

AGENDA

MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD MEETING



Date: Wednesday 5 October 2011

Time: 5.00 pm

Venue: Town Hall, High Street,
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Beerling, Mrs Blackmore, Carter, Chell,
Chittenden, Cooke, Cox, Cuming,
Daley, English, Hinder, Hotson,
Robertson, Mrs Stockell, Thick,
Vizzard, Mrs Whittle and J.A. Wilson
(Chairman)

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Notification of Visiting Members

Continued Over/:

Issued on 27 September 2011

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact JANET BARNES on 01622 602242**. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk

Alison Broom

**Alison Broom, Chief Executive, Maidstone Borough Council,
Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ**

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| 4. | Disclosures by Members and Officers | |
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| 6. | Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 July 2011 | 1 - 4 |
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| 8. | Questions/Statements by members of the public | |
| 9. | Report of Kent Highway Services and Maidstone Borough Council - Maidstone Transport Strategy | 5 - 54 |

Registering for Public Speaking

For this special meeting of the Joint Transportation Board, if you wish to speak it should only be in regard to the Item on the Agenda. To book a slot to speak at this special meeting, please contact Janet Barnes on 01622 602242 by 3.30pm on the day of the meeting. Please note that slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis up to a maximum of ten speakers.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 JULY 2011

Present: **Maidstone Borough Council**

**Councillor J.A. Wilson (Chairman), and
Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Cox, Cuming, English,
Hinder and Vizzard**

Kent County Council

**County Councillors Cooke, Daley, Hotson,
Robertson, Mrs Stockell and Mrs Whittle**

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Carter and Chittenden and Parish Councillor Butcher from KALC.

2. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no Substitute Members.

3. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

There were no visiting Members.

4. **URGENT ITEM**

The Chairman stated that in his opinion, the report relating to Kent Highway Services, Members Highways Fund 2010/11 and 2011/12 was urgent because it was not possible to include the item on the Agenda when it was despatched due to I.T. problems.

5. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

Councillor Hinder declared a personal interest in Agenda item 14, Update on Petitions submitted to Kent Highway Services as he is a member of the Boxley Parish Council which supported the Petition on Road Safety Measures along Walderslade Woods Road.

6. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

Councillors Robertson and Mrs Stockell stated that they had been lobbied in respect of Agenda item 10 on the Proposed Trial of 20mph Speed Limits outside Primary Schools within 30mph Limits without Self Enforcing Traffic Calming Measures.

7. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 APRIL 2011

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 April 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed subject to Councillor Cooke being added to the names under the Heading, Kent County Council rather than Maidstone Borough Council and in Minute 54, Binbury Road being referred to as Binbury Lane.

8. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no Petitions.

9. QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr Stuart Jeffrey addressed the Joint Transportation Board on issues raised in the report of the Head of Highways Transportation on the Proposed Trial of 20 mph Speed Limits outside Primary Schools within 30 mph Limits without Self Enforcing Traffic Calming Measures and urged the Board to support the Proposal.

10. PROPOSED TRIAL OF 20 MPH SPEED LIMITS OUTSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOLS WITHIN 30 MPH LIMITS WITHOUT SELF ENFORCING TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

The Board considered the report of the Head of Highway Transportation on the Proposed Trial of 20 mph Speed Limits outside Primary Schools within 30 mph Limits without Self Enforcing Traffic Calming Measures. In addition, it was reported that Kent Police had commented that whilst they would not normally support speed limits without traffic calming measures, they had indicated that they were keen to work with the Kent County Council on this scheme and welcomed the trial. It was indicated that the Officers would work with the Members who had raised these schemes with them and the finer detail of the scheme to be implemented. It was also acknowledged that there were improved accident records in the areas of schools in the last five years.

RESOLVED: That the proposed trial of 20 mph Speed Limits outside Primary Schools in Maidstone on the basis detailed in the report of the Head of Highway Transportation be approved and that local Members be involved in the development of any individual scheme.

11. MAIDSTONE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Board considered the report of the Head of Highway Transportation on the Maidstone Transport Strategy. The Board felt it was important that they were part of the consultation process and that if necessary an additional meeting of the Board could be arranged in order that it could comment on the Transport Strategy.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and that an additional meeting of the Board be set up to consider the matter of the Maidstone Transport Strategy as part of the consultation process on this matter.

12. RESULTS FROM THE HIGHWAY TRACKER SURVEY 2010

The Board considered the report of the Director of Kent Highway Services on the results from the Highway Tracker Survey 2010.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

13. ADDITIONAL FUNDING - SURFACING SITES - UPDATE INFORMATION

The Board considered the report of the Director of Kent Highway Services setting out the additional funding for surfacing sites and updating Members on the latest position.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

14. WINTER DAMAGE REPAIRS - FIND AND FIX UPDATE INFORMATION

The Board considered the report of the Director of Kent Highway Services updating Members on the latest position regarding the winter damage repairs.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

15. UPDATE ON PETITIONS SUBMITTED TO KENT HIGHWAY SERVICES

The Board considered the report of the Head of Transport and Development updating the Committee on the Petitions submitted to Kent Highway Services.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

16. UPDATE ON YALDING HGV SURVEYS

The Board was informed that a report on the surveys had now been prepared but there was some confusion as to what discussions had taken place regarding the document with all the interested parties.

RESOLVED: That the scheduled meeting between the Chairman of Yalding Parish Council, Councillor John Wilson, and County Councillor Mrs Stockell should take place at the earliest opportunity in order to discuss the detail of the Yalding HGV Surveys.

17. UPDATE ON FREIGHT TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Board were informed that work was currently taking place on the Freight Transport Strategy and it was felt that this matter should come before the Board in order for it to give its comment. It was felt that this

matter should be brought to the next meeting of the Board to be held in November.

RESOLVED: That the Freight Transport Strategy be submitted to the next meeting of the Joint Transportation Board in November.

18. KENT HIGHWAYS SERVICES - MEMBER'S HIGHWAYS FUND 2010/11 & 2011/12

The Board considered the report on Kent Highways Services Member's Highways Fund 2010/11 and 2011/12.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

19. DURATION OF MEETING

6.00 p.m. to 7.40 p.m.

Report To: Joint Transportation Board

Date: 5th October 2011

Report Title: Maidstone Transport Strategy

Report Author: Peter Rosevear

Summary:

This report describes the current position with regard to the preparation of a Transport Strategy in support of the Core Strategy of the MBC Local Development Framework

Decision: Report for Information and Comment

Affected Wards: All

Recommendations: Members of this Board are invited to comment on the Draft Transport Strategy, and make a formal response to the Borough Council on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy

Financial Implications:

The measures that will emerge into the final version of the strategy will be funded from a variety of sources, mainly through new development, and including Kent County Council (via the Local Transport Plan), and Maidstone Borough Council.

Purpose of the Report

1. Update Members on the Maidstone Transport Strategy and the Core Strategy consultation process

Background

2. Kent Highway Services and Maidstone Borough Council have been working together on the evolution of a Draft Transport Strategy that would support the expectations of growth identified in the LDF Core Strategy, and address existing and newly created transport issues. The attached document is a draft that describes the existing transport situation in the Borough and the option testing carried out with the multi modal transport model, and goes on to suggest a range of targets through which progress might be monitored.
3. MBC are currently in the process of consulting on the Core Strategy. The statutory period started on the 2nd September and will end on the 14th October. Appendix 3 of the consultation document shows a set of

policy evolution papers. The transport paper (number 6) is also attached as an appendix to this report (As Appendix 1) , and identifies a package of measures that has been evolved through option testing.

4. MBC is currently going through further internal discussion on its parking strategy, including the Park and Ride service and the management of the town centre off-street car parks. A separate Parking Strategy document will emerge in due course.
5. Members of this Board participated in a Transport Workshop in March, and will be aware of the dilemmas at the heart of the transport issues which were described in the briefing note circulated at that time. If there is little or no attempt to address the current congestion, existing residents and businesses will be adversely affected, and future regeneration is likely to be inhibited by the reduced accessibility of potential development sites. However, the measures that might be used to promote sustainable transport and less reliance on the private car may also be a deterrent to the inward investment required to fulfil the LDF Core Strategy's growth aspirations.
6. The package of transport measures emphasises management of the existing network as efficiently as possible, and working towards more sustainable patterns of movement. This is particularly important in regard of the desired prosperity of the town centre, whereby the Borough Council seeks to bring more investment into the town to create jobs. There are also pressing traffic and transport issues around the periphery of the town and in the rural areas to be addressed. The Draft Transport Strategy is attached as Appendix 2.

