

**STRATEGIC PLANNING
SUSTAINABILITY &
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

14TH March 2017

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

Yes

Maidstone Borough Local Plan: Proposed Main Modifications and Minor Changes

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transport Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Sarah Anderton, Principal Planning Officer (Spatial Policy)
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the publication of the schedule of proposed Main Modifications to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan in Appendix I for public consultation be approved.
2. That the publication of the schedule of proposed Minor Changes to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan in Appendix II for public consultation be approved.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – the Local Plan aims to plan positively for future growth in a sustainable way and protect the borough’s environmental assets
- Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough – the Local Plan also aims to plan positively for growth of the local economy whilst also protecting the environmental assets which make the borough such an attractive place to work.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transport Committee	14 th March 2017

Maidstone Borough Local Plan: Proposed Main Modifications and Minor Changes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 At its meeting on 18th April 2016, the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee agreed a Schedule of Proposed Changes to be sent to the Planning Inspectorate alongside the submission of the draft Local Plan. During the subsequent Examination in Public, a number of further changes to the draft Plan have been proposed and considered by the Inspector. The Inspector has confirmed which changes he now wishes to be subject to public consultation. These changes are termed 'proposed Main Modifications' to the draft Local Plan and they are the changes which, at this stage, the Inspector considers will be needed in order for him to be able to find the Plan sound.
- 1.2 The proposed Main Modifications must be subject to both public consultation and a Sustainability Appraisal to inform the Inspector's conclusions on the draft Plan's soundness in his final report. The Committee is recommended to approve the publication of the schedule of proposed Main Modifications for public consultation. The consultation period will be 7 (seven) weeks to take account of the Easter and May Day bank holidays.
- 1.3 There is a further category of proposed changes termed Minor Changes which update or correct the Plan or are consequential to one or more of the Main Modifications. The Minor Changes include changes to the policies map. The Inspector does not wish to consider these Minor Changes as they do not impact on the soundness of the Plan and will not form part of his final report. Nonetheless it is recommended that the schedule of Minor Changes is also subject to public consultation to give an overall picture of the Plan changes that are proposed.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The draft Local Plan was submitted for Examination in Public on 20th May 2016. The Examination Hearings commenced on 4th October 2016 and there has been a total of 21 days of hearings, the most recent taking place on Tuesday 24th January 2017. Prior to the commencement of the Hearings, the Borough Council wrote to the Inspector requesting formally that he recommend Main Modifications to the Borough Council as part of the Examination process if he considered that such changes would be needed for him to be able to find the draft Plan sound.
- 2.2 To recap, in his Interim Findings, the Inspector affirms that the Duty to Co-operate has been complied with and he does not give any signal that the other legal and procedural requirements have not been met. He must also judge the draft Plan against the tests of soundness which are as follows;

- **Positively prepared** – the Plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** – the Plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- **Effective** – the Plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – the Plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

2.3 The Schedule of Proposed Changes approved by this Committee on 18th April 2016 was submitted alongside the Plan on 20th May 2016. Since then, the proposed changes have been steadily added to as the Examination process has progressed. The changes have resulted from the discussion at the hearings to address issues raised by the Inspector and in response to his specific requests.

2.4 The Inspector is only concerned with those changes to the Plan's policies and supporting text needed to make the document sound. These changes are termed 'Main Modifications'. It is not the Inspector's role to recommend other changes which would make the Plan 'more sound' or generally improve it in other ways.

2.5 The Inspector has confirmed that the proposed Main Modifications listed in Appendix I are the ones he wants to be the subject to public consultation. He needs to understand interested parties' views on these proposed Main Modifications before he reaches his final conclusions on the Plan and the changes which are required to it. These conclusions and recommendations will be set out in his final report to the Council.

2.6 The Interim Findings issued on 22nd December 2016 highlight some of the specific matters requiring Main Modifications but there are also further matters, not covered in the Interim Findings, for which Main Modifications are required. A Sustainability Appraisal of the proposed Main Modifications is also needed to inform the Inspector's deliberations.

