegated powers to make minor editorial and presentational adjustments to the Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement prior to publication; and
4. As further details of the proposed changes to the planning system emerge, these will be reported to the Committee with any options/recommendations.

Councillor Garten requested that his vote against the first resolution be noted.

207. REPORT ON THE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW EVIDENCE BASE

Prior to the introduction of the report, Ms Claudine Russell addressed the Committee. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager then read a statement on behalf of Ms Caroline Highwood.

The Principal Planning Officer introduced the report and drew the published urgent update and appendices to the Committees attention.

The Committee acknowledged that the report was for noting, but emphasised that they would contact officers with questions on the evidence base to aid their understanding now that the information had been published.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted.

208. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. – 9.59 p.m.

	Committee	Month	Origin	CLT to clear	Lead	Report Author
Local Plan Review Regulation 18 - Preferred Approaches Public Consultation Part 1	SPI	09-Nov-20	Local Plan Review Process	?	Phil Coyne	Mark Egerton
Otham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16	SPI	09-Nov-20	Officer Update		Mark Egerton	Anna Ironmonger
Objections to Traffic Regulation Orders	SPI	18-Nov-20	Officer Update		Jeff Kitson	Charlie Reynolds
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021/22-2025/26	SPI	18-Nov-20	Governance	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Q2 Budget and Performance Monitoring 2020/21	SPI	18-Nov-20	Officer Update	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Infrastructure Funding Statement Report	SPI	08-Dec-20	Officer Update		Rob Jarman	Rob Jarman
Authority Monitoring Report	SPI	08-Dec-20	Local Plan Process	?	Mark Egerton	Anna Ironmonger
Medium Term Financial Strategy & Budget Proposals 2021/22	SPI	12-Jan-21	Governance	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Local Plan Review Regulation 18 - Preferred Approaches Public Consultation Part 2	SPI	09-Feb-21	Local Plan Review Process	?	Phil Coyne	Mark Egerton
Q3 Budget and Performance Monitoring 2020/21	SPI	09-Feb-21	Officer Update	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Reference from Council - Anti-Idling Campaign Motion	SPI	TBC	Council		TBC	TBC
Revised Integrated Transport Strategy	SPI	TBC	Cllr Request		TBC	TBC
Future Funding Opportunities for the Conservation Area Work Programme	SPI	TBC	Cllr Request		TBC	TBC
Ensuring Conditions are Incorporated in Delegated Decisions	SPI	TBC	Cllr Request	?	Rob Jarman	Rob Jarman
Update concerning works on Junction 3 of the M2	SPI	TBC	Cllr Request	?	TBC	TBC
Review of Building Control	SPI	TBC		?	Rob Jarman	TBC
KCC 20mph Speed Limit Pilot Scheme - Hale Road	SPI	TBC	Cllr Request	?	TBC	TBC

**Strategic Planning and
Infrastructure Committee**

7 October 2020

Outside Body Report

Outside Body	Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee
Councillor(s) represented on the Outside Body	Patrik Garten
Report Author	Patrik Garten & Nick Johansen (AONB Unit)
Date of Outside Body Meeting Attended	Current Update via email

Purpose of the External Board/Outside Body:

Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)

The Kent Downs relies on many stakeholders who have a role in managing the landscape, supporting local business and communities and enabling quiet recreation. The Joint Advisory Committee plays a pivotal role in helping realise the strategic vision for the Kent Downs AONB and oversee the Management Plan.

It's purpose is to provide advice to its members with statutory responsibilities for the effective management of the Kent Downs AONB. An Executive of representatives from the JAC, with some outside advisors, advises the work of the Kent Downs AONB Unit.

The Kent Downs AONB Unit is employed by Kent County Council and works on behalf of the JAC to carry out the preparation and review of the Management Plan, to advocate its policies and work in partnership to deliver a range of actions described in the Action Plan.

Funding partners & Members

Defra, Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, Gravesham Borough Council, London Borough of Bromley, Medway Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Swale Borough Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Country Land and Business Association, Environment Agency, Kent Association of Local Councils, Action with Communities in Rural Kent, National Farmers Union, English Heritage

AONB Management Plan Consultation, Preliminary Findings.

140 responses were received in total, which is good.

Headlines include:

- 92% strongly agree or tend to agree with the vision for the Kent Downs AONB in 2030
- 96% strongly agree or tend to agree that the Management Plan identifies what makes the area distinctive and special
- 85% strongly agree or tend to agree that the key social and economic components have been identified

The AONB Unit have started work on the consultation report and on re-drafting the plan. There will be a second draft plan, shared only with the JAC for final comments, this draft will be discussed at a JAC meeting in November. (18th, 2.00pm)

There is an important rider to this however: we are expecting that the Government will make its formal response to the Landscape Review (Glover Review) by the end of the calendar year. It makes little sense to finalise the Management Plan and start the adoption process in advance of any announcement and so we anticipate that the draft plan will have one last review in the light of the Government's announcements.

Just for information, there is expected to be a 'direction of travel' announcement for the Landscape Review in a Prime Ministerial speech on the environment expected on the anniversary of the publication of the Review (21st September).

AONB offer to the Green Recovery.

Over the summer the AONB Unit has been involved in a lot of work going on to try to support a Green Recovery both in Kent and nationally. In Kent the Recovery Plan specifically references a green recovery and the AONB Unit has some specific actions in the action plan.

At the National level, a document was prepared by their National Association and recently sent to Defra. The Kent Downs AONB Unit was closely involved in creating the content of this document during a frenetic period over the summer with a small group of other AONB Lead

The Association did a great job pulling all of the work into one place and I hope that it is influential in the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

Highlights from last year's delivery:

Each year the AONB Unit has to make a return to DEFRA. Here are some highlights from it; in 2019/20:

The AONB Unit

- conserved or enhanced 573 Ha of land for nature and 90 Ha of the setting of heritage sites;

- enhanced the condition or setting of 7 heritage sites
- engaged with over 1000 people including over 350 young people and over 350 volunteers
- appraised or were involved with 100 planning cases including several major infrastructure schemes
- had a turn-over of over £1.3m, mostly external funding.

Agenda Item 14

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

7 OCTOBER 2020

REFERENCE FROM THE BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

1. 'PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE' WHITE PAPER (2020)

- 1.1 On 24 September 2020 the Biodiversity and Climate Change Working Group considered the consultation to the Planning for the Future White Paper.
- 1.2 The Working Group's comments and response are attached at Appendix 1 for the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee to consider as part of their response to the White Paper.

2. RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Committee consider the consultation response from the working group at Appendix 1; and
2. That the Committee take the matters raised into account alongside consideration of their formal response on behalf of the Council.

'Planning for the Future' White Paper (2020)

1. Streamlining the Planning Process

The proposed three new Local Plan land designations (i.e. Growth, Renewal and Protected), should consider safeguards to ensure the following resilience and sustainability principles:

- High quality, resilient and 'future-proofed' communities should integrate new and enhanced green spaces (including parks, riparian and transport green corridors, urban woodland, nature reserves, allotments and community orchards). It will therefore be important within the proposed 'Growth' areas to ensure that the requisite protection and policy mechanisms to bring forward new urban green space are central to the proposed planning reforms. Recent experience during the COVID-19 pandemic has underlined the value to individuals and communities of access to high quality local semi-natural greenspace and the negative impacts and harm arising from unsustainable levels of footfall where provision was below that required by local communities. Indeed, our Victorian and Edwardian forebears delivered a magnificent legacy of parks, squares and tree-lined streets at a time when the population was much lower than it is today. Provision of sufficient new accessible natural greenspace is therefore a priority going forwards and must not be jeopardised by potential 'urban cramming', especially within the proposed 'Growth' and 'Renewal' zones.
- As regards engagement with communities and stakeholders, there is currently a perception of mistrust in the planning system, which deters many from becoming involved because of a fatalistic resignation and belief that such engagement is ultimately futile. To genuinely engage communities and stakeholders, the new planning system will need to provide greater subsidiarity in decision making to enable genuine local democratic control of such placemaking. Local community cohesion and trust in government is at stake in relation to the proposed planning reforms and a system which delivers for the local community, the UK and the planet, not just perceived developer and landowner interests, should be a central aspiration of any planning reforms.
- The proposed 'Sustainable Development Test' will need to be informed by a prescriptive 'check list' of planning parameters to ensure good design, environmental sustainability, net-gain for biodiversity, affordability and viability.
- Standardised digital mapping for local plans must incorporate layers providing the latest hazard, risk and ecosystem services opportunity mapping to inform planning policy and management decision making. For example, surface-water, fluvial and coastal flood plain, the routes of

Major Accident Hazard Pipelines and other utility networks, Air Quality Management Areas, utilities networks resilient to severe weather impacts, reservoir inundation zones, offsite Detailed Emergency Planning Zones for industrial and defence facilities, and land with opportunity to create urban and suburban wetlands and woodlands (to provide ecosystem services, enhance biodiversity and air quality and provide flood amelioration benefits).

- Development of a comprehensive 'Resources and Skills Strategy' must encompass increased awareness and knowledge in fields of resilience, environmental sustainability (such as energy/water efficiency and renewable energy generation) and protection and enhancement of biodiversity in landscape and built development design. Resilience and Emergency Planning considerations should be covered by the statutory consultee role to ensure 'future-proofed' resilient communities and landscapes.
- The proposed land zoning approach must address appropriate protections for urban brownfield sites which support a rich biodiversity. A reliance upon SSSI and SACs, which have a strong historic and rural emphasis, is insufficient to protect biodiverse brownfield and other urban wildlife sites. A new designation of 'urban wildlife site' and the research required to identify such exceptional urban biodiversity hot spots should be introduced.

2. Moving from a process based on documents to a process driven by data

Digital tools should include the latest mapping as relates to a standardised approach to identification of local risks and vulnerabilities including flooding, reservoir inundation, Major Accident Hazard Pipelines and industrial (COMAH / REPPiR) offsite impacts. Thus ensuring informed 'level playing field' decision making in relation to where development is best located and mitigation measures (such as ensuring protection and re-naturalisation of floodplains and river catchments). Such an approach could significantly reduce risk to people, the environment and the economy and repay the investment many times over. The current variations in mapping and associated emergency planning around such risks is bad for people and business. A 'levelling-up' of resilience and emergency planning to the standards achieved in exemplar Local Authorities and Resilience Forums is required.

Habitat and biodiversity opportunity mapping data should also inform planning decisions going forward and be integrated into spatial mapping. These will align with resilient landscape mapping and deliver optimal planning decisions for all stakeholders and the environment.

As climate change and population growth intensifies it is vital that planning decisions acknowledge resilience principles and ensure new communities design out risk through their siting, layout and construction. Better mapping,

informing better design and layout is central to realising the aspiration of resilient communities and landscapes.

3. Bringing a new focus on design and sustainability

It is clear that if net-zero is to be attained by 2050 planning permissions granted today will need to ensure optimal energy efficiency, incorporation of renewable energy generation and support delivery of new and enhanced wetlands and woodlands. Retro-fitting of such innovations will be technically difficult and far more expensive than early implementation of low carbon technology and landscaping enabling sequestration of greenhouse gases. Design codes and planning guidance must therefore be more ambitious and scientifically informed and sustainable design levelled-up and appropriately monitored to ensure that it is real and not a paper exercise. A legacy of polluting development will make attaining net-zero impossible.

In terms of the future of the planet and humanity stemming the worsening ecological crisis is as important as ensuring net-zero. Therefore, the planning system must make sure new development optimises opportunities for biodiversity must be central to any new planning system. Despite references within the MPPF and the MPPG many planning applications do not seek to integrate wildlife habitats into either built development or landscaping -the new system must deliver for wildlife.

Severe weather, in terms of increased storminess, flooding and drought will inevitably intensify in coming decades and it is therefore vital that planning design codes and guidance ensure resilient construction materials and landscaping in all development. This requirement to “harden” development against severe weather impacts especially applies to utilities, as loss of power or water can have a profound negative impact upon local communities and will become an increasing risk as climate change intensifies.

Good design must also apply to the landscape as there is currently inadequate access to semi-natural green space in many urban and rural areas, with insufficient semi-natural land to mitigate and ameliorate flooding and other severe weather impacts. If we build in space for water and nature we can deliver more resilient, better designed and desirable communities which are better climate-proofed and support ecological recovery.

4. Improving infrastructure delivery / reform of developer contributions

Any revised planning approach should emphasis the requirement for all new infrastructure to be resilient to severe weather and other challenges. Developer contributions must therefore facilitate both planning and physical works to deliver greater community and landscape resilience. This could include providing funding for flood defences, upland re-forestation and purchase and re-naturalisation of floodplains and catchments. The additional burden upon resilience and emergency planning, response and recovery must be

acknowledged, with developer contributions supporting the additional contingency planning burden arising from development within potentially vulnerable locations and an increasing local population.

A re-examination is also appropriate of the proposed trigger threshold for Infrastructure contributions at 40 units. Local evidence suggests that this would incentivise applications of 39 units (to avoid contributions and maximise profit) and therefore making coherent planning and infrastructure delivery problematic.

Further, the White Paper does not systematically address the issue of developers banking planning applications. A clearer regime where permissions lapse and full applications are required (rather than rubber stamp renewals) may be appropriate.

5. Ensuring more land is available for homes and development

The emphasis upon more development being delivered in growth hot spots is unsustainable and planning tools should seek a more balanced spatial distribution of development. There is currently very significant and unsustainable housing demand pressure upon areas around London and the wider South East. For example, research by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology evidenced more urbanisation in Kent than any other county in the UK between 1990 – 2015, such a 'predict and provide' demand-led approach is unsustainable in terms of environmental sustainability, local quality of life, social cohesion and biodiversity. A nationwide burden sharing approach in terms of new development and growth should be central to these planning reforms. This more equitable growth burden sharing approach should be supported by developer investment to provide the ICT, public transport and other infrastructure required to move away from the current South East focused housing demand.

Any planning changes to promote competition amongst developers must ensure a levelling-up rather than any reductions in design quality, environmental sustainability or open space provision.

Larger developments currently deliver optimal associated infrastructure yield and allow for the economies of scale required to support investment in areas such as green technologies and new open space. Any atomisation of the planning landscape must therefore ensure that infrastructure and design quality is not weakened.

6. Increasing tree cover

The working group have consistently supported increasing tree cover in the borough. In their Emergency Tree Plan the Woodland Trust sets out a vision for a major increase in tree cover to the 19%. This is also recommended by the national Committee on Climate Change.

<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/publications/2020/01/emergency-tree-plan/>

7. Consider the Wildlife Trusts recommendation of creating new designation – Wildbelt

The working group supports the Wildlife Trusts call on the government to ensure the planning system helps address the ecological and climate crises by protecting new land for nature's recovery and creating a new designation called Wildbelt. <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/news/governments-planning-reforms-must-address-nature-and-climate-crisis>

STRATEGIC PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

7 OCTOBER 2020

Upper Stone Street Air Quality Update

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee
Lead Head of Service	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration & Place
Lead Officer and Report Author	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration & Place
Classification	Public
Wards affected	High Street

Executive Summary

In July 2019, this Committee considered a feasibility study into the creation of a Low Emission Zone in Upper Stone Street. That report provided three different strategies that could be pursued to bring about air quality locations. This committee decided to pursue a Red Route in the locality, and this report provides an update in respect of achieving this ambition.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That this Committee refer the following recommendations for implementation to the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board on 14th October 2020:

1. That Controls to restrict waiting, loading, and unloading in Upper Stone Street be extended by increasing the current restricted period to apply on all days Monday to Sunday Double Yellow Lines 'no waiting at any time'. The waiting restrictions should be supported by a loading restriction to protect the peak traffic periods on all days from 7am to 8pm. The impact should then be monitored for a period of 12-months post implementation and the findings presented to the JTB, and that if unsuccessful, the JTB then be asked to pursue the Red Route.
2. Contraventions can be monitored more closely through the KCC traffic control room, who will install an additional camera/s and will provide direct and real-time communication to the MBC parking enforcement agent. Enforcement officers will then be deployed rapidly to deal with any contravention observed through the issue of Penalty Charge Notices.