Views of Local Members

7. All members representing Maidstone wards are invited to comment, both through this Board and directly to the Borough Council.

Views of Statutory Consultees

8. All stakeholders and interested parties now have the opportunity to make representations through the public participation process. Further consultation on transport and parking issues is expected to be needed in due course

Conclusion

9. As previously reported, most of the issues on the highway and transport networks are not new, and many have been the subject of much discussion at this Board and elsewhere. The opportunity now exists to set these issues into the context of the Borough Council's long term spatial planning objectives, and seek to coordinate public and developer funding streams towards potential solutions.

Attachments :- Extract from Core Strategy - Appendix 1

Draft Transport Strategy – Appendix 2

Contact: Peter Rosevear – Kent Highway Services
Email: peterrosevear@maidstone.gov.uk or peter.rosevear@kent.gov.uk

Extract from Core Strategy Appendix 3 – Policy Evolution

Paper 6 - Transport

Introduction

6.1 This paper describes the main elements of the transport strategy that forms Policy CS8. These have evolved from a series of assessments of various development scenarios and packages of transport measures made using a VISUM multi modal transport model.

6.2 The output from these tests provides a means of comparing the potential impact of various development proposals. This is a strategic tool. It is not intended to provide accurate figures for the flows on each road and turning movements at each junction in each peak hour in 2026. However, it provides a base from which to assess the effectiveness of transport measures in dealing with future growth expectations identified in the LDF Core Strategy, using statistics such as traffic flows, travel times on selected routes, and overall network performance. The options tested were (noting that the option labelling is as according to the commissions issued to Jacobs, and is different to the MBC nomenclature):

- Option A – 11,080 new homes, of which 3,725 being in a south east urban extension
- Option B – 10,080 new homes, with a more dispersed distribution
- Option C – 8,200 new homes with a dispersed distribution
- Option S – 10,080 new homes, with a different dispersal pattern (“optimal” option)

Background

6.3 The guiding principles of the measures that have been included in the transport package are those which :-

- a) manage existing resources as efficiently as possible
- b) promote sustainable transport
- c) seek to manage the demand for travel downwards
- d) are achievable within the life of the LDF
- e) are within the bounds of reasonable expectations of available funding

6.4 This emphasises that future transport strategy will not be based on the “predict and provide” approach, but seek to accommodate growth in as sustainable manner as possible.

6.5 The focus of both existing transport issues and future development will be in and around the urban area (the area subject to transport modelling). Therefore the main measures in the transport policy have evolved principally to deal with issues in this part of the Borough. It is fully accepted that there are a number of pressing transport problems in the rural areas, and that the final version of the strategy will have to include additional measures to address them.

6.6 The initial tests identified the scale of the challenge of creating a package of measures that would deal with the growth aspirations. For the “optimal” development option, the size and locations of housing and employment sites were determined by the MBC Cabinet, and the transport package was subsequently evolved to support the this scenario. This package balances the desire to increase the capacity of the transport networks to accommodate the additional demand from the regeneration proposals in the town centre with the financial and land availability issues that are inherent in providing this capacity. Hence the complementary issue of managing the future demand downwards that must be part of the strategy.

6.7 Funding and deliverability issues are particularly relevant to future Park and Ride services (which require commitment to both capital and revenue support) and to demand management by placing restrictions on town centre car parking (which could have a detrimental impact on the inward investment needed to fulfil regeneration aspirations)

Sustainable transport package

6.8 The full set of measures that have evolved from the option testing to contribute to the sustainable transport package is :-

TP1 Reduction of town centre long stay car parking spaces, and an increase in charges(assumed to be a 100% increase in long stay fees)

TP2 Travel Plan requirement for all large new development sites, including reduced car parking provision (assume 15% reduction of single vehicle occupancy)

TP3 Continued liaison with KCC to promote School Travel Plans

TP4 Refreshment of KCC and MBC in-house Travel Plans

- TP5 Maintenance and promotion of car share website (kentjourneyshare.com)
- TP6 Enhancement of County Hall Car Club
- TP7 Cycle Network – improvements to existing network and extension to serve new developments, and improved cycle parking facilities in the town
- TP8 Enhancement of pedestrian route between Maidstone East and Barracks railway stations
- TP9 Maidstone High Street Public Realm Improvement Scheme
- TP10 A274 Park and Ride site (located on Sutton Road)
- TP11 A229 (North) Park and Ride site
- TP12 Upgrade exiting Park and Ride sites at London Road and Willington Street
- TP13 Town Centre Bus Stop Improvements
- TP14 Maidstone East Bus/Rail Interchange Improvements (to be carried out in association with railway station redevelopment)
- TP15 Quality Bus Partnership route improvements
- TP16 General increase in bus frequency on main routes as development is delivered
- TP17¹ A229 Barracks Roundabout conversion to traffic signals (to enhance pedestrian accessibility to development on Whatman Way)*
- TP18 General improvements to assist pedestrian mobility and accessibility
- TP²19 New Pedestrian/Cycle bridge across the River Medway from Earl Street to St Peters Street (depending on long term development on St Peters Street)*
- TP20 Romney Place Bus Lane (to improve access to Chequers Bus Mall)
- TP21 M20 Improvements at Junctions and on main carriageway (detail to be determined through liaison with the Highway Agency)
- TP22 A20 London Road – Enlargement of existing Park and Ride site

¹ TP17 would be intended to support the development of a "Campus Quarter" as identified in the Town Centre Study, should it come forward. It has not been modelled at this stage.

² TP19 is dependent on future potential redevelopment of commercial sites on St Peters Street.

TP23 Thameslink Rail service to Maidstone East (currently scheduled by 2018)

TP24³Rural Service Centre sustainable transport improvements (particularly to encourage walking and cycling)

6.9 It is also important to note that the central area of Maidstone is subject to an Urban Traffic Management and Control system, so the road network is already (and will continue to be) managed as efficiently as possible, in line with the County Council's obligation under the Traffic Management Act.

6.10 Maidstone lies alongside the main access route to Dover and the Channel Tunnel, and thus local development and transport decisions have an impact on the strategic road network. Liaison with the Highways Agency has identified their expected requirements for improvements at the M20 junctions serving Maidstone. These include the introduction of traffic signals at Junction 5, 7, and 8, and the potential for lane reallocation on the main carriageway and collector distributor roads.

Transport model results

6.11 The model produces a range of statistics that demonstrate the predicted situation on the transport networks in 2026. The full set of results is shown in the Option Testing Report that forms part of the Core Strategy Evidence Base.

6.12 Table EN1: Comparison of Person Trips for the Optimal Development Option

Mode	2007 (am)	2026 (am)	2007 (pm)	2026 (pm)
	%	%	%	%
Car	74	69	77	72
Bus	14	14	10	12
Rail	10	12	11	12
P and R	2	5	2	5

6.13 The 2026 figures show a decrease in the proportion of trips undertaken by car and a corresponding rise in the proportion made by sustainable transport. It should be noted that the figures refer to travel by vehicle. It has been assumed that the proportion of total trips made by walking and cycling will increase from the current 12% to 15%, due to the influence of travel planning and infrastructure improvements.

³ TP24 has been identified to ensure that future development sites are fully connected into the pedestrian/cycle route networks in the various villages. The actual needs will be clarified once the specific development sites have been identified through the Land Allocations process

6.14 However, although the optimal option shows a proportional decrease in trips by car, the total number of trips made on the network rises considerably. The total number of individual journeys is predicted to rise considerably between 2007 and 2026 – from some 36,400 to 44,800 in the morning peak and from 31,400 to 39,100 in the evening. The effect of this rise can be seen in the summary of travel times shown in the tables below. The most representative figures have been taken as the morning peak inbound and the evening peak outbound, as this is when the road network is currently under the greatest pressure. The extent of the routes is shown in the Option Testing Report.