2.7 The proposed Main Modifications are set out in full in the schedule in Appendix I. Each proposed Main Modification is identified with a 'MM' reference which relates to a single change or, in some instances, a group of changes to one section of the Plan. Some key aspects of the proposed Main Modifications to highlight are as follows;

- Updated housing requirement and housing land supply position
- Infrastructure requirements
- Changes to housing site allocations and the Broad Locations
- Changes to SP17 – Countryside

- Minerals safeguarding
- Employment – offices provision and changes to the criteria for Woodcut Farm, Maidstone East/Royal Mail Sorting Office and Mote Road
- New policy for the Baltic Wharf site
- New policies for built heritage
- Change to the policy for development on brownfield land
- Reconfigured air quality policy
- Change to housing density policy
- Change to affordable housing site threshold
- Changes to the expansion of rural businesses policy
- More detailed and specific monitoring indicators
- New policy for the Local Plan Review
- Restructuring of the Plan to identify strategic policies to assist neighbourhood plans

2.8 Note: for ease, the following section quotes the Policy/paragraph numbers from the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan. The proposed restructuring of the Plan (explained below) and other Modifications will result in numbering changes throughout the final version of the Plan.

2.9 **Updated housing requirement and housing land supply position (Main Modification MM1):** In his Interim Findings, the Inspector indicated that the borough's objectively assessed housing need figure should stand at 17,600 dwellings (2011-31). This change is incorporated in the overall strategy policy of the Plan (Policy SS1). The components of the housing land supply in Table 4.1 of the Plan are also updated to a base date of 31st March 2016 and to take account of the Inspector's Interim Findings, in particular in respect of changes to specific housing site allocations and the Broad Locations (see below). The Inspector has not instructed the Council to consider allocating additional housing sites. He is explicit that the 1st April 2016 5 year supply position should be strengthened as a consequence of adjustments he proposes and continue to be strong in subsequent years¹.

2.10 **Infrastructure requirements (MM4, MM6):** The policies for the individual settlements now specify the health centres and surgeries to which health infrastructure improvements contributions will be directed (MM4). This information was not available when the Regulation 19 version of the Plan was prepared.

2.11 In his Interim Findings the Inspector supports highway mitigation measures to serve the housing sites in south east Maidstone to include highway capacity improvements and improved bus services supported by bus priority measures. He is specific that "a bus lane would enhance the speed and reliability of bus services and provide a strong incentive for modal shift from car to bus use that would benefit all road users including other car drivers"². He also supports the bus lane in the context of reducing traffic emissions³ and identifies that it is a measure for which developer funding is available.

¹ Paragraph 98 of the Inspector's Interim findings

² Paragraph 56

³ Paragraph 118

In response, a reference to the installation of an extended bus lane in Sutton Road is added to Policy SP3 – South East Maidstone (MM6).

2.12 There are also a number of individual changes in the schedule which relate to the particular infrastructure requirements in certain settlements or for specific sites.

2.13 **Capacity changes to specific housing allocations/Broad Locations:** In his Interim Findings, the Inspector took the view that two sites on Boughton Lane, Maidstone should not be allocated because of the lack of an adequate scheme of highways mitigation. These sites are;

- **H1(29) New Line Learning** – 220 dwellings (MM14, MM22)
- **H1(53) Boughton Lane** - 75 dwellings (MM14, MM26)

2.14 The allocations will be deleted from the policies map (policies map changes are categorised as minor changes, not Main Modifications). The New Line Learning site has historically been part of the urban area⁴ and the urban boundary will continue to include this site. The urban boundary will exclude the Boughton Lane site.

2.15 During the course of the Examination, a number of adjustments were made to the housing yield on other sites;

- **H1(11) Springfield, Royal Engineers Road** – increase from 500 dwellings to 692 dwellings to reflect updated housing monitoring information (MM14, MM20)
- **H1(30) West of Eclipse** – increase from 35 dwellings to 50 dwellings as a result of the discussion at the hearing (MM14, MM23)
- **H1(42) – Tanyard Farm, Lenham** - reduction from 155 to 145 dwellings to provide for views across the site towards the Lenham Cross (MM14, MM25)

2.16 In the Interim Findings the Inspector concludes that **Syngenta, Yalding** should not be allocated as a mixed housing and employment site (Policy RMX1(4)). The Inspector was not persuaded that a housing scheme could be adequately mitigated from flood risk without increasing the risk elsewhere. The proposed Main Modification replaces the allocation policy with a policy which positively supports alternative uses for this substantial brownfield site which are compatible with the site's flood status, subject to a comprehensive flood mitigation scheme being delivered (MM36).

