

Initial Infrastructure Feedback – LPR

Growth Locations

Introduction

The infrastructure study seeks to provide robust evidence in respect to the capacity of local services to accommodate future plan growth. This evidence builds on existing plans and strategies (eg IDP, KCC strategies and CCG forecasting), will support the deliverability case for the preferred spatial strategy, and underpins compliance of the plan with national policies and legislative frameworks.

Information sent out

Information was provided to organisations with an interest in infrastructure provision in the borough confidentially in Jan 2020 on the basis of the possible development achievable at the growth locations in the Local Plan Review. The data was based on Minimum quantum of development that should be expected (completions 2011-2019 + Local Plan 2017 allocations + extant planning consents), and potential maximums within each growth area expected (completions 2011-2019 + Local Plan 2017 allocations + extant Planning consents + potentially suitable Call for Sites sites).

The growth locations are similar to those set out in the existing Local Plan, but include new areas in the form of potential garden settlements. They can be summarised as:

- Maidstone Town Centre
- Maidstone Urban Area
- Extensions to Maidstone – South, South East, and South West
- Rural Service Centres – Marden, Staplehurst, Headcorn, Harrietsham, Lenham
- Larger Villages – Sutton Valence, Coxheath, Boughton Monchelsea, Eyborne St (Hollingbourne), Yalding
- The Countryside, including a large site at Beltring rail station
- Garden Settlements – Lidsing/Land north of the M2, Heathlands, North of Marden, Leeds-Langley Relief Rd corridor, North of Staplehurst, Pagehurst Farm, Binbury Park

Who was consulted?

The following providers were approached in Jan 2020 to establish the capacity of infrastructure that falls within their jurisdiction:

- KCC Transport
- KCC Waste
- KCC Education
- NHS CCG
- Network Rail & Southeastern Rail
- KCC Highways & Highways England
- MBC parks and leisure
- Utilities network providers

What information was sought?

To help infrastructure providers understand and assess potential development levels, a ranged maximum/minimum quantum of development was expressed for each site. Service providers were specifically asked to comment on:

- How would the maximum potential capacities be serviced;

- what problems or opportunities these levels and locations of development may present;
- potential trigger/tipping points for the provision of infrastructure;
- known capacity or phasing issues arising from the potential development;
- whether there are any absolute constraints to infrastructure delivery;
- provisional infrastructure costs;
- other forms of mitigation;
- potential funding sources.

Feedback has been received from most providers and discussions are ongoing with those who have yet to formally respond. The responses will be fed into a scoring matrix which sets out locational preference for each infrastructure provider, and this will indicate which patterns of growth can be accommodated within existing infrastructure and/or where/how additional infrastructure can be accommodated.

Next Steps

The information provided will be used to create Reasonable Alternative spatial development strategies. These will be consulted on with the providers again to understand the issues and opportunities involved in them. The feedback will inform the Council's LPR Preferred Approach. Estimated dates are:

- Reasonable Alternative feedback August 2020
- Preferred Approach consultation October-November 2020

Summary of Responses

Health

New garden settlements that are considered suitable/ sustainable (Heathlands) have the potential to provide new GP facilities, or expansion of nearby facilities. N of M2 development will link into Medway services and this needs more research.

Harrietsham has poor-quality existing provision and is an opportunity to upgrade. Lenham, Staplehurst, and Coxheath all have the potential to grow/ plans in place to accommodate growth.

Marden has land secured and S106 monies available to accommodate growth of up to 750 patients, but the CCC's view is that there is a need for a new building early on in the development to replace existing premises to accommodate new garden settlement.

Leeds-Langley could be accommodated in existing practices to 2037, but growth post 2037 would result in the need for a new practice.

Headcorn surgery has the space to expand to accommodate new patients.

Beltring development has potential to adversely impact on Yalding/ Marden unless connectivity with expanded Paddock Wood is secured.

A new central Maidstone practice is required over the Plan period, and it is expected that this will come forward as a part of new development.

The spread of Maidstone down the A274 towards Sutton Valence is being felt; the local practice is looking to grow to meet local need, this will ideally include moving onto the A274 itself to optimise bus connectivity, as well as creation of an expanded practice with circa 4,000 additional patient capacity.

Education

There is no scope to increase capacity at existing town centre primary and secondary provision and there are constraints to bringing forward a new school. Growth indicates that a 2FE primary school at each of the centre and south of the urban area may be appropriate.

Lenham would require the provision of a new 2FE primary school.

Potential growth identified for Staplehurst Headcorn, Coxheath and Sutton Valence potentially justifies a new school, however growth in each individual settlement does not justify a new school in any individual location. Furthermore, growth cannot be accommodated from the enlargement of existing schools. Alternative could be to provide a single primary school to serve all three, but this would require significant travel and would not correspond to KCC's planned growth.