3. Incorporate some of the RSK recommendations for green infrastructure enhancements into a new scheme agreed with KCC involving the removal of one existing tree, and the planting of six new upright growing trees of native species, which are known to be especially beneficial for air quality
4. Explore one-way designations for some side streets to Upper Stone Street.

Timetable	
<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee	7 October 2020
Maidstone Joint Transportation Board	14 October 2020

Upper Stone Street Air Quality Update

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>We expect the recommendations will contribute to the Council achieving the Safe, Clean and Green objective.</p>	Director of Regeneration & Place
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations support the achievement(s) of the "Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability" cross cutting objectives by attempting to improve air quality in Upper Stone Street.</p>	Director of Regeneration & Place
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to paragraph of the report. 	Director of Regeneration & Place
Financial	<p>The operational measures proposed in the recommendations are all within already approved budgetary headings and can be delivered within existing budgets. KCC has indicated that it has provision within its existing budgets to cover the cost of green infrastructure improvements as described in paragraphs 2.24 to 2.32</p>	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. 	Director of Regeneration & Place
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statutory highways responsibility, including the making of Traffic Regulation Orders lies with the County Council. The Borough Council retains some enforcement powers under Traffic Management Act 2004. It will therefore require cooperation between the County and Borough Councils to implement the recommendations in the report. Any Traffic Regulation Order pursued will need to follow the statutory requirements and provisions in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 as set out in the report. 	Cheryl parks, Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
Privacy and Data Protection	Accepting the recommendations will not increase the volume of personal data held by the Council.	Policy and Information Manager
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise the recommendations may have varying impacts on different communities within the specified Maidstone areas. It is therefore recommended that equalities is considered as part of any consultation undertaken. 	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that the recommendations in this report may have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals however it is recognised that additional action will be required to further reduce the negative individual and population health impacts on residents to mitigate and reduce the high air pollution levels in Upper Stone Street. 	[Public Health Officer]
Crime and Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendation will not have an effect impact on Crime and Disorder. 	[Head of Service or Manager]
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises for any green infrastructure changes and additions that it may make 	[Head of Service & Section 151 Officer]

	in the locality. We will complete those exercises in line with financial procedure rules.	
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The highest air pollution levels in Maidstone are to be found in Upper Stone Street (USS). These high pollution levels are caused by a number of different factors; primarily, the sheer volume of traffic, but also the fact that it is a one way street with two lanes of traffic, both going uphill, and conditions are often congested. Vehicle engines are having to work harder because of the uphill gradient, and tall buildings either side of a relatively narrow street lead to the so called 'street canyon' effect whereby pollution is less able to disperse.
- 2.2 There is a long-term downward trend in pollution levels however, both in USS and in Maidstone more generally, but nitrogen dioxide levels in USS remain stubbornly above the annual mean objective despite the downward trend. The previously estimated year of compliance remains unchanged at 2028.
- 2.3 The table below shows nitrogen dioxide data from all the monitoring sites in Upper Stone Street for both 2018 and 2019. The site Maid 124 is located at the back of the site that is currently operating as a car wash, so it does not relate directly to road traffic. The sites 128.1, 128.2, and 128.3 are triplicate tubes co-located with the automatic monitoring station, which is best practice. The abbreviation (a) means annualised result being DEFRA's approved way of estimating the annual mean nitrogen dioxide level from an incomplete year's data, which takes account of natural seasonal variations in NO₂ levels. The automatic monitoring station was commissioned in May of 2018.
- 2.4 Overall, the results show that in 2019, NO₂ levels decreased in 6 of the 7 monitoring locations in Upper Stone Street. The levels in 2019 range from 55.5 µgm⁻³ to 75.2 µgm⁻³ depending on location, against a compliance target of 40 µgm⁻³.

Site Number	Location	NO ₂ level µgm ⁻³ (2018)	NO ₂ level µgm ⁻³ (2019)
Maid 81	The Pilot pub, Maidstone, Kent	67.3	60.2
Maid 96	Lamppost KUBT 512 in bracket for "One Way" sign outside Lashings Sports Club	77.2	75.2
Maid 122	Loading sign to the right of the front of Papermakers PH	79.2	73.4
Maid 123	Loading sign on opposite side of Upper Stone St to site Maid 122	53.5	55.5
Maid 124	Fence pole at back of site for proposed development at 102 Upper Stone St (car wash site)	19.9	19.2

Maid 128.1	Air intake of automatic monitoring station	67.7 (a)	61.3
Maid 128.2	Air intake of automatic monitoring station	67.3 (a)	61.7
Maid 128.3	Air intake of automatic monitoring station	68.1 (a)	62.5
Automatic Monitoring Station	Grass verge outside former Jubilee Church building	70 (a)	68

2.5 To recap, in 2019, MBC engaged a consultant to review possible measures which could be introduced to improve air quality in USS. A long list of potential measures was produced, in part as the result of a stakeholder workshop, and three of these measures were then selected for more detailed examination, including air quality modelling. The three measures selected were:

- Scenario 1 – The introduction of a Red Route
- Scenario 2 – Cleaner and more efficient vehicle usage
- Scenario 3 – Category B Clean Air Zone

2.6 It was understood that none of these measures could be introduced without the support of Kent County Council (KCC). The results of the modelling indicated that with no additional intervention, air quality in USS would comply with all relevant objectives by 2028. None of the three interventions examined would have brought forward compliance by more than about one year.

2.7 In July 2019, members of this committee were asked which, if any, of these 3 measures they wished MBC officers to explore further with KCC. Members opted for the Red Route, but also asked officers to explore the potential benefits which could be derived from green planting (green infrastructure) in USS.

2.8 At the beginning of 2020, a working group was formed, comprising officers from both Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) and KCC. The group has met four times and the recommendations made in this report were developed by this group.

2.9 Furthermore, the officer group also explored whether there is a high level of traffic incidents in the locality that might be worsening the problem by increasing the stop / start of traffic. KCC provided the following incident log for USS for the 5-year period to March 2019.

Type of incident	No. of incidents, 5 years to 16th March 2020	Share of incidents	Incidents per week
Congestion	751	73.3%	2.89
Obstruction or Lane Closure	192	18.7%	0.74
Broken down vehicle	34	3.3%	0.13
Traffic signal fault	13	1.3%	0.05
Road safety campaign	7	0.7%	0.03
Broken down heavy lorry	6	0.6%	0.02
Flood	6	0.6%	0.02
Broken down bus	5	0.5%	0.02
Road closure	4	0.4%	0.02
Fire	3	0.3%	0.01
Other	2	0.2%	0.01
Bust water main	1	0.1%	0.00
Gas works	1	0.1%	0.00
	1025	100%	3.94

- 2.10 The table shows that there are on average 4 traffic incidents per week in USS, and the second most common cause is that of a lane obstruction / or closure. I.e. it could be concluded that greater stopping (parking / loading) restrictions in the form of a Red Route or similar could reduce the number of incidents.
- 2.11 KCC also undertook to produce an ongoing incident log for the current financial year, but this has been disrupted by the pandemic. Furthermore, once more normal business resumes, KCC have committed to installing a further traffic monitoring camera/s in the locality and provide real time incident alerts from their traffic control room to the MBC parking enforcement team, so as to enable them to attend incidents as speedily as possible.
- 2.12 As part of broader discussions with KCC, the possibility of an engagement programme with haulage companies was mooted, in terms of encouraging them to restrict their usage of the USS at certain times, particularly in terms of deliveries, but on balance it was considered that the array of such companies would be such that this would be unlikely to deliver an impact. However, KCC Freight Team officers will take forward discussions of this ilk

with some of the larger businesses based in the USS locality, in terms of their arrangements around deliveries.

- 2.13 **The creation of a Red Route at USS.** The opinion of KCC was sought on this matter, together with legal advice from Mid Kent Legal Services (MLS), and has informed the information provided below.
- 2.14 The term Red Route is a formal term used to define a specific type of statutory Clearway where the restrictions apply also to the verge and footway, not just to the main carriageway. The term Red Route is sometimes used to describe a road with a higher than average number of accident incidents but should not be confused with statutory Red Routes as described above.
- 2.15 Legislation sets out the signing and road marking requirements for Red Routes under The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD) and under Chapter 3 of the Traffic Signs Manual. Markings on the highway may only be placed as defined by the Traffic Regulation Order and in accordance with the TSRGD regulations. Traffic Regulation Orders can be imposed by virtue of the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and can be introduced to deal with issues relating to air quality. (*s1(1) Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and s87(1) Environment Act 1995*)
- 2.16 The Mayor of London (and TFL) have separate statutory powers not afforded to all local highway authorities; equally Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) provisions vary dependent on whether the authority is within or outside London.
- 2.17 Red Routes were first introduced on London highways in 1991 and have since been introduced in Metropolitan and Unitary Authorities outside London such as Nottingham and Coventry. It is probable that these schemes required DfT approval.
- 2.18 There do not appear to be any designated Red Routes in the county of Kent currently, although there are examples of Clearways, including in the Maidstone district.
- 2.19 The Agency Agreement and Operational Protocol sets out the Traffic Order Regulation (TRO) responsibilities for both District and County activity. Safety related TROs and the responsibility to maintain moving traffic is a County responsibility. District authorities are unable to make TROs in relation to Clearways or Red Routes.
- 2.20 In some district authorities, enforcement of parking and waiting restrictions is de-criminalised following the Traffic Management Act 2004 and local authority Civil Enforcement Officers have powers to issue penalty charge notices. This enforcement is undertaken in Maidstone by MBC's own Parking Team and Civil Enforcement Officers. Such enforcement provisions deal with the enforcement of TROs that have been imposed by the Highway Authority (KCC) to manage highway safety and traffic flow.
- 2.21 So, whilst KCC would appear able to create a Red Route, it would require Department for Transport (DfT) approval, but KCC could consider the

making of an Experimental TRO under powers derived from the same legislation as a standard TRO (RTRA 1984). KCC as the Highway Authority would need to make the order, however the experimental nature means that the order must cease to have effect after a maximum of 18 months. The imposition of an Experimental TRO allows for a period of data collection and monitoring of the effects of the restrictions, and to allow direct comparisons to be made with equivalent data sets collected before such an order was in place. At the end of the period of the Experimental TRO the Highway Authority must consider whether to continue the restrictions on a permanent basis by going through the relevant statutory procedures, or to end the restrictions. I.e. an Experimental TRO might be a useful option to allow the gathering of sufficient evidence for consideration of the future imposition of a permanent TRO, and in the instance that this was determined at a public inquiry, could prove persuasive to the determining inspector.

- 2.22 A Red Route TRO through either means (Experimental or not) would be a matter for KCC. However, a significant investment would be required by KCC for enforcement of a Red Route through approved devices / CCTV cameras / manpower. KCC would need to consider whether these costs could be recovered through penalty income given the relatively low level of incident rate recorded. I.e. due to the nature of the Red Route Clearway restrictions they are usually enforced using approved devices (cameras) which are expensive to operate effectively and so Red Route schemes would normally be used across a number of key locations within a city or County for greater efficiency.
- 2.23 Given the above, a Red Route may not necessarily be the most appropriate approach at the present time, particularly from a KCC perspective. Therefore, the **Available Options** section of this report explores whether the perceived benefits of a Red Route could be achieved through a different set of measures, inasmuch KCC strengthening the existing TRO's and the councils collaborating in terms of enforcement. For the avoidance of doubt, most of USS is currently single yellow line with a loading restriction.
- 2.24 **Green Infrastructure enhancements.** In Summer 2020, MBC engaged a specialist consultant (RSK) to consider the potential for a 'green infrastructure' scheme to reduce NO₂ levels in Upper Stone Street (see Appendix A). The consultant's report acknowledges that there is very limited space and scope for much green planting. The main area which could be utilised is the KCC owned grass verge outside the CareCo Mobility Showroom, on which the automatic air quality monitoring station is sited.
- 2.25 It is well known that some species of trees have a propensity to improve air pollution, whereas other species can worsen it. But it is also well recognised that trees can also worsen air pollution by virtue of their physical size and shape acting as a barrier to the dispersion of pollutants.
- 2.26 The consultant's report made three main recommendations:-

- That the three cherry trees currently present on the grass verge are worsening pollution and should be removed or relocated. The rationale for this is that NO₂ levels are known to be lower in summer months than in winter months, but this seasonal reduction in levels is less evident in the monitoring site immediately opposite the trees. This also happens to be the site which records the highest NO₂ levels in the County. The consultant argues that the normal seasonal reduction is offset by the tree canopy being much thicker and more extensive in the summer months when the trees are in full leaf. This exacerbates the street canyon and prevents pollution from dispersing.
 - That a low hedge of Leyland Cypress or Lawson Cypress is planted along the front of the grass verge. Leyland Cypress is identified as one of the species which has a capacity to reduce air pollution, however, we note that it is a fast growing species, so the hedge would require regular maintenance in order to keep the height at an optimum level. Officers will also explore similar opportunities with other private sector landowners in the locality to include Halfords.
 - The consultant also recommends that climbing plants such as ivy could be planted to create a green wall on the façade of the building used by Lashings Bar & Grill, if possible. Lashings is a private establishment so this would be dependent on the agreement of the proprietor and so is outside of the control of MBC. Officers will also explore similar opportunities with other private sector landowners in the locality to include Halfords.
- 2.27 The planting scheme for the grass verge has been discussed with KCC, and as a result of these discussions a modified scheme has been developed which offers a number of benefits over the scheme originally proposed by RSK.
- 2.28 The concern about the cherry trees preventing the dispersion of pollution will be addressed by the removal of the middle tree, leaving a wide gap between the two outer trees. The middle tree will be replaced with one of a different species which will be an upright growing species with no spreading canopy, so that the gap between the trees will be preserved. In addition, the replacement tree will be set further back from the road.
- 2.29 Five more trees will be planted on the grass verge, rather than the hedge recommended by RSK. This will make a total of six new trees, which will be two silver birch, two Scots pine and 2 field maple. These are all native species, and will be upright growing varieties which will not require maintenance to preserve the gaps between them. This is in contrast to the hedge proposed by RSK, which would be of a fast growing species requiring considerable maintenance.
- 2.30 Restricting the total number of new trees to six will allow the trees to be well spaced with good air circulation around them. Well spaced trees have been shown to increase air turbulence at roadsides which in itself encourages dispersion of pollution.