2.17 Following discussion at the hearings, the Inspector wrote to the Council on 6th December 2016 setting out his consideration of the **Town Centre Broad Location**⁵. His consideration is reflected in his Interim Findings. He requires the Local Plan to be more specific about the sources of housing supply within the town centre broad location. In response, changes are made to the Plan which specify three sources – redevelopment of The Mall, redevelopment in the riverside area of St Peters Street and through office-

⁴ 2000 and 1993 Maidstone Local Plans

⁵ ED102 http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0019/134560/ED-102-Letter-from-the-Inspector-to-our-Head-of-Planning-about-policy-H21-6-December-2016.pdf

to-residential conversions – to deliver 940 dwellings. This is an increase from the 700 dwelling figure which featured in the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan (MM29, MM30).

- 2.18 The Ministry of Defence's intention to close **Invicta Barracks** in 2027 was confirmed during the course of the Examination. The site could not be fully developed out for 1,300 dwellings by the end of the Plan period; instead the Inspector considers that 500 new homes is a more realistic figure (MM29, MM31). The balance of 800 homes could contribute future housing requirements in the post 2031 period.
- 2.19 The Inspector found that the **Lenham Broad Location** would be capable of delivering 1,000 new homes (reduced from 1,500) in the 10 years from 2021 to 2031 (MM29, MM32). The specific housing site allocations and infrastructure requirements will be established in a Lenham Neighbourhood Plan or, as a failsafe, the Local Plan Review (MM8). The proposed changes to Policy H2(3) specify principles which the relevant plan/s will need to address with respect to housing choice, the range of infrastructure requirements, the integration of the new development with the established village, the provision of green space and landscaping, the protection of biodiversity and flood risk.
- 2.20 In all these cases, consequent adjustments have been made to the overall housing land supply position (MM1).
- 2.21 **Policy SP17 – Countryside (MM11)**: This policy was discussed at length during the Examination. The Inspector wanted to improve the precision of the wording of both the policy and supporting text concerning the Council's duty with respect to AONBs and the NPPF's considerations for development in the AONB and in the Green Belt. The Inspector was not persuaded that the policy should list the types of development that would be appropriate in the countryside as he was concerned that this would not be comprehensive. Instead he favoured the inclusion of the overarching requirement that development should not be permitted unless it complied with other policies in the Plan and would not harm the character or appearance of the countryside.
- 2.22 The design and impact considerations in section (2) of the policy have been inserted into Policy DM34 – Design Principles in the Countryside (MM55). The criterion concerning the loss of shops and other community facilities in the countryside is deleted as this issue is specifically addressed in Policy DM18(4) – District Centres, Local Centres and Local Shops and Facilities. The protection of natural and historic features (section (9) of the Policy) is addressed in Policy DM3 – Natural Environment and the new policy DMx – Development affecting Designated and Non-Designated Heritage Assets.
- 2.23 **Minerals Safeguarding (MM16)**: The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan which was adopted in July 2016 identifies Mineral Safeguarding Areas whose purpose is to avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of mineral resources through incompatible development. Development proposals coming forward within the Minerals Safeguarding Areas will therefore need to comply with minerals safeguarding policies in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan. The extent of the Minerals Safeguarding Areas will be shown on the Local Plan

policies map. An additional criterion is to be added to the site allocation policies for sites which fall within the safeguarding areas to require a minerals assessment which will assess the viability and practicability of extracting the mineral prior to development.