Insofar as garden settlements are concerned, all four would require the creation of at least one new primary school within the plan period, which would be designed to be expandable to meet longer-term needs.

For secondary schools, only Lenham has the capacity to expand to accommodate need to 2037 with other settlements being reliant upon the implementation of longer-term strategies (ie the total need post 2037). Post 2037 development would potentially necessitate new schools in the Leeds-Langley and Heathlands areas, however the response suggests that the Heathlands development may be more practical to accommodate through the use of a combination of growth the existing school at Lenham, then eventually the delivery of a new school.

Strategic Road Network & Highways

Ongoing consultation is taking place with KCC and meetings/discussions have taken place since the early inception of the plan. Stage 1 transport modelling work is being undertaken and further, more detailed feedback, will be available once this has been completed. However, KCC have confirmed that while theoretically all green sites can be accommodated it is not at this stage possible to provide a robust assessment of overall or individual development(s) at this stage.

It is noted that there is concern with current congestion on the network & within Maidstone, consequently, support mode shift & reducing the need to travel generally. As such there are potential positives for higher density town centre development, but these need to be realised through policies.

Beltring development may have an impact on the A21, alongside development at Paddock Wood.

There is potential for a significant cumulative impact on M20 J7 & J8 from development across all parts of the borough. Recognition of the potential for a new M20 junction at Lenham, however more modelling work would be required. Cumulative Impact assessment from the development at Marden and Staplehurst on the A21 is required. Financial contributions flagged by Highways England towards upgrades to M20 Junctions 5,6,7,8 & 9 and/or A21 to mitigate development in the Maidstone Urban Area, Harrietsham, Sutton Valence, Headcorn, Langley Heath. Development at Lenham & Heathlands should contribute towards any future new M20 J9a junction.

Gas

The gas landscape is changing, policy is focusing on a reduction in the use of fossil fuels, and national policy regulation may impact on the need for new properties to connect to the gas network, as well as impact overall and per capita gas consumption.

There is a potential need for reinforcement of the gas mains identified, focusing on Marden and land north of the M2. It is anticipated that this cost, as well as that of connecting to the network will be borne by consumers and providers. Marden and land N of M2 are identified as an area in which new development would require reinforcement of the network.

Binbury Park is identified as a location for which it would be more difficult to connect than others in the MBC area.

Waste

The existing Maidstone household waste recycling centre at Tovil is already at capacity, with relatively little scope for capacity improvement. There is a new facility being provided in Tonbridge & Malling which is anticipated to take some capacity from the greater Maidstone urban area. A new facility to the southeast of Maidstone is preferred, potentially on the Leeds-Langley area. It is considered hardest of all to predict and accommodate demand arising from development in areas further from Maidstone, although a LLRR location would mitigate this. Potentially the LLRR alignment would be a suitable location for a new household waste recycling centre.

Rail

There is little Network Rail support for a new station on either line at Lenham Heath. It is recommended that a review of the Maidstone-Ashford branch be undertaken to identify what, if any interventions are appropriate. Development in areas around stations provide opportunities to improve footpaths and intermodal connectivity upgrades around stations, so these are generally supported. M20 J8/ LLRR may provide an opportunity to link to Hollingbourne Station, including upgrade as a parkway. The introduction of Thameslink has the potential to increase capacity, and rebalance favourability towards Maidstone for trips to & from London.

Southeastern suggested that there are a range of opportunities suggested to enhance access to and through stations in the borough. Some of these have the potential to be linked to development, where match funding may be possible.

Water

Southern Water provide fresh water and wastewater for much of the borough. They have provided a risk rating combining the risks of adding additional flow upstream of a WPS, a catchment-level hydraulic risk score, and a regional hydraulic risk score. Generally, the risk is highest in Maidstone, and less further away. There is a requirement for new development to connect to the current network, and a standard charge set up.

Sports, Parks and Leisure

Consultation is ongoing with MBC Parks and Leisure. Open spaces contribute significant social value, as well as contributing to visual amenity and increasing ecological values, health and Green Blue Infrastructure, including formal and informal outdoor parks and leisure spaces are intrinsically linked.

Maidstone's Strategic Plan Vision sets out its ambition to improve health opportunities and reduce inequalities within the borough. Open space and leisure infrastructure is central to delivering this ambition, and broader Green Blue Infrastructure will continue to play a pivotal role in helping to reduce health inequalities and achieve healthier lifestyles. The plan will seek to deliver improved Blue Green Infrastructure over the plan period.