

Name of Review:**'Ready, Steady...Go?'**

The Regeneration & Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee have decided to cover Traffic Congestion as a major review topic for 2011-2012. They wish to investigate the current priorities of the local and regional Transport Plans with a view to making recommendations to reduce congestion and take a full view of what is being achieved in the rest of the Country.

What are the objectives and desired outcomes of the review?

- Identify how to unlock the congestion in Maidstone town;
- Identify opportunities to engage and support the business community in reducing peak traffic roads and establish what businesses in the borough have to come through the town and for what reason;
- Investigate best practice for incentivised traffic reduction (i.e. Chelmsford City Council's, The Essex Transport Strategy: the Local Transport Plan for Essex);
- Examine best practice in established County Towns and other congested town centres in terms of volume, problems and solutions for traffic congestion;
- Investigate the consideration given to new developments by the planning authority in relation to traffic volume and road maintenance; and
- To make recommendations as appropriate.

What equality issues will need to be considered as part of the review – giving consideration to the 9 protected characteristics?

Age, Gender, Race, Sexual Orientation, Faith, Disability, Marriage & Civil Partnership, Pregnancy & Maternity, and Sex

- Check whether there are any issues affecting a protected characteristic when identifying recommendations.

Which witnesses are required?

- Businesses (Invicta Chamber of Commerce, Town Centre Management, Arriva, Nu-venture, Stagecoach)
- John Luckcock, Transport Planner KCC
- Cllr Brian Sweetland, Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste KCC
- Cllr Tony Harwood, Emergency Planning Officer KCC
- Graham Dalton, Highways Agency Chief Executive
- Economic Development (to explore transport issues with business)
- Cllr Norman Hume, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation Essex CC
- John Taylor, Chairman of LSP subcommittee

Other ways to seek evidence e.g. site visits, involving members of the public, consultation. *

Dependant on the Committee Member's experience of this topic prior to the review evidence would be sought by including:

- Visit to the traffic control centre in Maidstone to fully understand the aims, achievements and resources available to the traffic control team;
- Visit to Godstone Control Centre to gain an understanding of other neighbouring traffic control resources and management including other areas identified as demonstrating best practice;
- Visit Chelmsford Borough Council/traffic control centre –alternatively hold meetings with Officers/Members from Chelmsford to allow us to learn from their

experiences as a neighbouring County Town;

- Hold external meetings eg. with employees from public transport and heavy goods companies;
- Evidence from Department for Transport, Highways Agency and other advisory organisations; and
- Desktop research looking at best practice, beacon councils, studies and economic development strategies.

What information/training is needed?

Calendar of important dates relating to important decisions made by the relevant authorities.

Suggested time for review and report completion date

4-6 months

How does the review link to council priorities?

- For Maidstone to have a growing economy

How does this item deliver CfPS effective scrutiny principles?

- 1 Provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers
- 2 Enables the voice and concerns of the public
- 3 Is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role
- 4 Drives improvement in public services

Any co-optees or expert witnesses?

- KCC
- Highways Agency
- Essex CC
- Transport for London and/or Mayor of London
- Other expert/academic witnesses

* What do you know about the equality groups and the make-up of the people using the service or in the area? Qualitative and quantitative information
Think of the wider 'community' including people who possibly do not currently use the service but could or should.