- 2.24 At the Examination, MBC officers argued that there was insufficient justification to require a minerals assessment for two types of mineral deposits namely Kentish ragstone and industrial sands. As the Inspector has not dissented from this view, the proposed Main Modification relates to sites which coincide with areas of Folkestone Formation Building Sands, Sharp Sands and Gravel Aggregates and Palundina Limestone only.
- 2.25 **Employment sites:** During the Examination process changes were proposed to the Woodcut Farm site allocation policy to more stringently limit building footprints in different parts of the site and to make the landscaping and design requirements more precise (MM39).
- 2.26 Discussion at the Examination also focused on whether the Plan made adequate provision for the new office floorspace which is forecast to be needed in the borough by 2031 particularly as, in the shorter term, viability of new office development is likely to be challenging. In his Interim Findings the Inspector requested that the Council consider options for how the Plan could secure a sufficient supply of office floorspace.
- 2.27 In response to this issue, a number of Main Modifications have been proposed. The Woodcut Farm policy is amended to state that the site will provide land for at least 10,000sqm of office (B1a/b) floorspace and that this will be safeguarded from any alternative use until at least April 2026 or until a Local Plan Review determines that the land should be used for another purpose (MM39).
- 2.28 The site at Mote Road, Maidstone was allocated in the Regulation 19 Local Plan for up to 8,000sqm of offices (Policy EMP1(1)). During the Examination this was refined in recognition of deliverability issues to allocate for site for a residential and office mixed use development. The site will provide at least 2,000sqm of office floorspace subject to a detailed viability assessment (MM38).
- 2.29 The recognition in the supporting text of the Regulation 19 Local Plan that offices could be part of the mix of uses on the Maidstone East/Sorting Office site (RMX1(2)) has now been formalised to a policy requirement stating that the site will deliver 4,000sqm of offices as part of a mixed use redevelopment (MM34).
- 2.30 **Baltic Wharf, St Peters Street, Maidstone (MM37):** The Baltic Wharf site comprises the Grade II listed Powerhub building, the adjoining retail sheds to the south, Raglan House and the car park to the north of the railway line. A policy for the site is now proposed which identifies suitable uses and the considerations by which development proposals will be judged. The policy includes a requirement for comprehensive redevelopment of the site to avoid piecemeal development which could compromise the listed building's restoration.

- 2.31 **Historic Environment Policies (MM12, MM40 & MM57):** In the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan there was a single policy for historic assets, landscape and nature conservation. Historic England considered that the Plan gave insufficient emphasis to the historic environment. In response Main Modifications are proposed to include a separate, dedicated policy to guide the determination of applications affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets (MM40; MM57). Further, a new strategic policy for the historic environment is proposed which will ensure the Plan has the overarching, positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment which is required by the NPPF (MM12).
- 2.32 **Policy DM4 -Development on Brownfield Land (MM41):** Section 2 of this policy sets out the circumstances when residential development of a brownfield site in the countryside will be acceptable. An addition is proposed to confirm that the policy does not apply to residential gardens in the countryside. At the hearing, the Inspector expressed some doubts about the how the policy's requirement for the brownfield site to be 'in close proximity to' one of the Plan's identified settlements would be judged in practice. He preferred to rely on the policy's further requirement for sustainable transport connections to be in place, where reasonable, between the site and settlement. A Main Modification is proposed to delete the respective part of the policy.
- 2.33 **Policy DM6 - Air Quality (MM42):** The Inspector held a specific hearing to debate air quality matters. Revisions to the air quality policy and supporting text reflect the need to assess the potential significance of air quality impacts with regard to the scale, nature and/or location of development, and in accordance with national guidance. The revised policy now sets a clear hierarchical approach based on these factors to inform where the need for an Air Quality Impact Assessment (AQIA) will apply and that mitigation to acceptable levels will be required. The AQMA Action Plan, the emerging the Low Emission Strategy and forthcoming national policy changes are all likely to have implications for the local plan policy. The Council is therefore committed to preparing a DPD on the subject of air quality to ensure the local planning policy framework is both effective and up to date.
- 2.34 **Policy DM12 – Density of Housing Development (MM46):** An addition to this policy requires housing developments to make efficient use of land taking into account the character and location of the area. A proposal which does not achieve this risks being refused planning permission.
- 2.35 **Policy DM13 – Affordable Housing (MM47):** The site size threshold at which affordable housing is required as part of a residential development is changed to 11 dwellings (from 5) or a combined floorspace of greater than 1,000sqm to accord with national guidance.
- 2.36 **Policy DM41 – Expansion of existing businesses in rural areas (MM56):** Again, this is a policy which was debated with the Inspector at the hearings. He favoured a re-structuring to the policy to a) more clearly set out the circumstances when planning permission would be granted and b) set out what the applicant should do if these criteria cannot be achieved.