6.15 Table EN2: Comparison of A.M. Inbound Option Travel Times with 2007 Base (average travel time per vehicle in minutes : seconds)

	2007	Option S
A – A274 Sutton Road	16:20	20:19
B – A20 Ashford Road	14:24	14:43
C – A249 Sittingbourne Road	16:59	30:41
D – A229 Royal Engineers Way	10:08	18:34
E – A20 London Road	08:05	10:39
F – A26 Tonbridge Road	10:34	17:56

6.16 Table EN3 : Comparison of P.M. Outbound Travel Times (average travel time per vehicle in minutes : seconds)

	2007	Option S
A – A274 Sutton Road	09:47	14:23
B – A20 Ashford Road	15:12	12:57
C – A249 Sittingbourne Road	06:34	05:17
D – A229 Royal Engineers Way	06:00	17:02
E – A20 London Road	07:58	08:39
F – A26 Tonbridge Road	08:14	06:57

6.17 These figures show a relative stability or reduction in evening peak travel times (apart from the A229), but a combination of results for the morning peak. There are still predictions of considerable increases on some routes, although the modest rises on the other routes suggest that there is considerable scope for drivers to modify their trip patterns to balance out the delays, so that in practice there would be likely to be a general smaller rise in travel times on all the radial routes, rather than dramatic increases on a few. The Option S figures are the most promising results to emerge from the option testing process (other than the 8,200 option which was rejected as being incompatible with employment growth

aspirations and also being unable to generate sufficient funding for the overall Core Strategy infrastructure needs).

6.18 The overall network summary statistics are more concerning, as shown below.

6.19 Table EN4: Comparison of Total Network Delays (vehicle minutes) – A.M. Peak

	Network delay	Increase (total)	Difference (%)
Base 2007	924,780		
Option S	1,468,148	543,368	58.8

6.20 Table EN5: Comparison of Network Delays (vehicle minutes) – P.M. Peak

	Network Delay	Increase (total)	Difference (%)
Base 2007	914,220		
Option S	1,257,422	343,202	37.5

6.21 These results show that the overall congestion on the network is not just confined to the main radial routes, and that the peripheral network is likely to become more congested as drivers seek to avoid the busy central area.

Conclusion

6.22 The objective of the transport strategy is to address the Borough's existing transport problems, and support the expected development growth in the LDF Core Strategy. The package of measures includes a wide range of encouragement for sustainable transport modes, but the picture that emerges indicates that the provision of greater opportunities for sustainable travel would only be taken up if the cost and convenience of making trips is "re-balanced" towards these modes.

6.23 Therefore the package includes both positive investment in the Borough's Park and Ride service, an assumption of a general increase in commercial bus services, and the management of demand by reducing the number of long stay town centre car parking spaces available.

6.24 The figures above indicate the scale of the challenge. Even with a package that includes a doubling of the number of Park and Ride spaces available, and a reduction of at least several hundred long stay parking spaces, the model predicts considerable increases in congestion by 2026, both on the main radial routes and across the network generally.

6.25 Transport is one of the main influences on the economic activity of the Borough. The LDF Core Strategy seeks regeneration and prosperity for the town centre, for which its accessibility is a key component of the success of these policies. The prediction of future growth in both development and its transport impact is not an exact process. Maidstone does not exist in isolation. Decisions made nationally and by neighbouring planning authorities affect both commercial decisions made by potential developers and travel decisions made by individual members of the public on a rolling basis. However, the option testing so far carried out shows that strong support for sustainable transport and demand management will be required to make the town centre attractive to inward investment. It is quite likely that further measures will emerge in response to meet the expectations of both the public and development industry expressed through the Core Strategy public participation process.

Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy

Maidstone Borough Council
in partnership with Kent
County Council



Executive Summary

When it comes to transport the borough of Maidstone faces a variety of challenges from increasing congestion to the growing significance and impact of climate change. Maidstone's Sustainable Integrated Transport Strategy (SITS) looks at these challenges and outlines a range of actions and policies that may help address the issues. The reason we have a Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (SITS) is to support the wide ranging borough wide vision that is captured in the Draft Maidstone Core Strategy. The vision of the Core Strategy seeks

"A prosperous and vibrant future for Maidstone's urban and rural communities whilst retaining and enhancing the borough's distinctive heritage, landscape and character....

By 2026 prosperity will be achieved through sustainable economic growth across the borough supported by the creation of high quality employment opportunities, the regeneration of key sites, continued investment in the Town Centre and improvements to access.....

*There will be an emphasis on sustainable transport access improvements to the town centre and across the borough through an integrated approach to transport strategy to promote the role of Maidstone as a transport hub with national and regional links Measures will be sought to achieve the behavioural change that will be required to support the introduction of an integrated approach to sustainable transport solutions....."*¹

SITS is written in the context of national and local policies and objectives including the Local Transport Plan prepared by Kent County Council² and Growth without Gridlock³. SITS aims to support the aspirations of the development strategy embodied in the Core Strategy and it will look to address specific concerns about pedestrian, cycle and traffic and transport concerns in the borough including all modes of transport such as walking, cycling, driving, rail and bus. Growth without Gridlock looks

¹ Maidstone Core Strategy Public Participation Consultation 2011 Para 4.4 – 4.3

² Check reference

³ Growth without Gridlock – A transport delivery plan for Kent , KCC, December 2010334

specifically at particular issues within the districts in Kent and for Maidstone has indentified congestion within the town centre and areas of poor air quality as particular concerns.

SITS prepared in partnership with Kent County Council looks at the ways in which we can together begin to encourage shifts in behaviour away from use of the private car by individuals towards the promotion of more sustainable means of transport such as increasing patronage of public transport.

Funding of measures that may be required to support the aims and objectives of both the Core Strategy, and indeed the wider Local Development Framework, together with those measures proposed by Kent County Council will be derived from a number of sources:

- KCC's Local Transport Plan (LTP3) (Kent CC)
- Community Infrastructure Levy (Maidstone BC)
- Local Sustainable Transport Fund (Central Gov.)

It should be noted that historically highways investment in the borough has been lower than other parts of Kent and in particular east Kent. The challenge, therefore of providing the necessary infrastructure to meet the challenges of the growth agenda remains to be met.

The majority of current and future potential transport issues are focused on Maidstone as the County Town of Kent with an increasing emphasis on its role as a regionally important transport hub and therefore a large proportion of the measures are concentrated on the Maidstone Town Centre and Urban Area as defined on the proposals map of the Core Strategy.

SITS also is concerned with transport issues in the smaller towns and villages particularly within the rural part of the borough. Growth, whilst directed in the main towards the urban area will also have an impact on the rural part of the borough particularly in respect of transport related to the impact of growth in housing and employment.

Additionally connections between the outlying parishes and the town are very important, both in terms of our major highways routes such as the A229, A274, A249, A20

and A26 and with regard to the provision of appropriate levels of public transport.

There are a number of dilemmas at the heart of the transport debate that are clear. If we continue to make little or no real effort to address current congestion issues and the reasons behind these issues then the quality of life of the residents of the borough and the economic prosperity that is sought to be achieved will be severely affected.

SITS requires significant investment to achieve the potential improvements that it seeks. However investment in significant improvements to sustainable transport requires a clear overall strategy with a strong commitment towards capital funding and public transport services that provide value for money.

SITS aims to encourage the use of sustainable means of transport by reducing the availability of long term parking in the Town Centre, and or increasing parking charges, and or a reduction in the number of peak hour car trips and or improvements to the Park and Ride Services.

What is clear however is that regardless of Maidstone's status as a 'Growth Point' the level of development predicated by the Core Strategy will result in an increasing demand on the highway and transport networks. Maidstone has also been acknowledged as a Regional Transport Hub⁴ and MITS will seek to help fulfil and enhance this role.

SITS has a vital role to play in supporting the development aspirations of the Core Strategy and in providing the framework for appropriate measures that aim to mitigate the impact of the expected growth in demand.

Suggestions for further survey work or other information that requires updating on a regular basis are contained in green boxes.