- 2.31 The new tree species are all contained in a list described by RSK as category one trees, i.e., trees which have the greatest capacity to improve air quality, and the choice of upright growing varieties means that there won't be large tree canopies which can potentially trap pollution.
- 2.32 The new trees will be planted prior to the removal of the middle cherry tree.
- 2.33 KCC already has provision within existing budgets to fund this scheme.
- 2.34 MBC officers will continue to explore with KCC, any opportunities for green planting on private land in Upper Stone Street.
- 2.35 **Other potential mitigations.** KCC could be encouraged to commission specialist survey data to assess the impact of vehicles slowing because of turns off and on to USS to and from its side streets. This data could facilitate the exploration of making some of the side streets one-way as it is likely these adjoining roads impact on traffic movements and slow the speed of vehicles. I.e. causing the rippling effect of start stop traffic as seen on some motorways prior to the introduction of smart speed limits, so creating a smooth traffic flow may stabilise traffic speed, improve congestion and positively impact on air quality.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 In terms of the Red Route element, or alternatives, there are four options that can be considered as potential ways forward (N.B. the first option is what is currently in place):

Restriction	Days / Times	Extent of restriction	Method of enforcement	Dispensations	Boarding and alighting allowed	Penalty Charge
(Existing) (1) Single Yellow Line with Loading Restriction	No waiting Monday to Saturday 8am to 6.30pm No loading/unloading Monday to Saturday 8am to 6.30pm	Both sides of the road / Carriageway and Footway to the nearest property boundary	Civil Parking Enforcement Civil Enforcement Officers	None	Yes	£70 (code 02)
(2) Double Yellow Line with Loading Restriction	No waiting Monday to Sunday At all times Restricted loading/unloading Time set to manage peak demand (example 7am to 8pm)	Both sides of the road / Carriageway and Footway to the nearest property boundary	Civil Parking Enforcement Civil Enforcement Officers	None Local businesses loading/unloading outside peak times	Yes	£70 (code 02)
(3) Urban Clearway	No stopping Monday to Sunday At all times	Carriageway	Civil Parking Enforcement	Yes. Local businesses loading/unloadi	Yes	£70 (code 46)

			Approved device (camera)	ng outside peak times		
(4) Red Route (may require DfT approval)	No stopping Monday to Sunday At all times	Both sides of the road / Carriageway and Footway to the nearest property boundary	Civil Parking Enforcement Approved device (camera)	Yes. Local businesses loading/unloading outside peak times	Taxi's and Blue Badge Holders only	£70 (code 46)

3.2 In addition, one of the options above could be selected together with either one or both of the following:

- 3.3 (5) Implement the recommendations for green infrastructure enhancements agreed with KCC including removal of one cherry tree and replacement with six upright growing trees of native species on the grass verge
- 3.4 (6) Explore one-way designations for some side streets to USS.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 This Committee is recommended to refer the following recommendations for implementation to the MBC / KCC Joint Transportation Board on 14th October 2020:
- 4.2 That Controls to restrict waiting, loading, and unloading in Upper Stone Street be extended by increasing the current restricted period to apply on all days Monday to Sunday Double Yellow Lines 'no waiting at any time'. The waiting restrictions should be supported by a loading restriction to protect the peak traffic periods on all days from 7am to 8pm. The impact should then be monitored for a period of 12-months post implementation and the findings presented to the JTB, and that if unsuccessful, the JTB then be asked to pursue the Red Route.
- 4.3 Contraventions can be monitored more closely through the KCC traffic control room, who will install an additional camera/s and will provide direct and real-time communication to the MBC parking enforcement agent. Enforcement officers will then be deployed rapidly to deal with any contravention observed through the issue of Penalty Charge Notices.
- 4.4 Implement the recommendations for green infrastructure enhancements agreed with KCC including removal of one cherry tree and replacement with six upright growing trees of native species on the grass verge.
- 4.5 Explore one-way designations for some side streets to Upper Stone Street.
- 4.6 To summarise, at this stage it is felt that the perceived benefits of a Red Route could be achieved through the more straightforward means (of double yellow lines), which would be faster and more cost efficient too.

5. RISK

- 5.1 It is possible that the recommended approach of introducing double yellow lines will be an insufficient deterrent. However, if this is found to be the case after a 12-month observation period, the Red Route could then be implemented by way of an Experimental TRO.
- 5.2 It is possible that a more stringent regime will be unpopular with businesses in the locality, but they will be consulted on any proposed changes.
- 5.3 It is possible that changes will be unpopular with local residents too, but again, they will be consulted before any changes are made, and such views will need to be weighed against the ambition to accelerate air quality improvements in the locality.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 As per the recommendations, KCC would be expected to undertake a consultation exercise for residents and businesses prior to the implementation of any changes.
- 6.2 The Chair and Vice Chair of this Committee as well as MBC Ward Councillors have been briefed as the recommendations have been developed.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

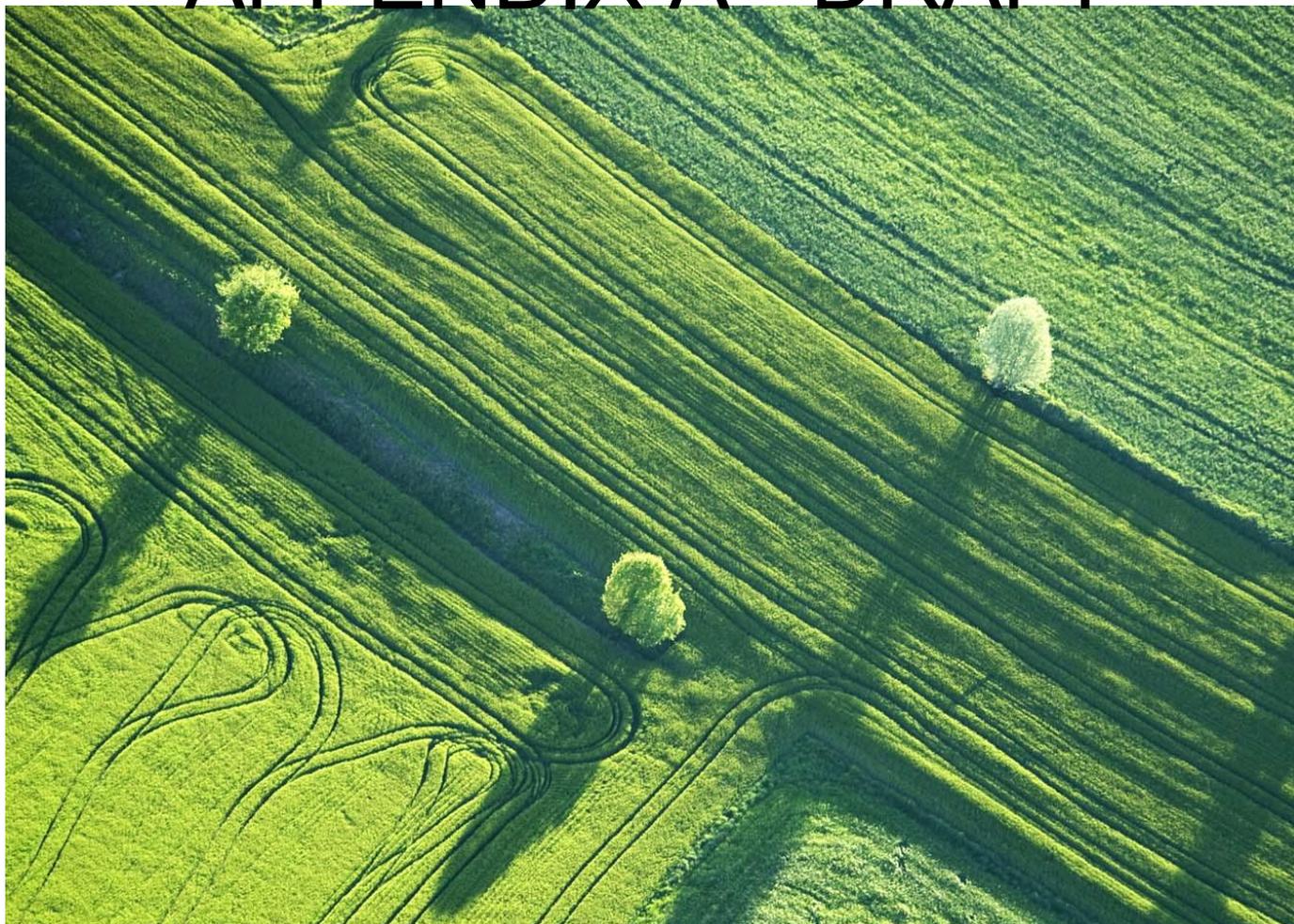
- 7.1 For the recommendations in this report to be referred to the Joint Transportation Board on the 14th October 2020.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Draft RSK Green Infrastructure Report

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.



Maidstone Borough Council

Green Infrastructure Mitigation – Phase 1 Feasibility Study

Upper Stone Street, Maidstone

Project No. 443847/FS01 (00)

AUGUST 2020

APPENDIX A - DRAFT



RSK GENERAL NOTES

Project No.: 443847/FS01 (00)

Title: Green Infrastructure Mitigation Feasibility Study - Upper Stone Street, Maidstone

Client: Maidstone Borough Council

Date: 4th August 2020

Office: Manchester

Status: Draft for Client Comment

Author	<u>Erin Zhang Senior Air Quality Consultant</u>	Technical reviewer	<u>Dr. Srinivas Srimath Director, Air Quality</u>
Signature		Signature	
Date:	<u>3rd August 2020</u>	Date:	<u>4th August 2020</u>

RSK Environment Ltd (RSK) has prepared this report for the sole use of the client, showing reasonable skill and care, for the intended purposes as stated in the agreement under which this work was completed. The report may not be relied upon by any other party without the express agreement of the client and RSK. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report.

Where any data supplied by the client or from other sources have been used, it has been assumed that the information is correct. No responsibility can be accepted by RSK for inaccuracies in the data supplied by any other party. The conclusions and recommendations in this report are based on the assumption that all relevant information has been supplied by those bodies from whom it was requested.

No part of this report may be copied or duplicated without the express permission of RSK and the party for whom it was prepared.

Where field investigations have been carried out, these have been restricted to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives of the work.

This work has been undertaken in accordance with the quality management system of RSK Group Limited.

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1 INTRODUCTION

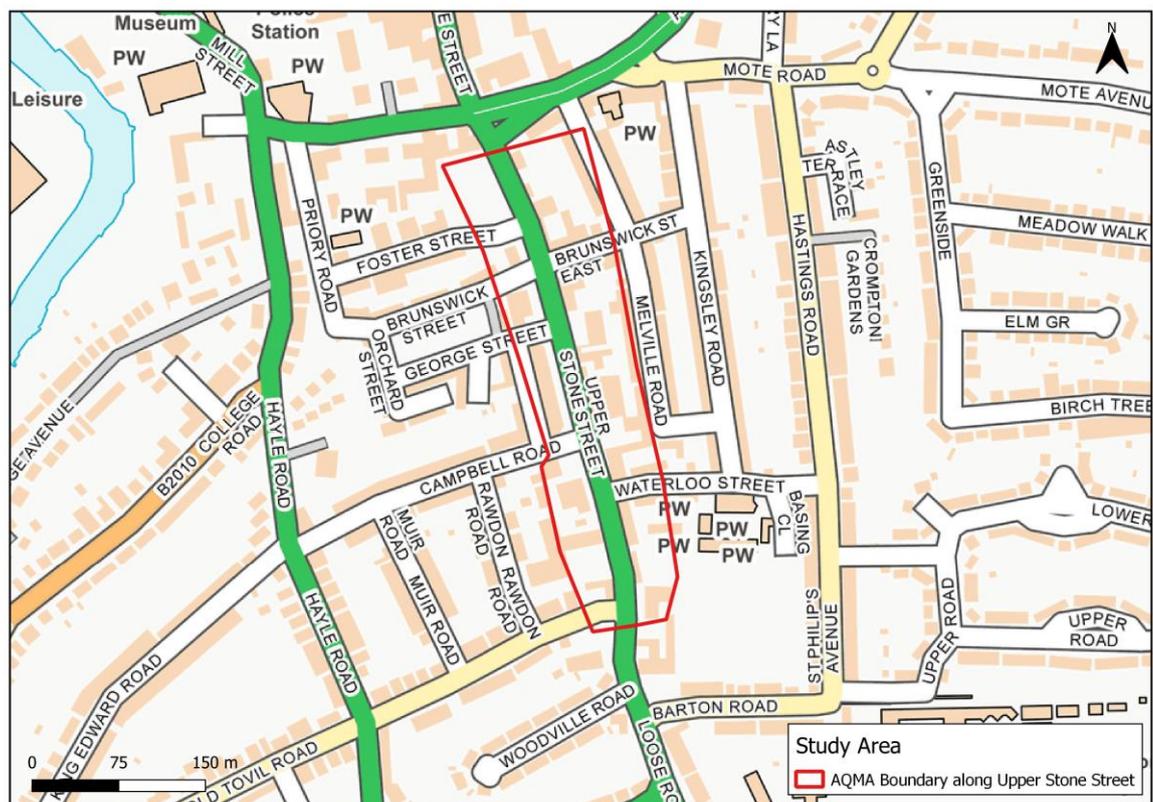
1.1 Background

RSK Environment Limited (RSK) was commissioned by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to undertake a Feasibility Study (FS), to identify how Green Infrastructure (GI) could help to reduce nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) concentrations at the Upper Stone Street, Maidstone.

The Upper Stone Street is a street in Maidstone and measures approximately 463 metres long. The approximate grid reference for the centre of Upper Stone Street is 576348, 155162. The study area (i.e. the Upper Stone Street) is shown in **Figure 1.1**.

The Upper Stone Street is a one way street with two lanes, which runs roughly north to south. Upper Stone Street has a steep uphill gradient (the average slope is approximately 6.7%¹). Along the Upper Stone Street, there are buildings located on either side of the road, some of which form as street canyons along the street. It is also noted that vehicles traveling along Upper Stone Street could be parked on the double yellow lines for pickups/drop offs, which could cause traffic congestion.

Figure 1.1: Study Area



¹ Measured using Google Earth Pro

1.2 Purpose and Scope

Following consultation with MBC and a review of the local air quality, it is understood that the major concern with regards to air quality in Maidstone is the exceedance of the annual mean NO₂ objective, and Upper Stone Street is the main area of concern.

Air quality monitoring undertaken in Upper Stone Street and relevant modelling studies suggest that annual mean NO₂ concentrations along Upper Stone Street are above 60 µg/m³ and therefore there is a risk of exceedances of the 1-hour mean NO₂ objective along this road. It is also noted that, a new MBC Air Quality Action Plan was introduced in 2017. The relevant air quality modelling assessment undertaken for the Air Quality Action Plan suggested that the annual mean NO₂ objective would not be met in Upper Stone Street till 2028.

Therefore, lowering the annual mean NO₂ along Upper Stone Street will be the focus and primary target for the GI mitigation scheme. The following scope has been adopted in this study:

- Literature research regarding GI mitigation.
- Detailed review of baseline air quality;
- Review of existing GI and local meteorological;
- Identify the potential impact of existing GI on air quality; and
- Recommendation of GI mitigation scheme.

2 LEGISLATION AND POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Air Quality Strategy

UK air quality policy is published under the umbrella of the Environment Act 1995, Part IV and specifically Section 80, the National Air Quality Strategy. The latest *Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – Working Together for Clean Air*, published in July 2007 sets air quality standards and objectives for ten key air pollutants to be achieved between 2003 and 2020.