- 2.37 **Local Plan Monitoring (MM59)**: The Inspector raised concerns about the sufficiency of the Plan's monitoring framework as a tool to measure the policies' performance. He wanted the targets to be more specific, to be capable of being monitored annually and to include triggers for action if sustained performance is below expectation. A replacement monitoring framework is proposed which sets out specific indicators, targets, triggers and actions. The Inspector also proposed the inclusion of some contextual indicators which do not measure the performance of the Plan per se but which will provide trend data for use as background information for future iterations of the Plan e.g. house price:earnings ratio, unemployment rates. The outcomes of the Local Plan monitoring will be reported in the Council's Authority Monitoring Report.
- 2.38 **Local Plan Review (MM60)**: A Main Modification is proposed to make a specific policy commitment to a review of the Local Plan to be adopted by April 2021. The Inspector determines that this is necessary to confirm specific housing allocations for later in the Plan period, particularly for the broad locations. The policy specifies the range of matters which may need to be addressed as part of the review process including updated assessments of housing and employment needs and supply and exploration of the need for additional transport mitigation measures. The Plan period may also be rolled forward by 5 years.
- 2.39 **Re-structuring of the Plan (MM61, MM3)**: The Inspector requested that the strategic policies of the Plan be more clearly identified and the Plan will be restructured to achieve this. The strategic policies comprise the borough-wide spatial strategy which sets development targets and the overall distribution of development across the borough, the spatial policies for the specific settlements and the countryside and those overarching policies dealing with affordable housing, housing mix, economic development, the historic environment, sustainable transport and infrastructure delivery (to have the prefixes SS-, SP-, ID-) as well as the site allocation policies (prefixes H-, EMP-, RMX-, OS- and GT-). The strategic policies exclude the development management policies which set out the detailed policy considerations for specific matters. Neighbourhood plans are required to conform with the strategic policies of the Local Plan so this exercise will provide valuable clarity for neighbourhood planning groups.
- 2.40 This is predominantly a re-structuring exercise which does not introduce additional content to the Plan with the exception of new introductory text at the start of the chapter (MM3) and the new strategic policy for the historic environment discussed above. Also, to note, is that the strategic policy for sustainable transport (MM13) has been created by amalgamating criteria 1 and 2 from the Regulation 19 Policy DM24 – Sustainable Transport and criterion 1 from Policy DM25 – Public Transport.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 2.41 A Sustainability Appraisal is needed to help the Inspector determine whether the proposed Main Modifications will have significant sustainability implications. The Sustainability Appraisal report into the Main Modifications

is included in Appendix II. This concludes that the proposed Modifications will not have significantly different effects from those identified in the Sustainability Appraisal of the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan.

2.42 The SA report will be published as a background document to the proposed Main Modifications consultation and will be sent to the Inspector alongside the consultation responses at the end of the consultation period. At the Inspector's request, two addendums to the Regulation 19 SA report which were prepared during the Examination process will also be published at the same time.

Minor Changes

2.43 In addition to the Main Modifications required for soundness, there will be other, minor changes to make to the content of the Plan. Some such minor changes were included in the Schedule of Proposed Changes approved by this Committee in April 2016. Further such changes have come to light as the Examination has progressed. These minor changes comprise;

- Factual updates;
- Correction of minor errors and inconsistencies;
- Clarifications;
- Consequential changes arising from the Main Modifications; and
- Changes to the policies map. The Inspector has specifically made clear that changes to the policies map are not Main Modifications.

2.44 The schedule of Minor Changes is included in Appendix III. It is recommended that these be published for consultation at the same time as the proposed Main Modifications to give an overall picture of the changes that are proposed to the Plan.

2.45 The Inspector is only concerned with the Main Modifications. He does not wish to consider the consultation responses to the Minor Changes; that will be a matter for the Council. If there are matters of significance raised during the Minor Changes' consultation, it may nonetheless be prudent to bring these to the Inspector's attention.

2.46 When the Inspector's final report is received (assuming it is favourable), a fully revised version of the Local Plan will be prepared incorporating his recommended Main Modifications and all the minor changes. It is likely that there will be some further minor adjustments to the Plan (such as formatting and typographical changes) when the final version of the document is prepared prior to adoption. The fully revised Local Plan will be presented to this Committee's with the request that it be recommended to Full Council for adoption.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 In respect of the schedule of Main Modifications, options for the Committee are as follows;