⁴ South East Regional Spatial Strategy – check reference

The Maidstone Context

In order for SITS to achieve its objectives of providing support for the Core Strategy as it emerges it is necessary to have an accurate picture of the context within which transport is operating in the borough. Information on the current Maidstone context is available from a number of sources and SITS will call upon them including:

- Traffic surveys carried out by Kent Highways Service (KHS) and those prepared to support the running of the Visum multi modal transport system
- Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) Urban Traffic Management and Control System (UTMC)
- Public transport operators data
- The KHS Crash injury database
- Highways Agency traffic data
- MBC's air quality monitoring data
- Joint Transport Reports (MBC/KCC)

Parking Policy

There are four strands to parking policy, which are explored in the Sustainable Integrated Parking Strategy. An overview of the strategy, which will emerge as a Supplementary Planning Document in due course, is shown in Appendix 5. The four elements are :-

- a) The management of the Borough Council's on and off street car parks
- b) The management of the residents' parking zones
- c) The management of the Borough's Park and Ride services
- d) The standards for parking provision at new developments

The Borough manages the number of publicly owned spaces available and the fees that are charged. Most of the streets surrounding the town centre are managed as residents' preferential parking areas. These areas were introduced to prevent drivers from outside of the town using them as free all-day parking,

which caused considerable inconvenience to residents and their deliveries/visitors. Park and Ride services were instigated to take the pressure off of long stay town centre parking and reduce the number of vehicles moving around the central area at peak times. There are currently three sites in operation, providing some 1,500 spaces. They are located on the A20 London Road (to the west of the town), the A249 Old Sittingbourne Road (to the north east), and Willington Street (to the east). The system currently requires considerable annual subsidy by the Borough Council.

The Borough Council's standards for parking provision at new developments are currently following those in PPG13, the former SPD4 document having lost its policy status when the Kent and Medway Structure Plan became obsolete in 2009. The coalition government has recently made changes to sections of PPG13, deleting the emphasis on maximum standards as a tool for restricting car trip generation, and thus giving local authorities more scope to set locally appropriate targets. Kent County Council has proposed an interim standard for residential parking standards through the Kent Design initiative.

There is an expectation that standards for new developments (both residential and commercial) in the town centre will be managed to reflect locally appropriate circumstances, although there is concern that some residential roads are experiencing increasing pressure on on-street parking when houses are converted for multiple occupation. Formal parking standards will be identified in a subsequent SPD.

There are currently some 1,700 off-street spaces in and around the town centre owned and run by the Borough Council. The last full survey of use was published in 2007, and showed that the short stay spaces had some 70% occupancy, and the long stay operated at about 50%.

There are also nearly 4,000 parking spaces associated with retail premises around the town centre (including 1,000 at the Mall Chequers, 760 at Fremlins Walk, and 370 at Sainsburys), and at least a further 4,000 private non-residential spaces attached to various commercial premises. A recent (2010) "snapshot" survey of the latter spaces showed that between a quarter and a third of them were not occupied. This is partly explained by the

amount of vacant office space that exists in the town – over 20% of floorspace is currently unused.

The current situation presents an opportunity for MBC to reduce the number of long stay spaces available, starting with those under their direct control, to assist in managing the potential growth of peak hour traffic. It also adds to the potential use of very positive Travel Plans to restrict town centre parking at new developments and investment in Park and Ride services. There is a potential facility within the UTMC system to use the variable message signs to direct drivers to car parks with vacant spaces, which could assist in making efficient use of spaces when the overall total number is reduced.

The MBC Parking Strategy in Appendix 1 examines these strands in more detail, particularly the fundamental relationship, in transport strategy terms, between the Borough's Park and Ride service and the town centre off-street car parks. The availability of spaces and the levels of fees for both services will have a considerable influence on the future demand for journeys into the town centre by different modes of travel at both the peak and off-peak times.

The peak time congestion issue leads towards further investment in Park and Ride provision, and a reduction in the number of long stay parking spaces available (and/or a substantial rise in fees). This would be intended to accommodate the growth in demand for journeys into the town that are inherent in the Core Strategy policies, but would encourage more use of sustainable means of transport rather than add to an increasing level of congestion.

The off-peak situation is one of encouraging more short stay trips to the town for shopping and other services, again balancing Park and Ride provision with the managing the demand for travel by a change in the pricing structure for short stay spaces.

Overall, there is a need to balance between the use of measures within the Borough Council's control (ie Park and Ride, off-street car parking) as proactive management tools to support the future objective prosperity against their potential deterrent effect. This comes back to the main objective of the transport strategy to manage demand without deterring inward investment.

The Parking Strategy has also examined further measures to support bus priority measures to support future investment in Park and Ride. This includes the potential for construction of new bus lanes and the re-designation of existing carriageway, where available, for bus-only use.

These measures go beyond those which have so far been tested through the transport model. Some are very expensive and radical in their approach, and will need to undergo a viability review before they could be introduced into the overall transport strategy. This review would be aimed at establishing whether schemes could actually achieve funding from the likely available sources, and whether they would be acceptable to MBC and KCC Members, and the general public.

Air Quality

Monitoring carried out by the Borough Council under obligations set under the Environment Act (1995) and the Air Quality Regulations (2000 and 2002) has previously (in 2002 and 2005) identified areas of exceedence of acceptable nitrogen dioxide and particulate levels within the town and on a section of the M20. More recent assessment of pollutant levels across the Borough has shown that additional “hotspots” are emerging. The Borough has therefore declared (in 2008) the entire built up area of Maidstone as an Air Quality Management Area. *Map to be inserted shows the extent of the AQMA and identifies the “hotspots” as presented in the 2011 MBC Air Quality Management Annual Progress Report.*

The majority of air pollution in Maidstone Borough relates to traffic emissions. It is therefore fundamental that the MBC Air Quality Action Plan is coordinated with the transport strategy, carbon emissions reduction plan, and sustainable communities strategy. The Plan includes a range of

measures to address air quality problems that relate to transport, with an emphasis on trying to reduce the levels of vehicular traffic, particularly at various “hotspots” around the town. The principle aim of the Air Quality Action Plan is to minimise the effects of air pollution on human health using all reasonable measures. The full AQAP is available on the MBC website.

Both the County and Borough Councils are keen to research the increasing potential for alternative fuel vehicles. A KCC Select Committee has taken evidence on renewable energy resources, which included a presentation by MBC officers on the use of electric vehicles and their bid to DEFRA for funding to introduce some charging points in Maidstone. The Committee also heard evidence from consultants on the development of this technology by leading car manufacturers, with the expectation of a much greater market share for hybrid, electric, and alternative fuel vehicles in the future.

There are six confirmed areas that exceed the Nitrogen Dioxide annual objective of 40 micrograms per kilogram.

a)Town Centre (inc High Street and Upper Stone Street)

b)The A229 Loose Road/A274 Sutton Road (Wheatsheaf) junction

c)A26 Fountain Lane junction

d)Well Road/Boxley Road junction

e)M20 Junctions 6-7

f)Forstal Road

The Upper Stone Street and Wheatsheaf sections of the A229 require the greatest reductions in nitrogen dioxide levels, and are under investigation for hourly exceedence of EU objective levels.

Climate Change

In 2008, MBC adopted a 3% annual emission reduction target for the Council's operations, which would result in a reduction in carbon emissions from its buildings and vehicles by 20% by 2015 and over 30% by 2020 (in line with the Climate Change Act 2008). Kent County Council also aims to reduce the emissions from their operations by 20% by 2015. Part of these savings will come from the use of energy efficient vehicles, and part from energy conservation – reducing uses by making fewer journeys; and reducing the emissions from buildings through more efficient use of energy.

Under the old National Indicator Set, all the Kent authorities were signed up (through the Kent Agreement 2) to deliver against National Indicator 186, which measured the per capita reduction in emissions in the local authority area. Between 2005 and 2007, the Kent districts reduced their County wide emissions by 7%. Although the National Indicator dataset has now been abolished, the quantification of this does not impose a local

authority burden as it is drawn down from a National dataset, and as such is currently continuing to be reported. The Department of Energy and Climate Change highlights that action by local authorities will be critical to the achievement of the legally binding targets set out in the Climate Change Act (which stipulate a 34% reduction in emissions by 2020 and 80% by 2050 – from a 1990 baseline) as they are uniquely placed to provide vision and leadership to local communities. Through their powers and responsibilities, including local transport, local authorities can have a significant influence over emissions in their local areas.

MBC is also a member of the Low Emission Strategies (LES) Partnership. This Partnership provides a package of measures to help mitigate the transport impacts of development, its primary aim being to accelerate the uptake of low emission fuels and technologies in and around new development, thereby complementing other

mitigation measures such as travel planning and public transport infrastructure.