The Air Quality Framework Directive (1996) established a framework under which the European Commission (EC) could set limit or target values for specified pollutants. The directive identified several pollutants for which limit or target values have been, or will be set in subsequent ‘daughter directives’. The framework and daughter directives were consolidated by Directive 2008/50/EC on Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe, which retains the existing air quality standards and introduces new objectives for fine particulates (PM_{2.5}).

2.2 Ambient Air Quality Standards

The ambient air quality standards (AQSs) in the United Kingdom are derived from European Commission (EC) Directives and are adopted into English law via the Air Quality (England) Regulations 2000, Air Quality (England) Amendment Regulations 2002, The Air Quality Limit Values Regulations 2003 and Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010. These criteria have been used within this assessment as appropriate.

The relevant² Air Quality Objectives (AQOs) and AQSs derived from the National Air Quality Strategy (NAQS) for England and Wales (and where they differ, AQSs derived from the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010) are summarised in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Relevant Air Quality Objectives

Substance	Averaging period	Exceedances allowed per year	Ground level concentration limit (µg/m ³)
Nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂)	1 calendar year	-	40
	1 hour	18	200
Fine particles (PM ₁₀)	1 calendar year	-	40
	24 hours	35	50
Fine particles (PM _{2.5})	1 year	-	25

² Relevance, in this case, is defined by the scope of the assessment.

2.3 The Environment Act

The set AQS objectives are to be used in the review and assessment of air quality by local authorities under Section 82 of the Environment Act (1995). If exceedances are measured or predicted through the review and assessment process, the local authority must declare an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) under Section 83 of the Act and produce an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to outline how air quality is to be improved.

3 BASELINE REVIEW

3.1 Baseline Air Quality Characterisation

Existing or baseline air quality refers to the concentrations of relevant substances that are already present in ambient air. These substances are emitted by various sources, including road traffic, industrial, domestic, agricultural and natural sources.

A desk-based study was undertaken including a review of monitoring data available from MBC and estimated background data from the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) Support website operated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

3.1.1 Local Authority Review and Assessment of Air Quality

Following a review of MBC's draft 2020 Air Quality Annual Status Report, it is noted that there are currently two automatic monitoring stations, and 74 NO₂ diffusion tube monitoring sites in operation in 2019. The annual average NO₂ concentrations at all monitoring sites within the study area are presented in **Table 3.1**. The locations of these monitoring sites are shown in **Figure 3.1**. Among them, CM3, Maid 122-124 and Maid 128 were started in 2018, therefore, only 2018 and 2019 monitoring data is available for these locations. It is noted that 2016-2019 NO₂ monitoring data shows exceedance of the annual mean NO₂ objective at all monitoring locations within Upper Stone Street, apart from Maid124. When comparing the monitoring data between 2016 and 2019, it is noted that annual mean NO₂ concentrations at Maid 81 and Maid 92 showed a continuous improvement during 2016-2019, and the remaining locations (i.e. Maid 122-124, Maid 128 and CM3) showed a general improvement in 2019 compared to 2018.

Table 3.1: Annual Mean NO₂ Concentrations for 2016-2018

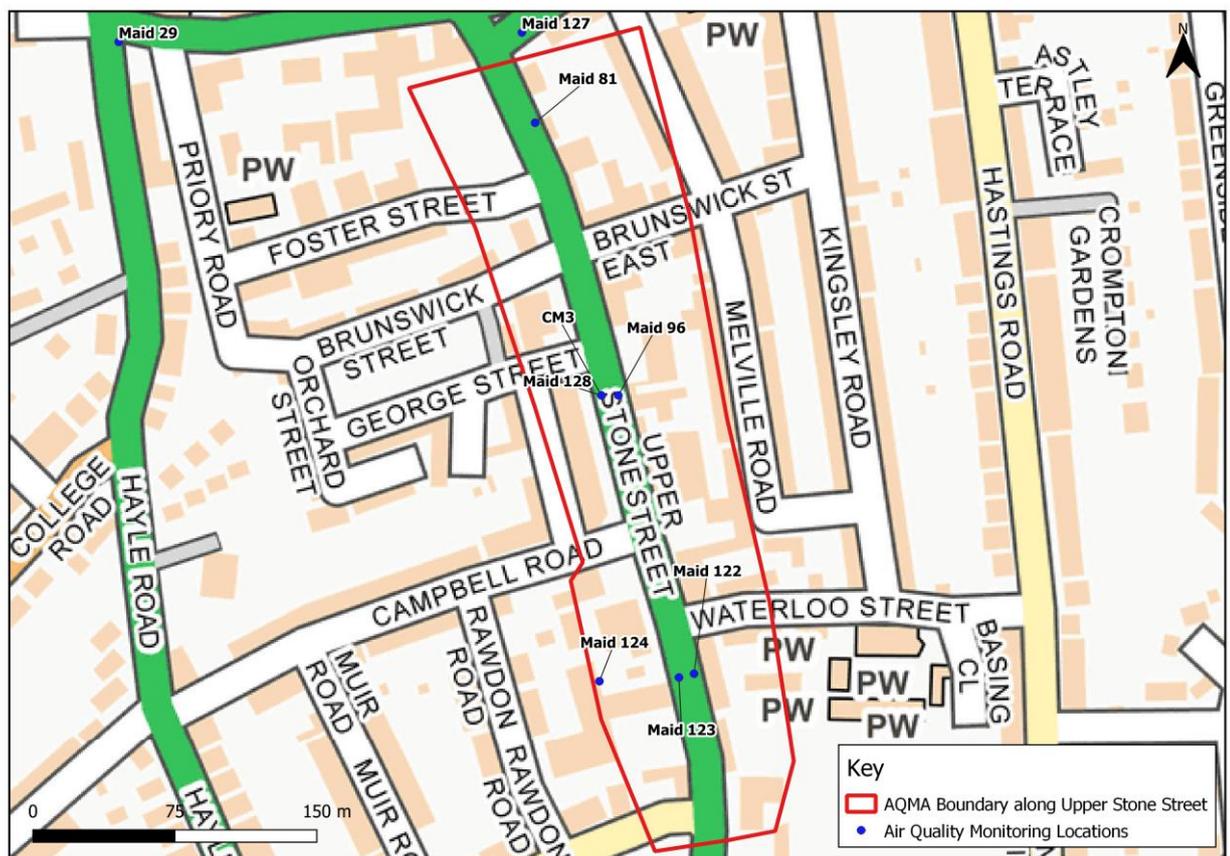
Site ID	Site Name	Grid (x,y)	Site Type*	Annual Mean NO ₂ Concentrations (µg/m ³)			
				2016	2017	2018	2019
CM3	Grass verge outside former Jubilee Church building	(576337, 155183)	Roadside	-	-	70^(a)	68
Maid 81	The Pilot PH	(576302, 155328)	Roadside	71.26	67.7	67.3	60.2
Maid 96	Lamppost KUBT 512 in bracket for "One Way" sign outside Lashings Sports Club (opposite grassy area) Upper Stone St	(576346, 155183)	Roadside	83.84	79.3	77.2	75.2
Maid 122	Loading sign to the right of the front of the Papermakers Arms PH	(576386, 155035)	Roadside	-	-	79.2	73.4
Maid 123	Loading sign on opposite side of Upper Stone St to	(576378, 155033)	Roadside	-	-	53.5	55.5

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Site ID	Site Name	Grid (x,y)	Site Type*	Annual Mean NO ₂ Concentrations (µg/m ³)			
				2016	2017	2018	2019
	Maid 122						
Maid 124	Fence pole at back of site for proposed development at 102 Upper Stone St (car wash site)	(576336, 155031)	Roadside	-	-	19.9	19.2
Maid 128.1	Site located in cage for air intake of new urban AQ station in Upper Stone Street	(576337, 155183)	Roadside	-	-	67.7^(a)	61.3
Maid 128.2				-	-	67.3^(a)	61.7
Maid 128.3				-	-	68.1^(a)	62.5
Air Quality Strategy (AQS) Objective				40			
Results in bold indicate an exceedance of the AQS objective.							
^(a) Annualisation has been conducted by MBC where data capture is <75%							
*Site type of the diffusion tubes are obtained from 2020 MBC Air Quality Annual Status Report.							

Figure 3.2: Air Quality Monitoring Sites within Upper Stone Street



3.1.2 LAQM Background Data

Estimated background air quality data are available from the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) website operated by the Department for Environment, Food &

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Rural Affairs (Defra) (<http://laqm.defra.gov.uk>). The Defra LAQM website provides estimated annual average background concentrations of NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} on a 1km² grid basis with the latest maps using 2017 base year data and with data projected up to the year 2030. **Table 3.2** presents estimated annual average background NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} concentrations at Upper Stone Street.

Table 3.3: Defra LAQM Estimated Annual Average NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} Concentrations at Upper Stone Street (from 2017 base maps)

Year	Estimated Annual Average Background Pollutant Concentrations from the LAQM Support Website (µg/m ³)		
	NO ₂	PM ₁₀	PM _{2.5}
2017	17.75	16.77	11.61
2018	17.24	16.57	11.46
2019	16.72	16.38	11.31
2020	16.10	16.19	11.16
AQS Objectives	40	40	25

The estimated background concentrations at the study area are well below the relevant UK AQS objectives.

3.2 Existing Green Infrastructure

A site visit to the Upper Stone Street was undertaken in June 2020. It is noted that there is currently very limited green space along Upper Stone Street. The main green space is the grass verge and trees next to the CareCo Mobility Showroom and the SC Motor Factory store. **Figure 3.2** below shows the location and condition of the existing GI.

Figure 3.2 Existing GI Along Upper Stone Street



4 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE MITIGATION FEASIBILITY STUDY

As discussed in section 3, there is limited green space available along the Upper Stone Street, which will limit the scope of any planting scheme. Furthermore, following consultation with MBC, it is understood that premises along the road are mostly private, it will be therefore difficult to obtain permission to implement GI planting schemes on these premises. However, it is understood that the grass verge next to the CareCo Mobility Showroom and the SC Motor Factory store, is owned by Kent County Council, which could be considered and used for GI planting. Therefore, this feasibility study focuses on this section of the road and the potential GI mitigation scheme that could be implemented.

4.1 Valuation of the Existing GI and Potential Impact

GI mitigation could include trees, vegetation barriers (such as hedges), green walls, and green roofs. GI could be used in different built environment and it could have both positive and negative impacts on air quality at street level, depending on the urban and vegetation characteristics³. For example, recent research shows that the presence of trees could increase the pollution concentration in a street canyon⁴, as trees can reduce the wind speed in a street canyon, resulting in reduced air exchange between the air above the roof and within the canyon and hence leading to accumulation of pollutants inside the street canyon⁵.

When reviewing the characteristics of Upper Stone Street, it is noted that it is a narrow road with buildings on either side of the road. The trees that are located next to the CareCo Mobility Showroom is situated adjacent to the kerb and in summertime the tree canopy creates a narrow asymmetric street canyon with the building on the other side of the road. Therefore, the trees in this area will likely to worsen the air pollution rather than mitigate, as the tree canopy will reduce the wind speed in the canyon, slow down the dispersion of air pollutants and lead to pollutants accumulation within the canyon.

To investigate this further, a detailed review of monthly air quality monitoring data along this section of the road (i.e. the grass verge area) has been undertaken to compare the NO₂ concentrations in summertime (referred as the season May-September when trees have leaves and tree canopy exists) and wintertime (referred as the season October-

³ K.V. Abhijith, Prashant Kumar, John Gallagher, Aonghus McNabola, Richard Baldauf, Francesco Pilla, Brian Broderick, Silvana Di Sabatino, Beatrice Pulvirenti, 'Air pollution abatement performances of green infrastructure in open road and built-up street canyon environments – A review', *Atmospheric Environment*, 162 (2017), pp. 71-86

⁴ Riccardo Buccolieri, Christof Gromke, Silvana Di Sabatino, Bodo Ruck, 'Aerodynamic effects of trees on pollutant concentration in street canyons', *Science of The Total Environment*, 407, no.19 (2009), pp. 5247-5256.

⁵ Riccardo Buccolieri, Pietro Salizzoni, Lionel Soulhac, Valeria Garbero, Silvana Di Sabatino, 'The breathability of compact cities', *Urban Climate*, 13 (2015), pp. 73-93

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April when trees lose leaves therefore no canopy exists). Data summary can be found in **Table 4.1 – Table 4.3** as below. CM3 and Maid 128 were started in 2018, therefore a full year data was only available for 2019. As a result, only 2019 data has been considered for CM3 and Maid 128 in this study.

Following a review of the monitoring data in **Table 4.1 – Table 4.3**, it is noted that Maid 96 monitored higher NO₂ concentrations than CM3 and Maid 128. Maid 96 is situated next to the left lane, while CM3 and Maid 128 are located next to the right lane. It is considered possible that the left lane may experience higher traffic flow volume than the right lane. As a result, Maid 96 may experience more traffic emissions than CM3 and Maid 128. Additionally, Maid 96 is located very close to the façade of the adjacent building, which would cause worse dispersion condition compared to open space at CM3 and Maid 128, and lead to accumulation of pollutants.

When looking into the seasonal mean, it is noted that Maid 96 monitored higher NO₂ concentrations in summertime during 2016-2019 (as shown in Appendix A), however, CM3 and Maid 128 monitored higher NO₂ concentrations in wintertime during 2019. As Maid 96, CM3 and Maid 128 are located in the same area, the same seasonal trend in monitored NO₂ concentrations is expected, however, the monitoring data from two sides of the road shows different seasonal trend.

To investigate this discrepancy in the seasonal trend, a review of the 2017-2019 windroses (as shown in **Appendix A**) for the EAST_MALLING meteorological station has been undertaken. It is noted that the prevailing wind direction is from the southwest. Therefore Maid 96 is located at the windward side of the canyon; CM3 and Maid 128 are located at the leeward side of the canyon. In summertime, the tree canopy will create a barrier along the street and will likely to slow down the wind speed and have a negative impact on dispersion. In wintertime, due to the absence of the tree canopy (much smaller number of leaves or no leaves), the street canyon effect is not expected to be significant in winter when compared to the summertime. That possibly explains the lower NO₂ concentrations measured at Maid 96 during wintertime. Therefore, it is considered likely that the seasonal trend identified at Maid 96 may be due to the tree canopy and street canyon effect on this section of the road. The aerodynamic effect appears to outweigh the filtering capacity of the trees. Furthermore, recent research shows that, trees in street canyons could cause an average increase of 20-96% in air pollutant concentrations, compared to those canyons without the trees⁶. Based on above, it is considered likely that the trees outside the CareCo Mobility Showroom are having a negative impact on NO₂ concentrations due to their close proximity to the kerb. It is proposed that the trees outside the CareCo Mobility Showroom are removed or relocated further away from the road.