- 3.2 **Option A: The Committee could decide to approve the publication of the Schedule of Main Modifications for public consultation.** As the schedule comprises the Modifications which the Inspector has indicated may be needed in order for him to find the Plan sound, this option maintains the progress of the Plan and represents the least risk to the Plan ultimately being found sound.
- 3.3 **Option B: The Committee could decide not to publish the Main Modifications for public consultation.** In this event, the Inspector would not be able to recommend the Main Modifications to make the Plan sound. It can be expected that the Inspector would write to the Council advising it to formally withdraw the Plan from Examination. If the Council did not withdraw the Plan, the Inspector's only option would be to issue a final report finding the Plan unsound. In either case, the Council would need to re-start the Plan preparation process, significantly delaying the point at which an adopted Plan could be in place. The Committee will be aware that the Government has previously announced that it will intervene where councils are not making sufficient progress with their Local Plans⁶. Without a substantially-advanced/adopted Local Plan which is compliant with the NPPF, the Council will have radically reduced control over development in the borough. There is risk of 'planning by appeal' for an extended period.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 For the reasons set out, the report recommends that the Committee approves the publication of the Schedule of Main Modifications for public consultation (Option A).
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5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 The public consultation on the Schedule of Proposed Main Modifications is programmed to commence on Friday 31st March and will run until Friday 19th May. The consultation period has been extended to seven weeks to compensate for the Easter and May Day bank holidays. The consultation arrangements will comply with the adopted Statement of Community Involvement. The consultation will be set up to focus on the changed aspects of the Plan specifically; this is not the opportunity for interested parties to raise matters on other, unchanged aspects of the Plan with which they disagree.
- 5.2 All the 'duly made' responses to the Main Modifications will be forwarded to the Inspector along with the Council's responses (where necessary) for his consideration. Having read the consultation responses, he may decide to hold additional hearings to discuss specific matters raised or he may ask for

⁶ Written Statement made by Minister of State for Housing and Planning (Brandon Lewis) on 21st July 2015.

additional written submissions from the Council or other participants. The Council will consider the responses to the Minor Changes.

- 5.3 Assuming there are no additional hearings, the Inspector’s Final Report should be issued by the end of July. The Inspector’s Final Report, together with a finalised version of the Local Plan, will be presented to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee seeking a recommendation to Council to adopt the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Maidstone Borough Local Plan will deliver the spatial objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Strategic Plan. It will also have regard to objectives set out in other council documents, such as the Economic Development Strategy and the Housing Strategy. The Local Plan aims to plan positively for future growth, including economic growth, in a sustainable way and protect the borough’s environmental assets which is central to both the Council’s key corporate priorities.	Head of Planning and Development
Risk Management	The adoption of the Local Plan will reduce the risk of inappropriate development	Head of Planning and Development
Financial	Resources for the preparation of the local plan have been made available within the Council’s revenue budget. This resource is provided from an earmarked reserve and Head of Finance & Resources therefore ring-fenced to this activity.	[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]
Staffing	The team is adequately staffed to progress the Plan to adoption based on the steps set out in this report.	Head of Planning and Development
Legal	On-going legal advice has been provided in relation to the testing of local plans and the procedures to be followed.	Estelle Culligan, Interim Head of Legal Partnership

Equality Impact Needs Assessment	There is no longer a statutory duty to prepare an EqIA for local plans but the EqIA attached at Appendix IV has been completed in order to meet the best practice requirements of the council. All individuals and communities have been engaged in the consultation process in accordance with the equalities legislation and the council's Corporate Equality Policy, and consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement.	[Policy & Information Manager]
Environmental/Sustainable Development	The Local Plan is fundamentally concerned with delivering sustainable development objectives.	Head of Planning and Development
Community Safety	N/A	Head of Planning and Development
Human Rights Act	N/A	Head of Planning and Development
Procurement	Consultants are used to prepare specialist or technical evidence to support the local plan and are appointed in accordance with the council's procurement procedures.	[Head of Service & Section 151 Officer]
Asset Management	N/A	Head of Planning and Development

7. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix I: Schedule of proposed Main Modifications
 - Appendix II: Sustainability Appraisal of the proposed Main Modifications
 - Appendix III: Schedule of proposed Minor Changes
 - Appendix IV: Equalities Impact Assessment of the proposed Main Modifications
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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Maidstone Borough Local Plan (Regulation 19) February 2016

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/docs/February%202016%20Regulation%2019%20Draft%20Local%20Plan.pdf>