

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 18 MARCH 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Report prepared by Tim Haggood

1. MAIDSTONE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

1.1 Issue for Consideration

- 1.1.1 To consider the points raised in relation to the development of the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS), the explanation of the cost benefit analysis undertaken for the different transport option packages and the information provided regarding the proposed Park and Ride sites at M20 Junction 7 and Linton Crossroads.

1.2 Recommendation of Head of Planning and Development

- 1.2.1 That the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny committee note the points raised in the report for discussion.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 1.3.1 This report has been requested by the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the discussion at the meeting on Tuesday 18th March.
- 1.3.2 The report provides background and context to show how the ITS has developed since the previous draft ITS went out for public consultation in Autumn 2012. Information is then provided to explain the cost benefit analysis undertaken for the different transport option packages. Further information then provides an insight in to the proposed Park and Ride sites at M20 Junction 7 and Linton Crossroads.

1.3.3 Transport Strategy Development

- 1.3.4 The previous draft ITS was based on the results of multi-modal transport modelling commissioned by Kent County Council (KCC) and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). The model was used to test the impact of planned housing and employment growth, together with

background traffic growth, on the local transport network. The previous Local Plan housing target of 10,080 (to 2026) was used. The baseline data that informed the model was collected in 2007 at inner and outer cordon points around the Maidstone urban area. The data showed that the vast majority of vehicular traffic crossing the outer cordon in the morning peak hour was heading to destinations within the town itself, including the town centre, the secondary schools and the hospital. On this basis, the modelling strongly indicated that the provision of strategic highway capacity around the town (for example, the South East Maidstone Strategic Link scheme) would not represent a cost-effective solution to existing and forecast traffic congestion in and around the town centre.

- 1.3.5 These considerations, together with the significant peak period congestion and poor air quality across the urban area, require the ITS to focus primarily on demand management measures (such as Park and Ride services, bus priority measures and enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure), combined with targeted highway capacity improvements at strategic junctions, to enable people to make informed choices about how and when they travel around the borough and to support town centre regeneration.
- 1.3.6 KCC and MBC jointly identified three transport strategy options to address the impact of forecast trip growth over the Local Plan period; namely, Option 1: 'Do Minimum', Option 2: 'Radial P&R Sites' and Option 3 'North / South P&R Spine'.
- 1.3.7 Each of the options was modelled and subject to benefit cost analysis. Option 3 was found to have the most beneficial impact on traffic flows and to represent the greatest value for money. However, concerns over the existing subsidy requirement for Park and Ride and the capital cost of Options 2 and 3 resulted in a modified Option 1 being selected for public consultation in the summer of 2012.
- 1.3.8 The modified Option 1 included the measures as set out in the table below for Option 1 plus a highway capacity improvement scheme for the Maidstone bridges gyratory. However it should be noted that in October 2012, the Joint Transportation Board (JTB) resolved that the level of forecast journey time increase on arterial routes associated with Option 1 was not acceptable. In order to progress the ITS, it was therefore necessary for officers to review and redefine the available options.

Transport Strategy Options		
Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thameslink rail services to London • M20 traffic signals • Increased bus frequencies on all main radial routes into Town Centre to at least every 10 minutes • Romney Place bus lane • Upgrade existing Park & Ride site facilities • Walking & cycling infrastructure • Travel plans for new development sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1 plus: • A229 and A274 Inbound bus / High Occupancy Vehicle Lane • Bus priority measures • Bluebell Hill Park & Ride Site • Sutton Road Park & Ride Site • Linton Corner Park & Ride Site • Newnham Court Park & Ride Site • Improved through bus services to key destinations • Reduction in Town Centre car parking supply • Increase in long-stay parking charges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1 plus: • Park & Ride facilities and services along a north / south spine corridor • Inbound bus / High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes to support P&R • Bus priority measures • New North West Express Loop bus service • Improved through bus services to key destinations • Reduction in Town Centre car parking supply • Increase in long-stay parking charges

1.3.9 Cost Benefit Analysis

1.3.10 Cost benefit analysis was undertaken for Options 2 and 3 in relation to the reference case (Option 1). The analysis assesses the impact of each package of measures against the Department for Transport's (DfT) New Approach to Transport Appraisal (NATA) criteria elements:

- Economy;
- Environment;
- Accessibility and Social Inclusion;
- Integration; and
- Safety.

1.3.11 The primary focus is upon the direct impact of the transport measures upon the economy, along with an accident analysis. A qualitative assessment was undertaken for the other elements.

1.3.12 The economic objective seeks to assess the benefits of the packages of measures against both direct and indirect impacts on the economy. The direct impacts relate to the Transport Economic Efficiency of the package in terms of improvements in journey times and reduction in travel costs. In addition, journey time reliability is also assessed. This is assessed in terms of groups travelling for different purposes, including businesses, commuters and other shopping, leisure and personal trips. The indirect impacts relate to the potential affects upon the wider economy. The economy objective also includes the overall assessment of benefits against the cost to the Public Accounts.

1.3.13 A standard approach to the analysis was undertaken utilising the DfT's Transport User Benefits Appraisal (TUBA) modelling software and in full accordance with WebTAG requirements. The TUBA model assesses the change in travel patterns / demand, travel times, and travel distances between the reference case (Option 1) and the do-something cases (Options 2 and 3) in order to assess the impact upon travel time and vehicle operating costs. Default values of time, and growth in values of time, and vehicle operating costs have been applied (as specified in WebTAG) in order to monetise the benefits / disbenefits associated with the different Options.