⁶ K.V. Abhijith, Prashant Kumar, John Gallagher, Aonghus McNabola, Richard Baldauf, Francesco Pilla, Brian Broderick, Silvana Di Sabatino, Beatrice Pulvirenti, 'Air pollution abatement performances of green infrastructure in open road and built-up street canyon environments – A review', *Atmospheric Environment*, 162 (2017), pp. 71-86

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Table 4.1 Monthly and Seasonal Monitoring Data – Maid 96

Year	Diffusion Tube Maid 96 - Raw Monthly NO ₂ Monitoring Data (µg/m ³)												Raw Seasonal Monitoring Data (µg/m ³)	
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Summer*	Winter**
2016	-	108.3	110.4	116.8	124	117.8	96.2	93.5	128.5	117.4	106.4	48.2	112.0	101.3
2017	91.8	104.4	77.9	123	115.4	102	112.2	105.8	97.7	98.9	110.1	80.7	106.6	98.1
2018	88	114.9	89	99.6	117.8	108.1	108.9	95.7	91.2	119.9	99.6	85.9	104.3	99.6
2019	110.1	85.2	89.1	114.1	107.4	110.4	110.9	97.5	90.4	101.2	113.9	73.3	103.3	98.1

*Summer referred to as May-September in this study **Winter referred to as October -April in this study

Table 4.2 2019 Monthly and Seasonal Monitoring Data – CM3

Site ID	Automatic Monitoring Station CM3 - Raw Monthly Monitoring NO ₂ Data (µg/m ³)												Raw Seasonal Monitoring Data (µg/m ³)	
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Summer*	Winter**
CM3	68	76	56	70	63	56	56	63	59	72	93 [^]	105 [^]	59.4	77.1

*Summer referred as to May-September in this study **Winter to referred as October -April in this study
[^]Data should be treated with caution, as the monitor broke down on 18th December 2019, and it's likely that an analyser fault was developed in the later weeks of October 2019

Table 4.3 2019 Monthly and Seasonal Monitoring Data – Maid 128.1, 128.2 and 128.3

Site ID	Diffusion Tube Maid 128.1,128.2 and 128.3 - Raw Monthly Monitoring NO ₂ Data (µg/m ³)												Raw Seasonal Monitoring Data (µg/m ³)	
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Summer*	Winter**
Maid 128.1	84.3	85.8	-	79	72.3	81.4	85.7	88.8	76.9	74.7	85.9	83.8	81.0	82.3
Maid 128.2	84	74.3	-	88.9	78.6	80.9	83.5	85.2	77	82.2	82.6	87.2	81.0	83.2
Maid 128.3	86.7	83	-	88.7	78.1	81.9	83.7	88.2	74.9	78.2	86	86.6	81.4	84.9

*Summer referred to as May-September in this study **Winter referred to as October -April in this study

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4.2 Proposed GI and Potential Impact

As discussed above, the aspect ratio (H/W) of the studied canyon is estimated to be 12m/9m=1.3. Recent research shows that, the aspect ratio is critical to determine the appropriate GI form for street canyons⁷, which states that:

“In deep street canyons (H/W ≥ 2), only green walls are recommended; in mid-depth street canyons (H/W 0.5–2), low-level vegetation (shrubs and low hedges) may also be implemented; and in shallow street canyons (H/W ≤ 0.5), small and open-crowned trees may be additionally planted on the windward side of the canyon, spaced broadly apart.”

Given that the aspect ratio of the study canyon is approximately 1.3, it is considered that low-level vegetation (shrubs and low hedges) could be implemented to reduce air pollution. It is proposed that low-level hedges could be planted along the edge of the grass verge. The use of low-level hedges could provide screening from road vehicle exhaust emissions and help to minimise the potential adverse canyon effects on air pollutant dispersion along the road.

A research undertaken by Lancaster University & Centre of Ecology and Hydrology, named ‘*Trees and Sustainable Urban air Quality*’ provides guidance of the potential impact of different tree species on air quality, which ranked tree species based on their effect on air quality. A summary is provided in Table 4.4 as below.

⁷ Kumar, P., Abhijith, K. V. & Barwise, Y. Implementing Green Infrastructure for Air Pollution Abatement: General Recommendations for Management and Plant Species Selection (2019). <<https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.8198261.v1>> [accessed 16 July 2020]

Table 4.4 Capacity of Different Tree Species on Air Quality Improvement

Category Based on The Capacity to Improve Air Quality		
Category 1 Trees that have the greatest capacity to improve air quality	Category 2 Trees that have a smaller capacity to improve air quality	Category 3 Trees that have the potential to worsen air quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ash • Common Alder • Field Maple • Larch • Norway Maple • Scots Pine • Silver Birch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple • Cherry Laurel • Common Elm • Common Lime • Elder • Grey Alder • Hawthorn • Hazel • Holly • Italian Alder • Lawson Cypress • Leyland Cypress • Lilac • Mountain Ash • Sycamore • Wild Cherry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crack Willow • English Oak • Goat Willow • Poplar • Red Oak • Sessile Oak • White Willow
<p>Bold indicates species could be planted as hedge.</p>		

Following a review of the tree species detailed as above, it is noted that none of the Category 1 species could be implemented as low-level hedge. Among Category 2 species, Cherry Laurel, Lawson Cypress, Leyland Cypress and Lilac could be planted as hedges.

Furthermore, recent research identified that small, stiff and complex leaves tend to be more effective than larger, less rigid and less complex leaves⁸. Lawson Cypress and Leyland Cypress have smaller, stiffer and more complex leaves compared to Cherry Laurel and Lilac. Therefore, it is recommended that Lawson Cypress and Leyland Cypress are planted as hedge for air pollution mitigation.

It is recommended that Category 3 trees may not be used for air pollution mitigation purposes.

⁸ Barwise, Y., Kumar, P. 'Designing vegetation barriers for urban air pollution abatement: a practical review for appropriate plant species selection'. *npj Clim Atmos Sci* 3, 12 (2020). <<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41612-020-0115-3>> [accessed 20 July 2020]

4.3 GI Implementation

As discussed above, it is proposed that the tress outside the CareCo Mobility Showroom (circled in **Figure 4.1** as below) may be removed or relocated further away from the road. It is proposed that hedges could be planted on the boundary of the grass verge, the proposed area is shown in **Figure 4.2** and **Figure 4.3** as below. Additionally, it is recommended that climbing plants such as ivy could be planted to create a green wall on the façade of the building used by Lashings Bar & Grill, if possible.

Currently, there were only a few studies examined the air pollution reduction potential of hedges in street canyons⁹. Some studies observed that hedges could reduce pollutant exposure by 24-61% at the footpath areas in street canyons^{10,11,12}, and green wall in a street canyon could reduce NO₂ concentration by up to 35%, PM₁₀ concentration by up to 50%¹³. However, other studies reported that under certain scenarios, hedge could cause an increase in pollutant concentration in street canyons¹⁴. It has not been possible to determine how much the propose GI mitigation scheme could reduce NO₂ concentrations in the study area without detailed modelling work. It is recommended that a more detailed modelling assessment using ENVI-met software is undertaken to further investigate the potential impact of the proposed GI mitigation scheme and identify the appropriate height and width for the proposed hedges before the implementation of GI planting.

⁹ K.V. Abhijith, Prashant Kumar, John Gallagher, Aonghus McNabola, Richard Baldauf, Francesco Pilla, Brian Broderick, Silvana Di Sabatino, Beatrice Pulvirenti, 'Air pollution abatement performances of green infrastructure in open road and built-up street canyon environments – A review', *Atmospheric Environment*, 162 (2017), pp. 71-86

¹⁰ Xiaoping Chen, Tingting Pei, Zhixiang Zhou, Mingjun Teng, Liang He, Man Luo, Xinxing Liu, 'Efficiency differences of roadside greenbelts with three configurations in removing coarse particles (PM10): A street scale investigation in Wuhan, China', *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 14, no. 2 (2015), pp 354-360

¹¹ Christof Gromke, Nabaraj Jamarkattel, Bodo Ruck, 'Influence of roadside hedgerows on air quality in urban street canyons', *Atmospheric Environment*, 139 (2016), pp 75-86

¹² Xiao-Bing Li, Qing-Chang Lu, Si-Jia Lu, Hong-Di He, Zhong-Ren Peng, Ya Gao, Zhan-Yong Wang, 'The impacts of roadside vegetation barriers on the dispersion of gaseous traffic pollution in urban street canyons', *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 17 (2016), pp 80-91

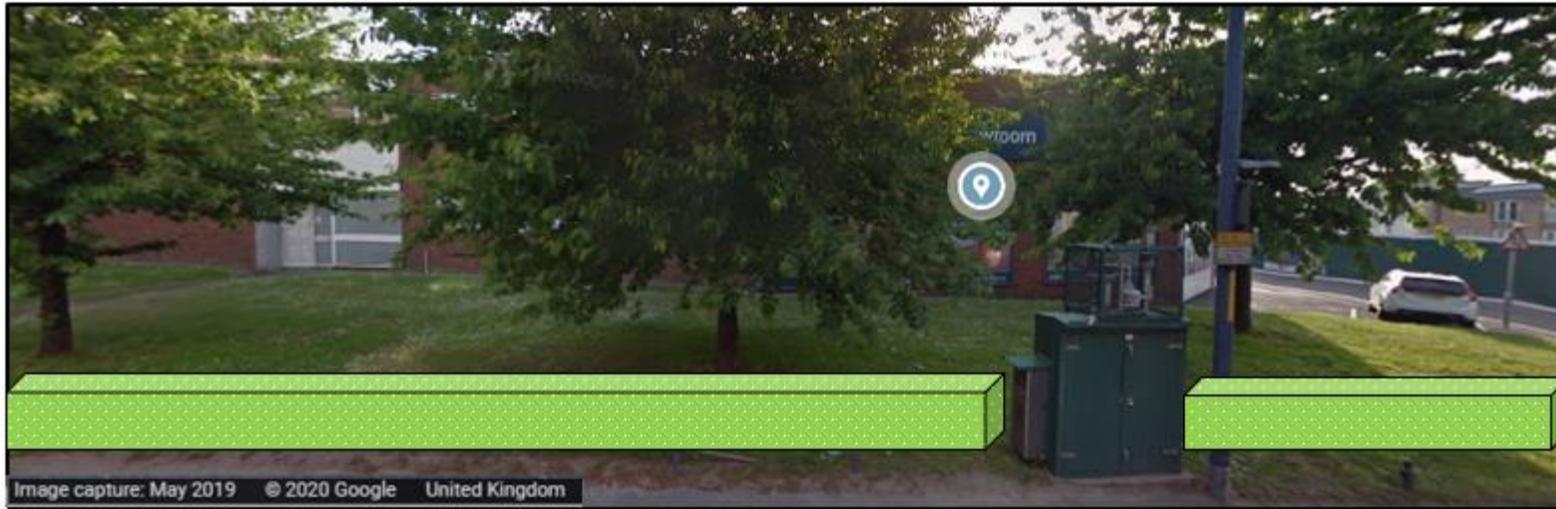
¹³ Thomas A. M. Pugh, A. Robert MacKenzie, J. Duncan Whyatt, and C. Nicholas Hewitt, 'Effectiveness of Green Infrastructure for Improvement of Air Quality in Urban Street Canyons', *Environmental Science & Technology*, 46 (2012), pp 7692-7699

¹⁴ Peter E.J. Vos, Bino Maiheu, Jean Vankerkom, Stijn Janssen, 'Improving local air quality in cities: To tree or not to tree?', *Environmental Pollution*, 183 (2013), pp 113-122

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RSK

Figure 4.3 Proposed Hedge



 Proposed Hedge

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Note: please do not scale, this figure is for illustrative purpose only

4.4 Limitations

- It should be noted that November and December monitoring data for CM3 should be treated with caution, as the monitor broke down on 18th December 2019, and it's likely that an analyser fault was developed in the later weeks of October 2019.
- As discussed in Section 4, CM3 and Maid 128 were started in 2018, therefore a full year data was only available for 2019. Due to the lack of multiyear monitoring data for CM3 and Maid 128, it was not possible to undertake further detailed review of the seasonal trend of NO₂ concentrations for CM3 and Maid 128.
- The tree species specified in Table 4.4 are based on research of trees in the West Midlands, which introduce a level of limitation with regards to the potential options for tree species section.
- The conclusion and recommendations made in this feasibility study are based on relevant research and a review of local air quality data and meteorological data. It is recommended that a more detailed modelling assessment using ENVI-met software is undertaken to further investigate the potential impact of the proposed GI mitigation scheme and identify the appropriate height and width for the proposed hedges before the implementation of GI planting.

5 CONCLUSION

RSK Environment Limited (RSK) was commissioned by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to undertake a Feasibility Study (FS), to identify how Green Infrastructure (GI) could help to reduce NO₂ concentrations at the Upper Stone Street, Maidstone.

A site visit to the Upper Stone Street was carried out in June 2020, it is noted that there is limited green space available along the Upper Stone Street, which will limit the scope of any planting scheme. Following consultation with MBC, it is understood that the grass verge next to the CareCo Mobility Showroom and the SC Motor Factors store, is owned by Kent County Council, which could be considered and used for GI planting. Therefore, this feasibility study focuses on this section of the road and the potential GI mitigation scheme that could be implemented.

It is considered that, during summertime, the trees outside the CareCo Mobility Showroom create a narrow asymmetric street canyon with the building on the other side of the road. In addition, the tree canopy creates a barrier along the street and is likely to slow down the wind speed and have a negative impact on air pollutant dispersion within the canyon. Therefore, it is considered that the trees outside the CareCo Mobility Showroom are having a negative impact on NO₂ concentrations. As a result, it is recommended that the trees outside the CareCo Mobility Showroom (as shown in **Figure 4.1**) are removed or relocated further away from the road.

To further mitigate NO₂ concentrations in the study area, it is recommended that low-level Lawson Cypress hedge or Leyland Cypress hedge could be planted at the edge of the grass verge. The use of low-level hedges could provide screening from road vehicle exhaust emissions, and also help to minimise the potential adverse canyon effects on air pollutant dispersion along the road.

Without detailed modelling, it was not possible to determine how much the proposed GI mitigation scheme could help to improve air quality in quantitative terms. It is recommended that a more detailed modelling assessment using ENVI-met software is undertaken to further investigate the potential impact of the proposed GI mitigation scheme and identify the appropriate height and width for the proposed hedges before the implementation of GI planting.

