

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Decision Made: 14 December 2023

Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Issue for Decision

To seek approval of the Kent County Council (KCC) Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP) consultation response as drafted by officers and appended to the report in Appendix 1.

Decision Made

That the response to the consultation at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

Reasons for Decision

The KCWIP is part of the Government's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan process. It has a 10-year timeframe but is a 'living document' in that it will be subject to regular review. This process was developed by the Department for Transport between 2016 to present.

These plans are to be used as the primary strategies for walking & cycling investment decisions. They also involve the development of a local cycling and walking infrastructure plans at a district or borough level to support the work of the Local Plan. The key outputs of this process as described by the DfT are threefold:

- a network plan for walking and cycling which identifies preferred routes and core zones for further development.
- a prioritised programme of infrastructure improvements for future investment
- a report which sets out the underlying analysis carried out and provides a narrative which supports the identified improvements and network.

At present Maidstone Borough Council is preparing for the development of its own Local Council Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to cover the Borough. This will be complementary to the KCWIP once developed.

This consultation is the second stage of consultation, but the first public consultation on the KCWIP. The first stage was a closed stakeholder consultation to which the Council did respond in July 2023.

Consultation content

The consultation document deals with two principal issues. Firstly, priority cycling routes proposed for the county, and secondly proposed walking and wheeling zones. These can be located on pages 10 to 16 of background document 1.

The priority cycling routes are those that have been identified to best support

travel by that mode and will be prioritised for investment. Within Maidstone Borough KCC have identified a route between Maidstone East Railway Station and Sittingbourne Railway Station via Detling, Hartlip, Kemlsey & Sittingbourne. A detailed route map has been attached to this report in Background document 2.

The proposed walking and wheeling zones are 2km radius areas from 15 identified town centres where intervention to encourage walking and cycling are proposed. None have been identified for Maidstone Borough.

Maidstone Borough Council response

The proposed full response on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council to the KCWIP consultation can be found in Appendix 1. However, set out below is a summary of that response.

In short, the proposed response makes the following points:

- Maidstone Borough Council would like to see Maidstone town centre as a walking zone in line with its adopted strategies.
- The proposed zones and routes do not appear to factor in projected growth and the Council feels that this should be the case now that the Local Plan Review is at an advanced stage.
- The proposed cycling routes need to be amended to support cycling to the rural service centres as stated in the adopted Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy and Maidstone walking & Cycling Strategy.

The KCWIP document suggests that following the consultation a consultation report will be produced and published. It is planned then intended for the document will be adopted by KCC in Spring 2024. The document will then be used to secure funding for the proposals.

The matter was considered by the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee on 7 December 2023 with support expressed for the report recommendation, taking into account the Committee's comments on the draft response. The response has also been shared with Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum for its views.

The response at appendix 1 to the report takes into account the views expressed by both bodies.

Alternatives considered and why rejected

1. Option 2: That the draft response be approved subject to further comments and changes. Depending on the extent and timing of the receipt of these comments, this would allow the response to be sent by the submission deadline of 10 January 2024.
2. Option 3: That the draft response is not approved. However, this would mean the response would not be sent and the Council's views on the KCWIP would not be provided to KCC.

These options were rejected as the approved response expresses the Council's views on the KCWIP and was subject to consultation with, and received support from, the PIED PAC and Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum.

Background Papers

- Background document 1: Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan: Consultation Document - [Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan | Let's talk Kent](#)
- Background document 2: Kent Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan: Cycling Route 14 Maidstone to Sittingbourne - [Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan | Let's talk Kent](#)

I have read and approved the above decision for the reasons (including possible alternative options rejected) as set out above.



Signed: _____
Councillor Paul Cooper, Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development

Full details of both the report for the decision taken above and any consideration by the relevant Policy Advisory Committee can be found at the following area of the [website](#)

Call-In: Should you be concerned about this decision and wish to call it in, please submit a call-in form signed by any three Members to the Proper Officer by: **5pm on Thursday 21 December 2023**