There is an inter-relationship between climate change and air quality in the transport sector, as transport is an emission source of both air quality pollutants and carbon dioxide.

The government has set up the Office for Low Emission Vehicles to bring together policy and funding streams at a national level. A number of funding initiatives have been launched, including grants for eligible “eco-friendly” cars, and the “Plugged-in Places” scheme, which will create over 4,000 charging points for electric vehicles in various pilot areas of the country.

Road Safety

The County Council has a statutory duty to record injury crash data from the Police records, and take any appropriate remedial action. Schemes to tackle identifiable patterns of crashes at individual junctions or sections of road are drawn up and promoted through the Local Transport Plan. KCC’s

road safety education programme tackles both all ages of school children and selected categories of road users, such as motor cyclists and scooter riders.

KHS has reported on crash patterns and safety issues to the MBC Scrutiny Committee, identifying and ongoing commitment and programme of initiatives to address problem areas. Remedial schemes form part of the LTP programme, which is reported to the Joint Transportation Board.

Statistically, the number of crashes involving death or serious injury in Maidstone Borough has been consistently above the Kent District average for the last 10 years. This is mainly due to the high level of population and vehicle movements taking place within the Borough, but there are specific areas of concern, both in terms of the concentration of crashes in certain locations, and with regard to the category of road users involved. There have generally been over 600 casualties per year in Maidstone Borough.

In 2010, the total Kent casualties fell to 4,689 (a drop of 4% from 2009), with the figure for Maidstone Borough dropped from 590 to 559, a fall of 5.3%. The number of fatal and serious injuries in the Borough fell from 55 to 50 (a 9.1% reduction over the previous year).

- Inevitably, the locations with the highest number of casualties are some of those with the highest and most complex manoeuvres – for instance the Running Horse Roundabout at Junction 6 of the M20, various sections of the town centre one way system, and major junctions such as the A229/A274 (Wheatsheaf) and A229/B2163 (Linton Crossroads).
- The categories that represent the highest number of casualties are car occupants (especially aged 17-24), motorcyclists (an increasing issue with over 25s on high powered bikes, and young scooter riders), and pedestrians.

- The KCC approach to dealing with its statutory duty of compiling, analysing and reducing injury crash problems is the conventional three pronged method, that of education, engineering, and enforcement. Education particularly involves safety training for school pupils, both primary and secondary. Engineering involves physical works on the highway, such as junction layout improvements and traffic calming. Enforcement is carried out by the Police, and by the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership.
- The long term national target had been the reduction of the total number of crashes involving KSI (killed and seriously injured) casualties by 33%, and child casualties by 40%. These reductions were to be achieved by 2020, based on the 2004-2008 average. The recent publication of the DfT's Strategic Framework for Road Safety considers that absolute over-arching national targets are no longer needed, and that local authorities should continue to prioritise road safety and take actions that are appropriate to local circumstances. This

would contribute to a downward fall in U.K. fatalities by around 37% to 1,770 by 2020, and a further fall to 1,200 by 2030. A reduction in the number of killed and serious injury crashes to below 10,000 by 2030 would also be expected, a fall of 70%. The DfT is confident that these levels can be achieved if everyone plays their part – central and local government, private and voluntary sectors, and individual members of the public.

Rural Traffic and Transport

Sustainable travel in the rural areas is achieved on the bus and rail networks. There are three rail lines, two of which pass through Maidstone and one that serves three main villages (the rural service centres of Headcorn, Marden, and Staplehurst) in the southern part of the Borough along the London-Tonbridge-Ashford line. Bus services primarily operate on the main radial routes to bring people into Maidstone for work, shops, and schools. Some communities only have a relatively poor level of bus service, and some have none. There are often

limited, or no, services in the evenings or on Sundays. It is difficult to run any bus services in many rural areas on a commercial basis, so that these are dependent on continuing revenue funding from the County Council.

However, financial cutbacks have led KCC to announce the withdrawal from various bus services from January 2012, including some Saturday services. This situation is the subject of concern to local communities, and KCC has indicated that it presents an opportunity for other organisations to contribute to local services. The Action for Rural Communities in Kent provides advice and assistance in setting up Community Bus operations. Further budget cuts may be required, as the bus industry has indicated that it must seek economies due to increased costs, and reductions in reimbursement for bus passes and fuel tax rebate. MBC wishes to discuss with KCC the prospect of future financial support for community transport to help fill the gaps.

KCC and MBC jointly support a Kent Karrier bus service that operates to bring shoppers into the town from the surrounding areas. A second vehicle is supported by MBC as an off-peak dial-a-ride service within the Borough. The former four Post Bus services have ceased, although two services have been instigated by parish councils (Lenham and Stockbury) as community transport schemes.

Public transport in the rural areas is complex, in that many residents depend on services and facilities in neighbouring centres, so cross boundary transport links are essential in some areas. Decisions made in the Medway Towns, Tonbridge & Malling, and Tunbridge Wells will have a particular influence on travel in Maidstone Borough.

Goods vehicles collect and deliver goods, produce and materials throughout the Borough. The rural economy, which has diversified greatly from its farming origins, generates HGV movements on and between the main roads. There are requirements for access to a wide range of rural activities from

cold stores to haulage depots and mineral extraction sites.

Maidstone Borough has a large hinterland of more than 40 parishes. There is particular concern that minor roads do not offer protection for pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians, being dominated by fast moving vehicles. This issue has resulted in many requests for traffic calming, reduced speed limits, additional signing, and Quiet Lane designations.

Operation Stack

Operation Stack comes into effect when cross-Channel traffic is disrupted by weather, mechanical problems, or industrial action. The procedure, which is operated by the Police, involves closing sections of the M20 to traffic, and using them to stack heavy goods vehicles until the ferries and/or

the Channel Tunnel can deal with them. Stage 2, the level at which Maidstone becomes affected, involves closing the coastbound carriageway between Junctions 8 and 9. All other vehicles are diverted onto the A20. This can result in long queues on both the motorway and the local road network. The County Council has identified a site for a large off-carriageway lorry park at Aldington, between Ashford and Folkestone, but the likely cost (as it involves a new junction on the M20) is over £40m, with no immediate source of confirmed funding. Further efforts to find a suitable single or multiple site alternative will be made.

Travel Plans

Both authorities are actively involved in demand management measures, both internally through their own Travel Plans, and externally by seeking Travel Plans to support major planning applications (*thresholds are shown in Appendix G*). KCC also has a very successful School Travel Plans team, which

has encouraged the preparation and implementation of Travel Plans by 550 out of the some 600 schools in the County (59 out of the 60 in Maidstone Borough). There has been less success in encouraging existing employers to adopt Travel Plans initiatives, although discussion with the Local Strategic Partnership continues over means of supporting local businesses. The aim is to coordinate the local authorities' concern about peak hour travel (ie employees journeys to work) with companies' concern about how their employees travel in the course of their work (and how these journeys could be made potentially more economically and sustainably).

Maidstone Borough Council is a founding member of the New Ways 2 Work Partnership run by KCC. The Partnership seeks to develop a coordinated Kent approach to travel planning, which gathers current skills and resources with the aim of collectively achieving the best deal for employees to travel to work sustainably and promotes travel planning for businesses. This will complement the

South East Business Carbon Hub project, promoted by KCC and supported by the European Regional Development Fund, which advises businesses on ways to reduce their carbon emissions and achieve the financial benefits of doing so.

KCC also promotes membership of the kentjourneyshare website, and runs a small car club based at County Hall. The latter initiative has recently been increased from 2 to 3 vehicles. Although a small operation, it may have future benefits in allowing higher density residential development in the town centre with low individual car ownership.

The monitoring of Travel Plans evolved through Section 106 Agreements is now carried out on a formal basis, using i-TRACE software recently purchased by KCC. This creates a database from which the targets, implementation, and monitoring can be regularly monitored by KCC & MBC, and developers can be encouraged to fulfil the conditions included in employment and residential Travel Plans. This allows the longer term

coordination of investment to bring about a higher mode share for sustainable transport.

The implementation of Travel Plans will be assisted by the government's national broadband strategy. This looks to supplement the connections made by private sector investment in urban areas and new developments, to bring faster services via fibre optic cables to rural communities. The two main objectives are that virtually every community in the country has access to a minimum download speed of 24Mbps by 2015, and that the government will "foster the roll-out of super-fast Next Generation Access". The private sector itself is expected to cover some 70% of the country, and the government also intends to issue new guidance for builders to ensure the broadband readiness of new build homes and office premises. Investment of this nature will allow more business to be carried out from more locations, including home working, and provide more opportunities to reduce the number of physical journeys made.