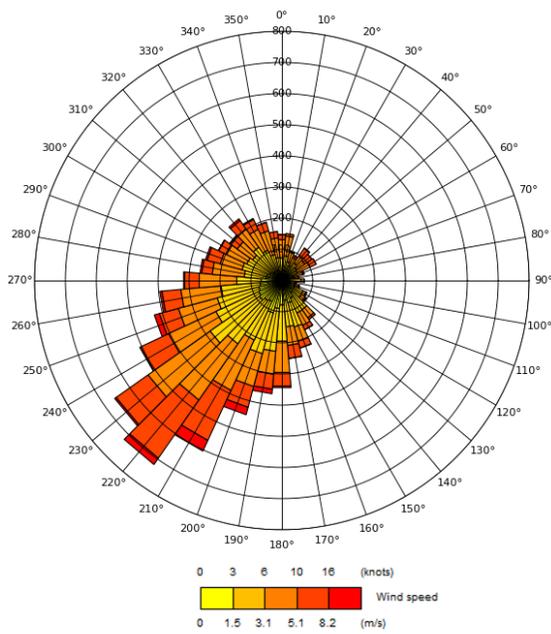
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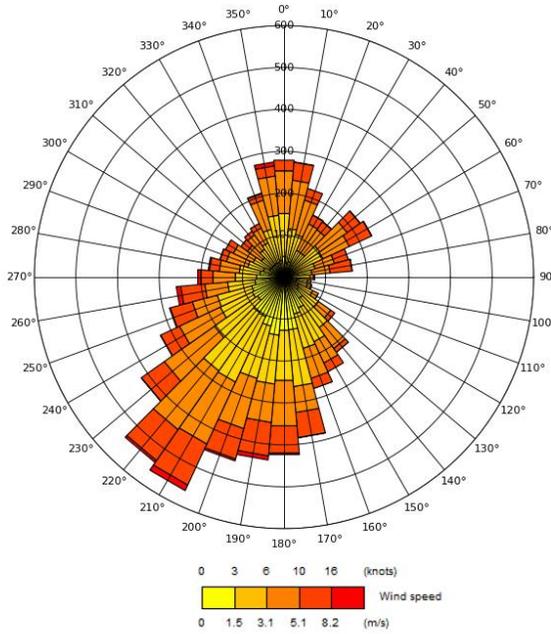
APPENDIX A – WINDROSES (EAST MALLING STATION)

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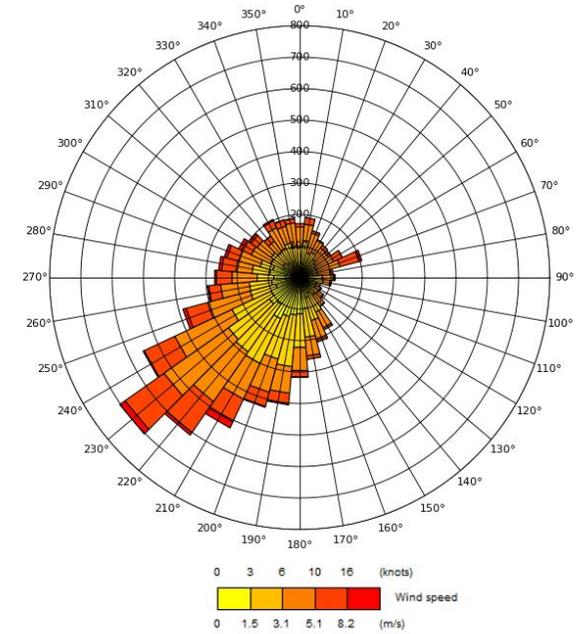
2017 Windrose



2018 Windrose



2019 Windrose



Agenda Item 16

Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee

7 October 2020

Parking Services Update

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee
Lead Head of Service	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration & Place / Mark Green, Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Jeff Kitson, Parking Services Manager / Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 9 June 2020, this committee requested a report on the financial implications of the Covid 19 pandemic on Parking Services, and the operational response to the lockdown measures introduced during March.

Purpose of Report

This report is for noting. Committee members are also asked to agree that the parking tariff increases agreed and planned for 1st April 2020, instead be implemented on 1st April 2021, owing to the impacts and uncertainties brought about by the pandemic.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the update and information relating to the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on parking operations, including the financial implications of this, be noted.
2. That the deferral of the planned parking tariff increases to 1st April 2021 be agreed.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee	7 October 2020

Parking Services Update

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. The proposed deferral of parking tariff increases is intended to support recovery by encouraging local economic revival. 	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Cross Cutting Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This report focuses on the council's response to the Covid 19 pandemic. It is unlikely that the recommendations of this report will materially impact on cross cutting objectives. 	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk management implications are detailed at section 5 of this report. 	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial implications are detailed within section 2 of this report. 	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No staffing implications arise from this report. 	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers and follows guidance issued by the British Parking Association, London Councils and the Local Government Association (provided at Appendix 1). The Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee is responsible for car parking functions including car parking plans and strategy. As such it is for this Committee consider the recommendations in this report. 	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Privacy and Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No privacy or data protection implications arise from this report. 	Policy and Information Team

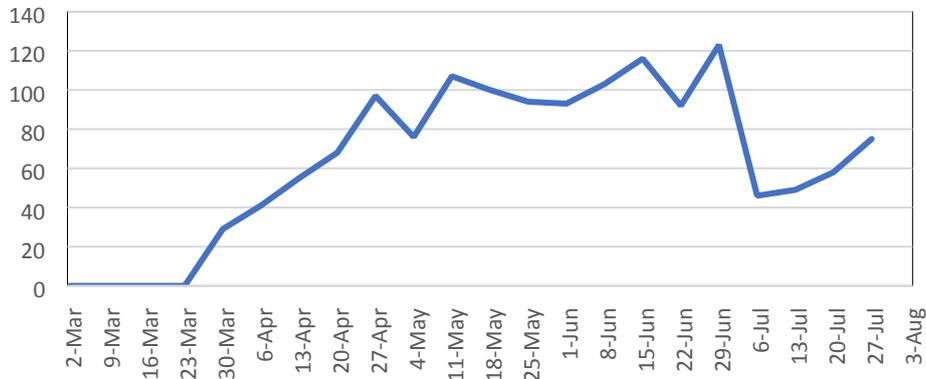
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment. 	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals. 	[Public Health Officer]
Crime and Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No implications relating to crime and disorder arise from this report. 	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no procurement implications arising from this report. 	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the start of the pandemic lockdown in late March, car park occupancy significantly reduced to around 5% of normal occupancy levels. Vehicle movements in the town centre, residential areas and rural areas were also significantly lower than pre-lockdown levels.
- 2.2 Increases in home working, self-isolation and social distancing placed unprecedented pressure on the parking spaces available within residential streets with many roads unable to meet the increased demand.
- 2.3 On 24th March the British Parking Association, London Councils and the Local Government Association published the Local Authority Parking and Traffic Management Operational Advice during Covid-19 (Appendix 1). This guidance was issued to assist local authorities consider appropriate temporary measures in the very challenging circumstances around Covid-19.
- 2.4 To manage this unprecedented situation and to meet the requirements of government guidance, services were quickly adapted, and a number of adjustments were applied at the end of March and into April 2020.
- 2.5 Following an announcement by Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Robert Jenrick, local councils in England were required to provide free car parking for NHS staff and social care workers during the coronavirus outbreak. This initiative was designed to enable these workers to park in on-street parking bays and council owned car parks without having to worry about cost or time restrictions.
- 2.6 These critical workers were encouraged by government to display supporting evidence in their windscreen, such as photocopies of their work pass with sensitive information removed, or a letter of evidence from their employer. As a result of this informality, the government concession was quickly abused, and enforcement action became necessary to control the concession by accepting only government approved permits made

available through NHS and Social Care employer networks. The government's position has not changed, and these permits currently represent around 10 to 15 permits on display in Maidstone each day.

NHS & Social Care permits in paid parking bays



- 2.7 To ease levels of inconsiderate and illegal parking, residents and businesses displaying a valid permit were allowed to park in the councils underutilised off-street car parks until 1 July 2020 to absorb the additional demand. This supported local residents adhering to government advice to stay at home and eased congestion in many residential streets.
- 2.8 As car park charges remained in place throughout the lockdown period, those residents using the car parks without resident parking permits paid for parking in the normal way.
- 2.9 The resident parking scheme is applied to roads close to the town centre to deter long stay non-resident and commuter parking. As non-resident demand in these roads decreased due to the lockdown, Parking Services in consultation with the Chief Executive were able to ease the restrictions applied to resident parking bays during the emergency period to accommodate the additional demand from residents.
- 2.10 To facilitate controlled parking, 1500 letters were hand delivered to residential properties in the worst affected roads which coincided with a press release to help reduce levels of inconsiderate and dangerous parking as an alternative to enforcement action.
- 2.11 Restrictions placed to manage commuter parking in rural villages such as those where a 30-minute restriction is applied during the day, were also relaxed until 1 July 2020 to improve on-street parking capacity for residents living in these areas.
- 2.12 Lockmeadow housed the Maidstone Community Hub at the start of the pandemic and with business closures within the facility, the car park was closed to customers until 8 June 2020.
- 2.13 The car parks within Mote Park and Cobtree Park were also closed during the emergency period to facilitate public social distancing in line with Government guidelines. These reopened once government restrictions eased on 13 May 2020.

2.14 All other car parks have remained open and normal tariffs have applied throughout the emergency pandemic period.

2.15 An officer decision was submitted on 23 March 2020 and copied to the Chair and Vice Chair of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee for noting which recorded:

That the on-street and off-street parking regulations in relation to resident parking bays and single yellow lines restricting waiting for 30 minutes are eased to support residents and business until 1 July 2020.

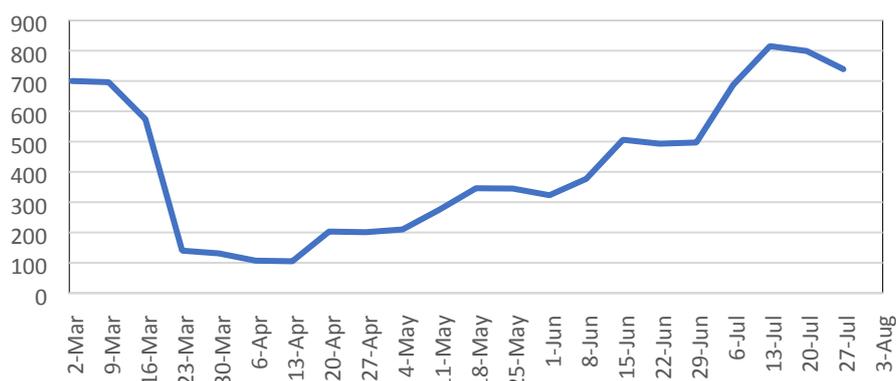
That resident parking permits and business permits are valid in off-street car parks to ease on-street parking demand until 1 July 2020.

That regulations in off-street car parks are eased to provide NHS and Social Care workers with free parking concessions as result of the Covid-19 outbreak.

That the car parks at Mote Park, Cobtree Park and Lockmeadow are closed to facilitate public social distancing in line with Government guidelines.

2.16 Civil Parking Enforcement activity remained critical throughout Maidstone during the emergency lockdown period to preserve highway safety and maintain good access for emergency services and refuse teams. As a result, the level of deployed hours of enforcement patrols has remained consistent with contracted levels. However, the number of contraventions was reduced due to the limited number of vehicle movements throughout the lockdown period.

Contraventions / Notices issued



2.17 Enforcement patrols continued to manage school keep clear markings as it was necessary to keep school entrances clear for key worker's children who had to continue going to school.

2.18 Enforcement of loading bays also remained important to maintain essential food store deliveries as was the management of disabled bays to ensure that Blue Badge Holders had good access to those facilities that remained open.

- 2.19 The processing of Civil Parking Enforcement appeals, and case progression continued throughout the period of lockdown in line with current legislation. Mitigation presented as part of an appeal in relation to Covid-19 continues to be carefully considered to ensure a fair and balanced enforcement process.
- 2.20 Following a return to normal operations on 1 July 2020, a press release was published in tandem with the issue of advisory notices to those drivers continuing to display resident permits in car parks or parking on 30 minute yellow line restrictions to improve compliance levels before Penalty Charge Notice issue.
- 2.21 Following the introduction of The Taking Control of Goods and Certification of Enforcement Agents (Amendment) (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 in March, Warrant enforcement at residential premises and on highways was suspended by bailiff recovery teams. However, Warrants remain active for 12 months and normal recovery operations have recently been reintroduced on 24th August 2020 in line with current legislation.

Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders

- 2.22 KCC were successful in a bid to the DfT for Emergency Active Travel Funding (EATF), to deliver experimental road space reallocation schemes in order to encourage and active travel and enable social distancing. For Maidstone, KCC have been able to secure the funding to deliver trials of two schemes which MBC had previously identified as part of the 2016 Infrastructure Delivery Plan. These schemes include the pedestrianisation of Earl Street and the installation of a cycle lane along King Street, between the A249 and Wyke Manor Road.
- 2.23 These measures are being delivered using Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders, which involves installing a trial version of the scheme, then undertaking a public consultation process while the trial is live in order to fine tune the scheme and form a view as to whether a permanent solution may be viable and supported.
- 2.24 These schemes are intended to provide suitable infrastructure so that more journeys can be safely undertaken in a way that does not worsen air pollution or congestion, does improve health (particularly respiratory health), and has proven benefits to local economies. These aims are of particular importance during the current pandemic; however, it is also true that achieving them has inherent costs. Principally, aside from the funding, achieving the above described goals requires the addition of some highway space being allocated to cycles and, therefore, some reallocation away from existing uses.
- 2.25 One such use is parking and the EATF schemes for Maidstone do involve some slight reduction in the number of on-street Pay & Display parking spaces in the town centre. As a result, there is a potential loss of revenue from parking provision during this trial however it is also possible that this will have no discernible impact on parking revenue. The reason for the uncertainty around revenue impact is the lack of evidence to support whether the removal of a small number of parking spaces would mean that

visitors abandon entirely parking in a town centre P&D space, or simply go to another location. It is also unknown what proportion of individuals in that latter group would go to an MBC car park, or a private one.

2.26 Consultation on this scheme will be ongoing throughout the trial and it is recommended that the Parking Services team observe any discernible impact on parking revenue during and raise any resultant issues with Kent County Council, so that proportionate solutions can be identified.

Financial Implications

2.27 Covid-19 and the lockdown have had a significant impact on parking income with a dramatic reduction in occupancy levels. The table below provides a summary of income levels for off street pay and display car parks for the first 18 weeks of the year and illustrates the decline in income compared to the same period in 2019/20. It does also however show the early signs of recovery as the town centre reopened in early July (week 14), although occupancy rates are still only around 40% of what would normally be expected at this time of year.

Week No	Budget 20/21	Income 20/21	Income 19/20	Variance 19/20- 20/21	Year on Year variance (%)
1	£39,133	£8,924	£38,080	-£29,156	-77%
2	£43,794	£1,082	£39,392	-£38,310	-97%
3	£42,902	£1,085	£36,813	-£35,729	-97%
4	£39,502	£1,290	£33,804	-£32,514	-96%
5	£41,945	£1,439	£38,993	-£37,554	-96%
6	£38,968	£5,390	£36,947	-£31,556	-85%
7	£40,732	£4,921	£35,992	-£31,071	-86%
8	£38,194	£4,448	£35,677	-£31,229	-88%
9	£40,458	£3,778	£36,924	-£33,146	-90%
10	£41,172	£11,743	£35,306	-£23,563	-67%
11	£40,822	£5,753	£37,357	-£31,604	-85%
12	£39,663	£13,700	£36,615	-£22,915	-63%
13	£40,697	£10,180	£36,961	-£26,781	-72%
14	£40,432	£23,200	£36,697	-£13,496	-37%
15	£39,726	£14,460	£36,449	-£21,989	-60%
16	£41,979	£17,475	£37,309	-£19,834	-53%
17	£42,022	£17,520	£36,988	-£19,468	-53%
18	£43,794	£17,663	£37,695	-£20,033	-53%
Total	£735,935	£164,051	£664,000	-£499,949	-75%

2.28 This, along with a marked reduction in income from on street parking and penalty charge notices is expected to give rise to an overall budget shortfall of £1.1m in this area. Further detail and contextual information regarding these variances are provided within the first quarter financial update report which is also on the agenda for this committee meeting.