1.3.14 The safety objective encompasses two elements: accidents and personal safety and security. The accident analysis has been conducted using COBA modelling software approach to assess the impacts of the package options upon accident levels. A qualitative assessment of road safety and personal security was also undertaken.

1.3.15 An overall assessment of the quantified and monetised impacts from the appraisal process was undertaken in order to provide an overall indication of the scale of the potential costs and benefits associated within each package.

1.3.16 The analysis does not provide a cost benefit figure for Option 1 as it is the reference case for the comparison between the different option packages.

1.3.17 **Quantified Package Performance - Option 2**

1.3.18 The overall net impact of the proposed package of measures in Option 2, in terms of user and non-user benefits, private sector benefits, and Government costs are as follows:

- Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) = 1.9 to 1

1.3.19 The BCR represents a positive indication that the package of measures in Option 2 is considered to generate benefits in excess of the

associated costs. The scheme would also generate inter-peak, off-peak and weekend benefits that are not included within this analysis.

1.3.20 **Quantified Package Performance - Option 3**

1.3.21 The overall net impact of the proposed package of measures in Option 3, in terms of user and non-user benefits, private sector benefits, and Government costs are as follows:

- Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) = 3.6 to 1

1.3.22 The BCR represents a strong positive indication that the package of measures in Option 3 is considered to generate benefits in excess of the associated costs. The scheme would also generate inter-peak, off-peak and weekend benefits that are not included within this analysis.

1.3.23 **Park and Ride Sites**

1.3.24 As shown above Option 3 represents the best benefit to cost ratio. As part of the assessment work undertaken, the provision of Park and Ride sites in the vicinity of M20 Junction 7 and Linton Crossroads was found to have the most beneficial impact on traffic flows and to represent the greatest value for money. On this basis, KCC and MBC officers visited colleagues at Essex County Council and Chelmsford City Council to view the city's new Park and Ride service and to discuss the critical success factors which could be applied in Maidstone. The meeting strengthened the findings of the earlier modelling exercise that a small number of large, purpose-built Park and Ride sites serving distinct catchment areas offer the strongest prospect of becoming commercially viable in the medium term.

1.3.25 The M20 Junction 7 Park and Ride scheme involves the expansion of the existing Sittingbourne Road Park and Ride site on the A249 corridor to the north of Maidstone to provide a 1,000 space facility. The scheme incorporates a single decked car park, with high level security measures, along with modern waiting facilities and information.

1.3.26 A scheme cost estimate of approximately £9.5 million has been calculated. A funding bid is being prepared to the Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF) for the identified scheme costs.

1.3.27 Newnham Court was also considered as a potential Park and Ride location. However the combination of a number of factors confirmed that the Sittingbourne Road site provides a better option for Park and Ride.

1.3.28 The Sittingbourne Road Park and Ride is an existing site and therefore the success of the site can be built on by providing a new enhanced service. The decked car park arrangement can be accommodated within the existing site and also within the context of the wider Eclipse Business Park where the precedent for multi-story buildings has already been set. The new junction arrangement on the A249 Bearsted Road also provides improved access to the site for both buses and cars. This in turn provides better journey times by bus from the Sittingbourne Park and Ride site to the town centre when compared to a potential site at Newnham Court.

1.3.29 Further to this the masterplan produced for Newnham Court did not include provision for a Park and Ride site. The space required was not identified and the masterplan process has subsequently moved on to a stage where provision of a Park and Ride site is not considered feasible.

1.3.30 The Linton Crossroads Park and Ride scheme involves the provision of a 1,000 space facility on a 6.7 hectare site to the west of the A229 Linton Hill and to the south of the B2163 Heath Road, together with complementary bus priority measures on the A229 Loose Road to the north. The scheme is being promoted by the current landowner as part of a larger proposal involving enabling residential development on a 4.2 hectare site to the north west

1.3.31 The Park and Ride site would incorporate an at-grade car park, with high level security measures, together with modern waiting facilities and information. Vehicular access would potentially be provided from both the A229 Linton Hill and the B2163 Heath Road. The car park would cover approximately half of the site, with a woodland area to the south and west sides and landscaping along all boundaries.

1.3.32 A scheme cost estimate of approximately £6.3 million has been calculated. Should planning permission be granted for this scheme and the nearby residential development described above, the majority of these costs (totalling approximately £5 million) would be borne by the developer. On this basis, a contribution of £1.3 million is sought from the SLGF to provide a high quality passenger waiting facility and bus priority measures on the A229 Loose Road to the north.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 N/A

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 N/A

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 N/A

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

- 1. Financial
- 2. Staffing
- 3. Legal
- 4. Equality Impact Needs Assessment
- 5. Environmental/Sustainable Development
- 6. Community Safety
- 7. Human Rights Act
- 8. Procurement
- 9. Asset Management

1.8 Relevant Documents

1.9 None.

1.9.1 Appendices

1.9.2 None.

1.9.3 Background Documents

1.9.4 Maidstone Integrated Parking Strategy Research – Option Appraisal Report

<u>IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?</u>		<u>THIS BOX MUST BE COMPLETED</u>	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If yes, this is a Key Decision because:			
.....			
Wards/Parishes affected:			