Relationship with other Authorities

With respect to neighbouring planning authorities, any planning proposals for Maidstone look to avoid coalescence with the Medway Towns, and ensure that development complements rather than competes with the Thames Gateway towns of Dartford, Gravesend, Medway & Sittingbourne, and does not add to travel pressures between them.

There is already considerable movement between Maidstone and the Medway Towns, both by car and the high frequency 101 bus service, with further sustainable transport measures to be explored. This bus link is much more convenient than the rail service, for which a journey from Maidstone to the centre of Medway would involve a change of train onto the North Kent line at Strood.

The other main interaction with a neighbouring planning authority is in the Medway Gap to the west of Maidstone along the A20/M20 corridor. This lies within the Tonbridge & Malling Borough,

which already has an adopted LDF Core Strategy up to 2021. There are existing major developments at Kings Hill/West Malling and on the A228 north of M20 Junction 4, with further housing areas identified at Holborough, Peters Pit, and Leybourne Grange..

Agreements are in place for improvements to sustainable transport provisions in association with planning permissions for these sites. They involve links to railway stations on the Medway Valley line and improvements to bus and cycle movements along the A20 corridor from West Malling through Ditton and Larkfield to Coldharbour at M20 Junction 5. Capacity improvements to M20 Junction 4 are also identified.

One of the main issues on this part of the A20/M20 corridor is the high level of movements between Maidstone and Kings Hill/West Malling. Kings Hill is a large mixed housing and commercial/business park estate on a former airfield, the edge of which is some 2 kilometres south of West Malling village and railway station. It is a purpose built as an

integrated housing/employment site, with some 10% of residents having taken up employment within the site. The remainder commute outwards, either by bus to reach West Malling railway station, or by car via the A228, A20 and/or M20. The high quality employment opportunities on the site act as a major draw across a wide area, including from Maidstone. It is anticipated that Arriva will soon be operating a more direct service on this link.

The Highways Agency is particularly concerned about short distance car trips on the M20, and are keen to see that improvements for sustainable transport are made on the A20 to support the existing bus services, and that the railway service is as well used as possible between Maidstone and West Malling.

In respect of other neighbouring planning authorities, there is interaction with Swale Borough, particularly Sittingbourne, served by a relatively low frequency bus service. There are also bus links to Tunbridge Wells and Ashford. The links to Tunbridge Wells have significance beyond links

to town centres, as the bus service has an important role in moving people between the Maidstone and Pembury Hospitals, which are covered by the same NHS Trust and distribute health services between them. A Kickstart bid to enhance the bus service that links Tunbridge Wells to Maidstone via the two hospitals was recently successful, but central government funding for the programme was subsequently withdrawn. KCC and Arriva have agreed to joint fund an improvement to the service from their own resources.

To the east, Ashford is destined to fulfil a role as a Growth Area, with major increases in housing and employment opportunities. Both railway and bus links from Maidstone to the town, and its station on High Speed One at Ashford International, are important to maintain.

In terms of overall traffic management, KCC enjoys a close working relationship with the Highway Agency on the management of the road network, with the UTM system exchanging information with the HA M20 data. The M20 is a Controlled

Motorway between Junctions 4 and 7, with overhead gantries using a variable speed limit to ease congestion and restrict air pollution. In addition, Project Cordon is due to come into operation within the next year, and will involve the combined management of the M20, M2, A229, and A249 “box”. This will allow coordinated responses to incidents on the strategic and local road network, using the available capacity on the main roads as efficiently as possible via variable message signs, and thus help reduce the impact of motorway incidents on the town centre (and vice versa).

Liaison with the Highways Agency and Swale Borough Council will also be maintained over the substantial development proposals in this part of the Thames Gateway (Kent Thames-side) Growth Area and potential changes to Junction 5 of the M2. There are currently capacity problems in the morning peak on the southbound A249 approach from the A2 Key Street roundabout down to the motorway junction. If capacity here is improved,

there would be additional peak hour traffic arriving at Junction 7 of the M20, adding to the lengthy morning peak southbound queue at this junction. The Swale Borough LDF Core Strategy is currently at the “vision” consultation stage.

The Current Situation

Maidstone is the County Town of Kent but not all of the population live in the urban area. Of the current population of 150,000 (check figures) about half live in the urban area and half in the more rural part of the borough. The Town Centre functions as a Regional Transport Hub whilst the rural part of the borough is dominated by pockets of manufacturing and farming and agricultural/horticultural enterprises.

Most of the borough is covered by 40 parish councils although some of the urban area is not parished. The Core Strategy has identified 5 settlements as Rural Service Centres and these are Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst.

Maidstone has a number of good links to the motorway system including access to the M20 and M2. Maidstone also enjoys a good level of access via a comprehensive road network to neighbouring boroughs such as Tunbridge Wells and to nearby

growth areas such as Ashford and Kent Thameside. In transport terms the borough has a wide range of both rural and urban characteristics. Some of the biggest issues in the borough arise from the lack of connectivity across the borough from some of the smaller rural settlements to connectivity issues across the town centre itself.

At the moment long queues tend to form on the main radial approaches to the town in the morning peak. The main central network is busy throughout the day. The main constraint across the urban network in the centre of Maidstone is the single crossing point across the River Medway at the Bridge Gyratory where the A20, A26 and A229 meet. This is also the point where north south movements meet those going in an east west direction. Congestion then tends to spread outwards from this point to other parts of the urban road network leading to drivers attempting to seek alternative routes for longer journeys within and around the town centre. In essence a lot of the congestion issues emerge as there is a

difficulty in determining whether drivers are using Maidstone Town Centre as a destination or as a through route - both types of journeys have different requirements that can sometimes clash when it comes to infrastructure requirements. Up to 97% of traffic on Royal Engineers Way (A229 South of Junction 6) is destined for the Maidstone Urban Area whilst on Sutton Road (A274) is it 87% destined for the Urban Area.

Maidstone is served by four junctions on the M20. At the present time Junctions 5, 6 and 7 are congested at peak times within some spare capacity at Junction 8.

The rural part of the borough is not immune from congestion and other traffic impacts. The lack of connectivity is a great worry to residents and businesses and in particular there is a large amount of concern over the movement of heavy goods vehicles along rural roads and other parts of the minor road network.

Main Modes of Transport in Maidstone

Transport in Maidstone consists of more than the use of the private car. People in Maidstone walk, cycle, use buses and trains and taxis as well as the private car. Each of these modes is dealt with in turn.

Walking

At some point almost all journeys include an element of walking, either to complete the journey or to transfer between modes. As many journeys involve the town centre as the main focus it is of vital importance to the ongoing success of the town centre that sufficient attention is paid to the pedestrian experience. Main routes through and to the town centre and other major destinations are important to the town's activities.

The biggest issues with walking arise when pedestrians interact with road traffic. When pedestrians have to cross main roads they are competing with the need to ensure a safe and

attractive route for themselves whilst at the same time not creating hazards for other road users. In Maidstone there are particular issues for pedestrians trying to cross the A229 at various locations within the town, and in crossing the river on the high level bridge near Maidstone East Railway Station. There are ongoing discussions with Network Rail on potential improvements to the footpath alongside this bridge aiming to make the route safer and more attractive. Funding for this improvement is potentially available from a Section 106 Agreement associated with housing development on St Peter Street and there are further potential contributions if there is further development around Maidstone East Station.

MBC last looked at the number of pedestrians in the town centre in July 2008 when a footfall survey was carried out. Comparing those figures with some from a 2006 survey it showed an overall increase of 5.6% of the number of people walking across 27 count sites. An annual Maidstone town centre footfall count is urgently required as recent KCC surveys show a fall in 2010 of some 6.8% and these figures need to be looked at annually

A major public realm improvement scheme has just been started in the High Street in Maidstone and this should result in improvements to the ability of pedestrians to navigate their way around the town due to improvements in signage. Improvements to tourist information signage should also help improve the offer of the town centre.