2.29 As part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the committee is asked to consider a recommendation that the parking tariff increases agreed and planned for 1st April 2020, now be implemented on 1st April 2021, owing to the impacts and uncertainties brought about by the pandemic. These increases were originally agreed by the Committee on 7th January 2020. The reasons for implementing the increases remain valid, namely that the increases are consistent with the Council's charging policy and they support the requirement that the Council delivers a balanced budget. Failing to implement the increases would create budget pressures elsewhere at a time when the Council's budget is already under severe pressure owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

Option 1 - The committee is asked to note the update and agree that the parking tariff increases agreed and planned for 1st April 2020, now be implemented on 1st April 2021, owing to the impacts and uncertainties brought about by the pandemic.

Option 2 - The committee could elect to reinstate the planned increases to parking charges sooner, however this is not recommended at this stage as the deferral of the increase is intended to stabilise operations and support local economic recovery.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The preferred option is Option 1 as set above. The proposed deferral of parking tariff increases is intended to stabilise operations and support recovery by encouraging local economic revival.

5. RISK

5.1 This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications which arise from the recommendations.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 The situation will continue to be monitored closely by officers. Budgetary implications will be given further consideration as part of future financial updates to the committee, and through the development of the medium-term financial strategy for 2021/22 onwards.

7. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Local Authority Parking and Traffic Management Operational Advice during Covid-19
-

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.



Version 1 – 24th March 2020

Introduction

This guidance has been produced jointly by the British Parking Association, London Councils and the Local Government Association to assist local authorities to consider appropriate temporary measures in the unprecedented and very challenging circumstances around Covid-19. The authors of this advice will keep it under constant review in light of the rapidly changing situation and update & reissue as necessary. There will be appropriate publicity to accompany this advice, which will be shared with communication leads.

Benefits of Parking Management

Parking management is an important public service, which provides benefits to motorists and the wider community. Those benefits include maintaining road safety and ensuring access to goods and services. This is extremely important, particularly for certain key workers, as local authorities aim to keep providing essential services at this challenging time.

Enforcement

Without some level of enforcement, authorities will not be able to ensure good levels of compliance with important parking controls to manage their highways effectively.

It is therefore likely that authorities will need to continue to deploy their enforcement teams in some capacity to focus their reduced parking resources on priority areas and controls. Enforcement officers should be focused on providing help and advice about where people can and can't park and only issue a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) where absolutely necessary.

It is recommended that any enforcement activity focuses on the more serious 'higher level' contraventions and incidents of obstructive or dangerous parking that could have a more significant impact on safety and access for emergency and essential services. This would include yellow lines at junctions, loading restrictions, zig zags at crossings and obstruction of dropped kerbs.

Those local authorities that undertake vehicle removals should only do so if a vehicle is parked dangerously or obstructing traffic flow. Where possible, any vehicle that needs to be removed should be relocated to a safe, lawful position close by on street rather than removed to the vehicle pound. Removing to a pound should absolutely be a last resort.

It is likely that in residential areas, parking demand may currently outstrip supply if most residents are at staying at home. This additional pressure will need to be managed carefully to prevent obstructive parking hindering emergency services and the delivery of essential supplies and services, such as waste collection. However, to especially help those who are self-isolating, authorities should take a pragmatic approach to unlawful parking if it is not dangerous or causing an obstruction, particularly in residential controlled parking zones.

Authorities should consider maximising parking spaces in one-hour single yellow line restrictions where commuters might usually park, by relaxing those parking restrictions to enable home-working. Authorities should also consider temporary extensions to their residents permits for the next 3 months and then keep this under review.

Supporting NHS and Critical Key Workers

Wherever possible it is important to provide help and support to critical key workers, especially NHS staff, the emergency services and community volunteers, frontline transport and council workers and those providing direct support helping unwell and vulnerable people in their communities.

These workers may be working longer hours and may no longer have the full range of travel choices they would normally have, such as public transport. This means that they may be struggling to find and pay for somewhere to park near their place of work or at a patient's home.

Authorities should therefore consider providing exemptions for NHS staff and critical key workers to use on and off-street parking bays without time restriction or charge. This would include any council car parks, on-street paid for parking bays and permit bays in controlled parking zones.

Where necessary at certain key locations, authorities may wish to explore opportunities to increase parking capacity by talking to closed business, shopping centres or opening parks for additional key worker parking.

If parking capacity permits, authorities may consider relaxing or reducing the hours of some controlled parking zones around hospitals, clinics and control centres to assist the activities of critical key workers.

Managing Critical Key Worker Exemptions

How exemptions are managed will depend on the individual authority's parking systems and processes, as well as the availability and capacity of already stretched staff.

Where virtual permit systems exist, authorities may be able to invite key workers to register online and provide some minimal evidence of their key worker status and vehicle details, so they can be "whitelisted" either for the entire authority area or for a specific controlled area near their place of work.

Where physical permits are needed, authorities should consider emailing a temporary permit which can be self-printed and displayed within the vehicle.

It may not be possible for authorities to implement any new permit regime or may take time to make any of the suggested changes. In the interim, relevant key workers should be asked to display a notice in their vehicle advising that they are engaged in essential key worker activities.

Despite the introduction of the relaxation of controls for some key workers, it is possible that some may still receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). Any key worker in receipt of a PCN should challenge this in the usual way. Authorities should treat any appeals sympathetically in accordance with this guidance and any evidence provided to support the appeal. Where possible the process should be made as simple as possible for key workers to avoid taking up their valuable time and to reduce administrative burden on already stretched authorities.

Civil Enforcement Officers should be reminded of the importance of capturing any supporting evidence that is displayed in a vehicle indicating that the driver is a key worker and engaged in important 'emergency activity'. Consideration as to whether to issue a PCN if a note is displayed should be made depending on the parking control contravened.

Moving Traffic Contraventions – London and Wales only

Most moving traffic controls, such as no entries, banned turns and yellow boxes are for important safety and traffic management purposes. The continuation of enforcement is therefore likely to be important to ensure compliance. However, authorities should consider whether to continue the enforcement of non-safety critical controls.

STRATEGIC PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

7 October 2020

1st Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring Report 2020/21

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee
Lead Head of Service	Mark Green, Director of Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Authors	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client) Carly Benville, Senior Business Analyst
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the 2020/21 financial and performance position for the services reporting into the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee (SPI) as at 30th June 2020 (Quarter 1). The primary focus is on:

- The 2020/21 Revenue and Capital budgets; and
- The 2020/21 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that relate to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045.

The combined reporting of the financial and performance position enables the Committee to consider and comment on the issues raised and actions being taken to address both budget pressures and performance issues in their proper context, reflecting the fact that the financial and performance-related fortunes of the Council are inextricably linked. The report for this quarter has a particular focus on the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the Council's financial position and performance.

Budget Monitoring

Current forecasts indicate that overall net expenditure for the services reporting to SPI is £596,000, compared to the approved revised budget of -£78,000, representing a net income shortfall of £674,000 for the year. It is anticipated that this will be partially mitigated by the recently announced government scheme to compensate councils for lost sales, fees and charges income.

Capital expenditure for the services reporting to SPI of £12,000 has been incurred against the approved budget of £1.03m. This is forecast to be fully spent by the end of the financial year.

Performance Monitoring

Overall, 83.3% (5) of (6) targetable quarterly key performance indicators (KPIs) reportable to SPI achieved the Quarter 1 (Q1) target.

Purpose of Report

The report enables the Committee to consider and comment on the issues raised and actions being taken to address both budget pressures and performance issues as at 30th June 2020.

This report makes the following Recommendations to the Committee:

1. That the Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 1 for 2020/21, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted.
2. That the Capital position at the end of Quarter 1 be noted; and
3. That the Performance position as at Quarter 1 for 2020/21, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted.

Timetable

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee	7 October 2020

1st Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring Report 2020/21

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p>Impact on Corporate Priorities</p>	<p>This report monitors actual activity against the revenue budget and other financial matters set by Council for the financial year. The budget is set in accordance with the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy which is linked to the Strategic Plan and corporate priorities.</p> <p>The Key Performance Indicators and strategic actions are part of the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2019-45 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. They also cover a wide range of services and priority areas.</p>	<p>Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)</p>
<p>Cross Cutting Objectives</p>	<p>This report enables any links between performance and financial matters to be identified and addressed at an early stage, thereby reducing the risk of compromising the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045, including its cross-cutting objectives.</p>	<p>Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)</p>
<p>Risk Management</p>	<p>This is addressed in Section 5 of this report.</p>	<p>Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)</p>

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Financial	<p>Financial implications are the focus of this report through high level budget monitoring. Budget monitoring ensures that services can react quickly enough to potential resource problems. The process ensures that the Council is not faced by corporate financial problems that may prejudice the delivery of strategic priorities.</p> <p>Performance indicators and targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and determining good value for money. The financial implications of any proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and associated annual budget setting process. Performance issues are highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.</p>	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Staffing	<p>The budget for staffing represents a significant proportion of the direct spend of the Council and is carefully monitored. Any issues in relation to employee costs will be raised in this and future monitoring reports.</p> <p>Having a clear set of performance targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place.</p>	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Legal	<p>The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget and the monitoring process enables the Committee to remain aware of issues and the process to be taken to maintain a balanced budget.</p> <p>There is no statutory duty to report regularly on the Council's performance. However, under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) a best value authority has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. One of the purposes of the Key Performance Indicators is to facilitate the improvement of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of Council services. Regular reports on Council performance help to demonstrate best value and compliance with the statutory duty.</p>	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Privacy and Data Protection	The performance data is held and processed in accordance with the data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 2018 and in line with the Data Quality Policy, which sets out the requirement for ensuring data quality. There is a program for undertaking data quality audits of performance indicators.	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Equalities	There is no impact on Equalities as a result of the recommendations in this report. An EqIA would be carried out as part of a policy or service change should one be identified.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	The performance recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no specific issues arising.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Procurement	Performance Indicators and Strategic Milestones monitor any procurement needed to achieve the outcomes of the Strategic Plan.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2020/21 to 2024/25 - including the budget for 2020/21 - was approved by full Council on 26th February 2020. This report updates the Committee on how its services have performed over the last quarter with regard to revenue and capital expenditure against approved budgets.
- 1.2 The report particularly focuses on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the financial position and performance of the service areas that fall under this committee, and provide some further detail around particular areas of concern.
- 1.3 This report also includes an update to the Committee on progress against its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- 1.4 Attached at **Appendix 1**, is a report setting out the revenue and capital spending position at the Quarter 4 stage. Attached at **Appendix 2**, is a report setting out the position for the KPIs for the corresponding period.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 There are no matters for decision in this report. The Committee is asked to note the contents but may choose to take further action depending on the matters reported here.
-

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In considering the current position on the Revenue budget, the Capital Programme and KPIs at the end of June 2020, the Committee can choose to note this information or could choose to take further action.
- 3.2 The Committee is requested to note the content of the report and agree on any necessary action to be taken in relation to the budget position and/or the KPIs position.
-

4. RISK

- 4.1 This report is presented for information only and has no direct risk management implications.
- 4.2 The Council has produced a balanced budget for both revenue and capital income and expenditure for 2020/21. The budget is set against a backdrop of limited resources and a difficult economic climate. The financial challenge facing the Council has been exacerbated this year by the Covid 19 pandemic and the impact of lockdown on Council services and the local economy. Regular and comprehensive monitoring of the type included in this report ensures early warning of significant issues that may place the Council at financial risk. This gives the Committee the best opportunity to take actions to mitigate such risks.
-

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The KPIs update ("Performance Monitoring") is reported to service committees quarterly: Communities, Housing & Environment Committee; Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee; and the Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee. Each committee will receive a report on the relevant priority action areas. The report is also presented to the Policy & Resources Committee, reporting on the priority areas of "A Thriving Place", "Safe, Clean and Green", "Homes and Communities" and "Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure".
-

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The Quarter 1 Budget & Performance Monitoring reports are being considered by the relevant Service Committees during September and

October 2020, including a full report to the Policy & Resources Committee on 16th September 2020.

- 6.2 Details of the discussions which take place at Service Committees regarding financial and performance management will be reported to Policy and Resources Committee where appropriate.
- 6.3 The Council could choose not to monitor its budget and/or the Strategic Plan and/or make alternative performance management arrangements, such as the frequency of reporting. This is not recommended as it could lead to action not being taken against financial and/or other performance during the year, and the Council failing to deliver its priorities.
- 6.4 There is significant uncertainty regarding the Council's financial position beyond 2020/21, arising from the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis and the Council's role in responding to this. Future finance reports to this committee will ensure that members are kept up to date with this situation as it develops.

7. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: First Quarter Financial Update 2020/21
- Appendix 2: First Quarter Performance Monitoring 2020/21

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

First Quarter Financial Update 2020/21

Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee

7th October 2020

Lead Officer: Mark Green

Report Authors: Ellie Dunnet/Paul Holland

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Part A

Executive Summary & Overview

This report provides members with a financial update for the first quarter of 2020/21, covering activity within this committee's revenue and capital accounts for this period, and a projected outturn for the year.

Members will be aware that since the budget was agreed in February, the position for 2020/21 and future years has changed significantly as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Specific impacts include:

- Redirection of existing resources to support vulnerable people
- Administering government support schemes, notably business rate reliefs and grants
- Temporary closure of many Council facilities
- Reduction in levels of activity in many other Council services
- Income generating activities severely impacted by overall contraction in economic activity
- Change in working patterns, with almost all office-based staff now working from home
- Reduced levels of Council Tax and Business Rates collection.

This has resulted in many service areas reporting or projecting adverse variances against the budget for 2020/21, particularly in relation to income. The overall projection for the council is summarised in table 1 below, and shows that the potential impact of Covid-19 on the council's financial position is £8.547m. These projections are based on information submitted to central government as part of the monthly financial monitoring return which councils have been asked to complete to enable a comprehensive picture of the financial impact of Covid-19 on local authorities to be compiled by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The projections are based on the information available to finance officers at the time of submitting the return and are being regularly updated as the situation unfolds and further information becomes available.

	£000
Additional Spending	1,377
Income Reductions:	
Business Rates (MBC share)	1,901
Council Tax (MBC share)	950
Other Income	4,319
Total	8,547

Table 1, Covid-19 financial impact

It should be noted that the projections detailed within table 1 will not necessarily align to the in year budget outturn projections. This is partly due to the statutory accounting arrangements for council tax and business rates which impact on the timing of when these losses reaching the general fund balance. In addition to this, the variances above reflect an estimate of the financial impact of Covid-19 and do not take into account other factors which may impact on the budget outturn.

To date, support totalling £2.2m has been received from the government. A further support package to compensate for fees and charges losses has been announced recently and will be

confirmed later this month. Any residual in year deficit will need to be met from reserves. Given the all-encompassing impact of Covid-19 across many of the council's services, mitigation for losses will be treated as a corporate exercise, and we will therefore not necessarily seek to apportion all unringfenced support received across service committees.

The impacts which arise from areas within this committee's remit are detailed within section B of this report.

Headline messages arising from other sections of this report are summarised below:

Part B: Revenue budget – Q1 2020/21

- Overall net expenditure for the services reporting to SPI is £0.596m, compared to the profiled approved budget of -£78,000, representing a net income shortfall of £0.674m. Of this, £0.700m is attributable to income shortfalls within parking services. The forecast outturn for planning and development activity at the end of the first quarter is net expenditure of £0.219m.
- We are anticipating funding to mitigate the impact of losses from fees and charges income, however, the value of support to be received will not be confirmed until October. Initial calculations indicate that this funding could be in the region of £1.7m for the council as a whole.

Part C: Capital budget – Q1 2020/21

- Capital expenditure for the services reporting to SPI of £12,000 has been incurred against the approved budget of £1.03m, which is forecast to be fully spent by the end of the financial year.

Part B

First Quarter Revenue Budget 2020/21

B1) Overall Position – SPI Committee

B1.1 The table below provides a detailed summary on the budgeted net income position for SPI services at the end of Quarter 1. The financial figures are presented on an 'accruals' basis (e.g. expenditure for goods and services received, but not yet paid for, is included).

SPI Revenue Budget & Outturn

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Cost Centre	Approved Budget for Year £000	Budget to 30 June 2020 £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Forecast 31 March 2020 £000	Forecast Variance 31 March 2020 £000
Building Regulations Chargeable	-385	-96	-86	-11	-346	-39
Building Control	-1	-0	0	-0	-1	0
Street Naming & Numbering	-82	-20	-3	-18	-37	-45
Development Control Advice	-251	-60	-21	-40	-188	-63
Development Control Appeals	127	13	7	7	127	0
Development Control Majors	-556	-128	-124	-4	-335	-222
Development Control - Other	-712	-177	-177	-1	-496	-215
Development Control Enforcement	68	17	9	8	68	0
Planning Policy	163	49	52	-2	163	0
Neighbourhood Planning	25	25	24	1	25	0
Conservation	-11	-3	0	-4	-11	0
Land Charges	-298	-73	-81	8	-264	-34
Environment Improvements	25	6	1	6	25	0
Development Management Section	967	242	240	2	967	0
Spatial Policy Planning Section	408	91	60	31	404	4
Head of Planning and Development	111	28	30	-2	111	0
Development Management Enforcement Section	185	46	53	-7	185	0
Building Surveying Section	444	100	95	5	444	0
Mid Kent Planning Support Service	395	101	56	45	327	67
Heritage Landscape and Design Section	223	58	58	0	223	0
CIL Management Section	145	36	18	18	145	0
Mid Kent Local Land Charges Section	55	10	6	5	55	0
Salary Slippage	-90	-23	0	-23	-90	0
Name Plates & Notices	19	5	1	4	19	0
Sub-Total - Planning Services	975	245	219	27	1,520	-546

Table 2, Budget & Outturn – Planning Services (first quarter 2020/21)

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Cost Centre	Approved Budget for Year £000	Budget to 30 June 2020 £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Forecast 31 March 2020 £000	Forecast Variance 31 March 2020 £000
On Street Parking	-403	-107	37	-144	-157	-246
Residents Parking	-209	-49	-21	-27	-135	-74
Pay & Display Car Parks	-1,860	-296	182	-478	-1,210	-650
Non Paying Car Parks	11	9	8	1	11	0
Off Street Parking - Enforcement	-125	-32	29	-60	-31	-94
Mote Park Pay & Display	-189	-52	-37	-15	-162	-27
Sandling Road Car Park	4	1	-0	1	4	0
Park & Ride	166	94	82	13	166	0
Socially Desirable Buses	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Transport Services	-10	-2	6	-9	-10	0
Parking Services Section	343	111	91	20	343	0
Sub-Total - Parking Services	-2,271	-323	377	-700	-1,180	-1,091
Committee Total	-1,297	-78	596	-674	340	-1,636

Table 3, Budget & Outturn – Parking Services & Committee Total (first quarter 2020/21)

B1.2 The table shows that at the end of the first quarter overall net expenditure for the services reporting to SPI is £0.596m, compared to the approved budget of -£78,000, representing a net income shortfall of £0.674m. It should be noted that this forecast does not take into account further government support for income losses announced recently. The planned scheme will see councils absorbing losses of up to 5% of planned sales, fees and charges income, with the government compensating for 75p in every pound of 'relevant losses' thereafter. We are therefore confident that the position will improve from the forecasts set out in tables 2 and 3 above.

B1.3 The table indicates that in certain areas, significant variances to the budgeted income levels have emerged during the first quarter of the year. The reasons for the more significant variances are explored in sections B2 and B3.

B2) Planning & Development

B2.1 The initial impact of Covid-19 and lockdown has been minimal, but a delayed impact on income from planning fees is forecast for later in the year as the level of new applications decreases. There are some signs of recovery in terms of application numbers, including the receipt of a two significant sums totalling £40,000 for major developments. The forecasts are based on the circumstances as they stand at present, and assume a gradual return to normal levels of activity, but the timescale of that is less clear, and of course the possibility of a second wave of the virus remains a risk that needs to be considered.

B2.2 Actual net expenditure for the planning & development services is £0.219m against a profiled budget of £0.245m, representing an underspend of £27,000 at the end of the first quarter. However, considering the potential impact of Covid-19 the projection for the end of the year is a shortfall of £0.546m. However, as stated previously, this variance may be partially mitigated through the government's support scheme for lost income. The following table highlights the most significant variances and explains the background to them:

	Positive Variance Q1	Adverse Variance Q1	Year End Forecast Variance
Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee	£000		
PLANNING SERVICES			
Development Control Advice – During the first part of the year there has been a 50% reduction in income for pre-application discussions and Planning Performance Agreements. This trend is expected to continue as the effects of Covid-19 continue to be felt.		-40	-63
Development Control – Majors – Income has been on budget for the first quarter, but there is expected to be a delayed impact from Covid-19 with a forecast reduction in income of potentially up to 75%.		-4	-222
Development Control – Other - Income has been on budget for the first quarter, but there is expected to be a delayed impact from Covid-19 with a forecast reduction in income of potentially up to 60%.		-1	-215
Mid Kent Planning Support Service – This variance reflects a number of vacancies in the team. One post will remain vacant, but the remainder will be recruited to by the middle of the year.	45		67

Table 4, Significant variances – Planning Services (Q1 2020/21)

B3) Parking & Transportation

- B3.1 Covid-19 and the lockdown have had a significant impact on parking income with a dramatic reduction in occupancy levels. There is a separate report on the agenda for this committee which will provide a more detailed update on parking services, and the operational response in this area. Table 5 below provides a summary of income levels for off street pay and display car parks for the first 18 weeks of the year and illustrates the decline in income compared to the same period in 2019/20. It does also however show the early signs of recovery as the town centre reopened in early July (week 14), although occupancy rates are still only around 40% of what would normally be expected at this time of year. It should also be noted that the rise in parking charges that was due to be implemented on 1st April has been deferred.
- B3.2 As with the forecast figures referenced earlier for planning these are based on current circumstances and assume a gradual return to normal levels of activity. In the case of parking this means more footfall in the town centre from both shoppers and office workers. Again the prospect of a second wave of the virus remains a risk.

Week No	Budget 20/21	Income 20/21	Income 19/20	Variance 19/20- 20/21	Year on Year variance (%)
1	£39,133	£8,924	£38,080	-£29,156	-77%
2	£43,794	£1,082	£39,392	-£38,310	-97%
3	£42,902	£1,085	£36,813	-£35,729	-97%
4	£39,502	£1,290	£33,804	-£32,514	-96%
5	£41,945	£1,439	£38,993	-£37,554	-96%
6	£38,968	£5,390	£36,947	-£31,556	-85%
7	£40,732	£4,921	£35,992	-£31,071	-86%
8	£38,194	£4,448	£35,677	-£31,229	-88%
9	£40,458	£3,778	£36,924	-£33,146	-90%
10	£41,172	£11,743	£35,306	-£23,563	-67%
11	£40,822	£5,753	£37,357	-£31,604	-85%
12	£39,663	£13,700	£36,615	-£22,915	-63%
13	£40,697	£10,180	£36,961	-£26,781	-72%
14	£40,432	£23,200	£36,697	-£13,496	-37%
15	£39,726	£14,460	£36,449	-£21,989	-60%
16	£41,979	£17,475	£37,309	-£19,834	-53%
17	£42,022	£17,520	£36,988	-£19,468	-53%
18	£43,794	£17,663	£37,695	-£20,033	-53%
Total	£735,935	£164,051	£664,000	-£499,949	-75%

Table 5, Off-street / Pay & Display income, weeks 1-18 2020/21

B3.2 Actual net expenditure for the parking and transportation services is £0.377m against a profiled net income budget of -£0.3.23m, representing a shortfall of £0.700m at the end of the first quarter. However, considering the potential impact of Covid-19 the projection for the end of the year is a shortfall of £1.091m. As stated previously, it is likely that this variance will be partially mitigated through the government's support scheme for lost income and the year end forecast will improve in line with this once the position has been clarified. The following table highlights the most significant variances and explains the background to them:

	Positive Variance Q1	Adverse Variance Q1	Year End Forecast Variance
Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee	£000		
PARKING SERVICES			
On Street Parking – The effects of Covid-19 have impacted all parking income, although it is recovering slowly now, and this forecast assumes that trend will continue.		-144	-246
Residents Parking – Penalty Charge Notice income has dropped significantly, in part due to restrictions placed on collecting outstanding debts. Income from parking permits has remained at normal levels.		-27	-74
Pay & Display Car Parks - The effects of Covid-19 have impacted all parking income, although it is recovering slowly now, and this forecast assumes that trend will continue.		-478	-650
Off Street Parking – Enforcement – Penalty Charge Notice income has dropped significantly, although as occupancy levels increase in the car parks this is forecast the slowly improve.		-60	-94

Table 6, Significant variances – Parking Services (Q1 2020/21)

B4) Local Plan Review

- B4.1 The Local Plan Review (LPR) process is an important, high profile and continuous task undertaken by the Planning Services team. The associated revenue spending profile however is cyclical and does not fit the conventional 12-month financial planning process for general revenue expenditure. Instead, spending tends to follow the five-year production period of each Local Plan with various peaks and troughs over that time period.
- B4.2 The LPR process is therefore funded through an annual £200,000 revenue contribution, in addition to the existing service budget, with any remaining unspent balances at year end automatically rolled forward into the following financial year. The table below shows the available revenue resources currently allocated to fund LPR activities, the spend at 30 June 2020 and planned further spending over the remainder of the year.

Opening Balance 01/04/2020 (including 2020/21 allocation)	Spending April - June 2020	Forecast Spending July - March 2021	Forecast Remaining Balance 31/03/2021
£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s
508,280	-59,640	-502,222	-53,583

Table 7, Local Plan Review budget (Q1, 2020/21)

- B4.3 Table 7 above identifies that there is a budget of £508,280 available to spend during 2020/21, including unspent resources brought forward from previous years. The forecast spend for 2020/21 exceeds the funding available by £53,583. Officers are currently

working to identify alternative funding or options for controlling spending in this area. The primary reasons for the variance arise from new areas of spending in relation to climate change assessments and the local walking and cycling implementation plan, and the extension of contracts for specialists.

Part C

First Quarter Capital Budget 2020/21



C1) Capital Budget: Strategic Planning & Regeneration Committee (SPI)

C1.1 The position of the 2020/21 SPI element of the Capital Programme at the Quarter 1 stage is presented in Table 3 below. The budget for 2020/21 includes resources brought forward from 2019/20.

Table 4: SPI Capital Programme 2020/21 (@ Quarter 1)

Capital Programme Heading	Estimate 2020/21 £000	Actual to June 2020 £000	Budget Remaining £000	Q2 Profile £000	Q3 Profile £000	Q4 Profile £000	Projected Total Expenditu re £000	Projected Slippage to 2021/22 £000
Strategic Planning & Infrastructure								
Mall Bus Station Redevelopment	947	12	935	15	50	870	947	0
Bridges Gyrotory Scheme	86		86		43	43	86	0
Total	1,033	12	1,021	15	93	913	1,033	0

C1.2 Comments on the variances in the table above are as follows:

- *Mall Bus Station Redevelopment* – work is progressing on the scheme with survey and design work being undertaken so far. It is anticipated that works will commence later in the year with completion due in early 2021.
- *Bridges Gyrotory Scheme* – the residual budget is being used to fund flood prevention works by the Medway Street subway. Designs have been drawn up and the work is now expected to take place during this year.

**First Quarter Performance Monitoring
2020/21**

Key to performance ratings

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

Direction	
	Performance has improved
	Performance has been sustained
	Performance has declined
N/A	No previous data to compare

Performance Summary

RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A ¹	Total
KPIs	5	0	1	1	7
Direction	Up	No Change	Down	N/A	Total
Last Quarter	4	1	2	0	7
Last Year	3	1	3	0	7

- 83.3% (5) of (6) targetable quarterly key performance indicators (KPIs) reportable to the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee achieved the Quarter 1 (Q1) target¹.
- Compared to last quarter (Q4 2019/20), performance for 57.1% (4) of (7) KPIs has improved, 14.3% (1) of (7) KPIs has been sustained, and for 28.6% (2) of (7) KPIs has declined¹.
- Compared to last year (Q1 2019/20), performance for 42.9% (3) of (7) KPIs has improved, 14.3% (1) of (7) KPIs has been sustained, and for 42.9% (3) of (7) KPIs has declined¹.

Embracing Growth & Enabling Infrastructure

Performance Indicator	Q1 2020/21				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend (Last Quarter)	Long Trend (Last Year)

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

* Indicates data that has not been authorised

Performance Indicator	Q1 2020/21				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend (Last Quarter)	Long Trend (Last Year)
Percentage of priority 1 enforcement cases dealt with in time	100%	95%			
Percentage of Priority 2 enforcement cases dealt with in time	93.01%	90%			
Number of enforcement complaints received	148				
Number of affordable homes delivered (Gross)*	33	45			
Processing of planning applications: Major applications (NI 157a)	100%	92%			
Processing of planning applications: Minor applications (NI 157b)	99.10%	99%			
Processing of planning applications: Other applications (NI 157c)	100%	99%			
Affordable homes as a percentage of all new homes	Annual KPI				
Net additional homes provided (NI 154)	Annual KPI				

Please note, August 2020 will be the first month that data is recorded for the new 'Open planning enforcement cases' KPI. A monthly figure will be captured at the beginning of every month and reported going forwards.

Under 'Embracing Growth & Enabling Infrastructure', all targetable quarterly KPIs were met bar one which missed its quarterly target by more than 10%. Please note one KPI, 'Number of enforcement complaints received' is an information-only KPI for Q1 2020/21.

The '**Number of affordable homes delivered (Gross)**' KPI achieved a figure of 33 in Q1 2020/21, made up of 18 shared ownership homes delivered (gross) and 15 social rented homes delivered (gross). For the same quarter last year (Q1 2019/20), 56 homes had been delivered. Last quarter (Q4 2019/20), 142 affordable homes (gross) had been delivered. Due to coronavirus (COVID-19), RP programmes are being reviewed for all sites, with affordable units being constructed for the remainder of the 2020/21 year. The team responsible for this KPI anticipates that starts on site and completions will be affected and delayed, which can have an impact on Maidstone Borough Council's ability to meet quarterly and end of year targets.

Please note, the following data was unavailable in the SPI End of Year Outturn 2019/20 report:

Indicator	Annual 2019/20	Annual Target 2019/20	Direction of travel	Annual Status
Affordable homes as a percentage of all new homes	24.92%	20%	↑	✓
Net additional homes provided (NI 154)	1304	973	↑	✓