The rural part of the borough must not be ignored in terms of the pedestrian experience. Whilst transport is generally dominated by functional aspects of infrastructure provision the network of minor roads and footpaths allows access to the quieter parts of the borough and thus enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors. As part of the overall objective to improve the pedestrian experience ongoing improvements will continue to be made to the River Medway towpath and this will help to reinforce the connection between town and country.

Road Safety is a major concern within the borough and KCC has a statutory duty to record crash injury data and to take appropriate remedial action. Schemes to tackle patterns of crashes are promoted via the Local Transport

Plan.⁵ Remedial schemes will form part of the LTP and these are reported to the Joint Transport Board. KCC also runs a road safety education programme that tackles school age children and targeted categories of road users such as motor cyclists.

The number of crashes involving death or serious injury in Maidstone has consistently been above the Kent District average for the last ten years. Whilst this may be due to the high population and level of vehicle movements there are specific areas of concerns with concentrations of crashes in certain locations and with regard to the category of road users involved. There are generally over 600 casualties per year in the borough.

	Kent Casualties	Maidstone Casualties	KSI *	KSI Kent	KSI Maidstone
2008	5,006		617	520	75
2009	4,886		590	534	55
2010	4,689		559	440	50

*KSI= Killed or seriously injured

⁵ LTP 3 – Check correct reference

In 2010 the figures for Kent fell by 4% from 2009 whilst at the same time figures for Maidstone fell by 5.3%. The number of fatal and serious injuries fell by 9.1% over the previous year. The locations with the highest number of casualties are those with some of the highest number of movements and the most complex manoeuvres.

More worryingly is the categories that represent the highest number of casualties. Car occupants, especially those aged between 17 and 24 together with Motorcyclists and pedestrians feature.

KCC approaches its duty to deal with reducing crash injuries via a tripartite method of education, engineering and enforcement. Education involves training for schools, engineering involves physical works on the highway and enforcement is carried out by the police and the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership.

Cycling

Maidstone has a number of cycle routes that link the suburban areas to the town centre. However connections of these routes within the town centre and further afield to the surrounding areas are limited. Cycle use in Maidstone is very low and there has been little investment in new cycle routes and other necessary infrastructure in recent years. All of the issues relating to Cycling are covered in the separate Maidstone Sustainable Cycle Strategy which is attached to this strategy as an Appendix 1.⁶

The Cycle Strategy includes an action plan with a number of objectives:

- Create new routes and linkages
- Maintain the cycle route network
- Improve cycle security and parking
- Promote a cycling culture

⁶ Maidstone Draft Cycle Strategy July 2011

Buses

Maidstone has a well established bus network provided by a number of operators. The network is a combination of high frequency routes within the town and longer distance routes that connect the town to the rural areas of the Borough and to neighbouring communities including the Medway Towns and Tunbridge Wells. Around 80% of bus services in the borough are operated on a commercial basis with Kent County Council spending over £6million per year to support non-viable but important services

The patronage of bus services is regularly monitored and each year a survey of bus ticket sales is carried out. The results of this survey would appear to indicate that bus patronage is increasing over the last five years with a six day autumn sample showing an increase. Please note that these figures do not include Park and Ride patronage but do show how important Bus transport is within the overall transport network.

Chart to be inserted to illustrate bus ticket sales

Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council have been engaged in a Bus Quality Partnership (BQP) with Arriva, the main service provider in Maidstone since 2000. The point of the BQP is to guide future investment towards the provision of bus services and supporting infrastructure. The BQP is due to undergo a reinvigoration in 2011.

So called 'Smart Ticketing' is also being pursued across a number of different operator networks. This will improve convenience for passenger and allow for passenger data to be collated more easily. Other improvements will go towards improving the passenger experience include real time information being made available at a number of bus stops in the town centre via variable message signs that are connected to the UTMC system.

Some of the smaller rural settlements in Maidstone have no conventional bus service. Some settlements have locally based transport initiatives such as the minibus that operates in Lenham and Stockbury. With increasing levels of savings needing to be achieved in the funding of bus services community led initiatives will become increasingly more important. KCC provides funding for

demand responsive services including the 'Kent Karrier' which provides a one day a week shopping service into Maidstone for those who cannot physically access buses or who live a significant distance from a local bus service. MBC also fund a second Kent Karrier to act as an off peak Dial a Ride Service. KCC subsidises the Kent Freedom Pass that offers unlimited bus travel to young people for an annual fee currently £100.

As the education authority KCC is also responsible for home to school transport. In general there is a high demand for additional capacity on public transport networks at the start and end of the school day. The start of the school day also coincides with the start of the working day, a peak of home to work trips on public transport. In the rural parts of the borough there are a number of bus networks serving large schools such as the Cornwallis Academy, and there are a mixture of school contracts and local bus services to cope with scholars that are not entitled to free or subsidised transport. Some services cross borough boundaries to serve schools just across the Maidstone boundary.

The national bus pass scheme provides free access for the over 60's, the cost to Maidstone in 2010/11 was estimated to be £2million, only part of which is recoverable from Central government. KCC also funded an extension of the national permit which allowed people to travel from 9am rather than 9.30. The funding for the extension has now been withdrawn.

One particular improvement that has been made in Maidstone is the inclusion of a 'bus gate' in the housing development next to Maidstone Hospital. This will enable buses to avoid congestion on the A26 and will also assist the bus connection between Maidstone and Pembury hospitals. The service has been further enhanced by investment from KCC and Arriva to improve the connection between the two hospitals in response to somewhat controversial proposals by the NHS to redistribute medical services between the two sites.

Park and Ride

Park and ride services were introduced into Maidstone in the early 1980s on an experimental, Saturday only basis. The first weekday operation range in 1989 from Willington Street followed by the now closed Coombe Quarry in 1990, London Road in 1991 and Sittingbourne Road in 1998. Coombe Quarry was closed in 2007 due to falling patronage.

Park and Ride was introduced to address severe peak hour congestion in and around the town centre coupled with increasing pressure on parking spaces by long stay commuter parking in residential areas. In 1990 Residents Preferential Parking Zones were introduced. Park and Ride was initially intended as a workers' long stay parking service but has become increasingly popular with shoppers and visitors. (An unusual addition to the normal park and ride offer was the Park and Float – check was service was actually called!!)

Current Park and Ride provision in Maidstone is shared between three sites with Sittingbourne Road having 600 spaces, London Road having 500 spaces and Willington

Street 400 spaces. In the financial year 2008/9 there were 516,000 transactions on board Park and Ride Services. This reduced by 14% in 2009/10 to 445,000 transactions. In addition to these paid for journeys there are some 60,000 journeys made each year using season tickets. Passengers can also use concessionary passes for the over 60s but these journeys attract no payment. This tendency for figures to fall appears to have levelled off in 2010/11. Patronage of Park and Ride must also be set against a background of a high level of empty parking spaces, both public and private, in the town centre and the comparatively low cost of all day parking fees compared to other towns.

Funding continues to be an issue with the provision of Park and Ride services. To run the service in 2011 the level of subsidy required is some £420,000 including a large sum for the rental of Sittingbourne Road. Negotiations with the owner of Sittingbourne Road are ongoing and the outcome of this will inform the future of the site.

The future development of Park and Ride in Maidstone is being reviewed as part of the concurrent study into the

Sustainable Integrated Parking Strategy (SIPS) in Maidstone included as Appendix 2 of this report.

Rail Services

Three main rail routes serve the borough with a total of 13 stations. The principal route serving Maidstone town is the Victoria to Ashford International Line. With an average journey time of less than one hour Maidstone is strategically important to people who work in central London. In 2009 annual sales indicated around 1,211,000 single, return and season ticket purchases at Maidstone East over a calendar year. This fell in 2010 to 1,130,000 a fall of 6.7%.

The Medway Valley line also passes through Maidstone and links Strood to Paddock Wood. The Ashford to London via Tonbridge line runs across the south of the borough and connects the rural service centres of Headcorn, Staplehurst and Marden to London.

Changes to services between Maidstone East and London following the introduction of high speed train services to

other parts of the county provoked heavy criticism including a debate in Parliament. The link to Cannon Street was not included in the specification of the current Integrated Kent Franchise.

Kent County Council adopted a Rail Strategy for Kent in April 2011.⁷ This strategy clearly indicates that KCC will continue to lobby train operators and the government for improvements to services connecting Maidstone to the capital. The Rail Strategy for Kent will form the basis of discussions in advance of the awarding of the rail franchise renewal in 2014.



As with bus passengers the issue of through ticketing is a recurring theme. Train passengers have the option to buy a bus ticket for their connecting journey through the PlusBus system but bus passengers cannot buy a comparable ticket for a rail connecting service. Price increases will also have an impact on patronage of the service

⁷ A Rail Strategy for Kent, KCC 2011

Taxis

There are taxi ranks based at both Maidstone West and Maidstone East stations. The High Street Project will allow direct access eastbound all the way up the High Street from the A229 at Fairmeadow – a route at present only passable by buses, thereby overcoming the current circuitous route via Earl Street. Taxi services represent a valuable supplement to rail and bus services in and around the town. Future development within the town and at the railway stations should make provision for accommodating taxi services in order to further enhance the role of Maidstone as a transport interchange and Regional Transport Hub.

Cars

Highway Network Performance

A large number of journeys are made in and around the borough by the least sustainable method available, the private car. Data collected shows that some 8,000 cars are making their way into the town centre at the inner cordon in the morning peak each weekday with some 5,000 vehicles moving in the opposite direction. At the outer cordon over 8,500 vehicles are coming into town with 7,000 heading out of town. In the evening peak period this pattern is reversed. It should be noted that these particular figures are taken from the 2007 survey and that more up to date figures should be available from the annual Kent Transport Report⁸

Specific journey information collected reveals that the average speed on the busiest routes in the morning is around 21-22 Kilometres Per Hour (Mileage equivalent is

13 miles an hour) with inbound trips taking 10 – 15 minutes on average to cover the distance from the edge of town to the centre.

There is morning peak congestion at the Coldharbour Junction on the A20 adjacent to Junction 5 of the M20 as inbound and outbound traffic interact at the Maidstone/Tonbridge & Malling border. There is also a level of congestion at the Running Horse and Cobtree Roundabouts at Junction 6 and regular queues forming on the A229 Bluebell Hill as southbound traffic attempts to turn west onto the M20. The M20 roundabout at Junction 7 also experiences queues in the morning again caused by southbound traffic attempting to join the M20. Evening congestion occurs affecting traffic returning on the M20 from the west and turning south into Maidstone. Roundabouts on Bearsted Road, south of the M20 are also congested in both morning and evening peaks as drivers attempt to avoid the congestion in central Maidstone.

⁸ Kent Annual Transport Report – check reference and latest date

Urban Traffic Management and Control System

The central road network in Maidstone is covered by the Urban Traffic Management and Control System (UTMCS). This coordinates traffic signal timings to make the highway network run as efficiently as possible, and allows direct intervention by operators in the Traffic Management Centre to deal with unexpected incidents such as breakdowns and accidents that have an unpredictable impact on highway capacity. Information is given directly to drivers through a cordon of Variable Message Signs, and this system also runs Real Time Passenger Information connected to bus stops. Vehicle travel times through the town centre are collated via information gathered from a number of Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras

Traffic Flows in the Town Centre

There are a wide variety of reasons that may affect the traffic flows in the town centre including the current economic recession. Data in Appendix 3⁹ shows that flows

have undergone a general reduction in daily movements to and through the town centre despite increasing amounts of housing being delivered in and around Maidstone. Rising fuel prices may also be having an impact.

Inner Cordon	24 hr/2-way	Inbound 7-10 am
2007	167,300	20,900
2008	166,900	20,031
2009	167,900	19,908
2010	154,900	18,886
Outer Cordon		
2007	177,800	21,100
2008	175,100	20,400
2009	179,500	20,968
2010	170,900	21,476

Diagram to illustrate Cordon locations to be inserted here

⁹ Appendix 3 Transport Option Testing

Initial Conclusions

The following matters have been identified as the major issues that need to be dealt with either via this Sustainable Integrated Transport Strategy or via other strategies and tools that Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council are partners to:

- Road safety for specific groups of users
- Cycling route connectivity
- Provision of adequate bus services
- A Park and Ride service that encourages changes in behaviours
- Reliability and price of rail services
- Appropriate locations of taxi ranks
- Morning and evening peak congestion

- A Highways network capable of supporting the development strategy expressed in the Core Strategy

Action Plan

Having identified the areas of concern that need to be addressed SITS now needs to identify those actions that can be taken either immediately, in the short and medium term or those actions that require a long lead in time in order to deliver the package that will ensure that Maidstone functions as well as it can both as the County Town of Kent and as the Regional Transport Hub.

Main actions that are required have been identified in the Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) that accompanies the Draft Core Strategy. The IDP also identifies the main schemes that require capital funding and also looks to identify the potential funding sources. In total the IDP identifies some £33 million worth of unprioritised measures.

The funding of improvements to bus service frequencies are assumed to take place on the main routes into town on a commercial basis which implies that bus operator would fund the actual vehicles required to achieve this. The financial impact of the closure of town centre car parks will depend on their subsequent use and this issue

is dealt with in the SIPS, as is the potential loss of revenue from parking charges balanced against the potentially substantial gain to MBC from the release of land for development. The measures identified in the following tables have evolved from various option testing exercises that were carried out a to support the Core Strategy overall strategy and vision which emerged as a dispersed pattern of housing and employment development culminating in an optimal solution reported to Maidstone Cabinet in February 2011. An extensive amount of modelling work that sits behind the potential solutions was carried out on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council by Jacobs. This modelling was also the subject of a member workshop held on 16th March where Jacobs presented to an all member workshop the modelling work to date and talked through how the model had been calibrated.

It is likely that the modelling will have to be re-run at some point when the strategy is confirmed following consultation on the revised Core Strategy prior to submission to the Secretary of State.

Action Plan Measures

The following tables illustrate:

Table 1 – The full package

Table 2 – Those measures that will continue to be implemented throughout the life of the Core Strategy from 2006 to 2026

Table 3 – Identifies those capital measures to be implemented in phases, divided into three year periods to reflect the remainder of the plan period, short term 2012-2016, medium term 2017 – 2021 and long term 2022 to 2026.

Table 4 – Identifies those reactive measures and streams of work liable to arise during the plan period.

Table 1 The Full Package

TP1	Reduction of town centre long stay car parking spaces, and an increase in charges (assumed to be a 100% increase in long stay fees)
TP2	Travel Plan requirement for all large new development sites, including reduced car parking provision (assume 15% reduction of single vehicle occupancy)

TP3	Continued liaison with KCC to promote School Travel Plans
TP4	Refreshment of KCC and MBC in-house Travel Plans
TP5	Maintenance and promotion of car share website (kentjourneyshare.com)
TP6	Enhancement of County Hall Car Club
TP7	Cycle Network – improvements to existing network and extension to serve new developments, and improved cycle parking facilities in the town
TP8	Enhancement of pedestrian route between Maidstone East and Barracks railway stations
TP9	Maidstone High Street Public Realm Improvement Scheme
TP10	A274 Park and Ride site (located on Sutton Road)
TP11	A229 (North) Park and Ride site
TP12	Upgrade exiting Park and Ride sites at London Road and Willington Street
TP13	Town Centre Bus Stop Improvements
TP14	Maidstone East Bus/Rail Interchange Improvements (to be carried out in association with railway station redevelopment)
TP15	Quality Bus Partnership route improvements

TP16	General increase in bus frequency on main routes as development is delivered
TP17*	<i>A229 Barracks Roundabout (White Rabbit) conversion to traffic signals (to enhance Pedestrian accessibility to development on Whatman Way)</i>
TP18	General Improvements to assist pedestrian mobility, legibility and accessibility
TP19*	<i>New Pedestrian/Cycle bridge across the River Medway from Earl Street to St Peters Street (depending on long term development on St Peters Street)</i>
TP20	Romney Place Bus Lane (to improve access to Chequers Bus Mall)
TP21	M20 Improvements at Junctions and on main carriageway (detail to be determined through liaison with the Highway Agency)
TP22	A20 London Road – Enlargement of existing Park and Ride site

* TP17 would be intended to support the development of a “Campus Quarter” on the Whatman site, as identified in the Town Centre Study, should it come forward. It has not been modelled at this stage.

* TP19 is dependent on future potential redevelopment of commercial sites on St Peters Street.

* TP24 has been identified to ensure that future development sites are fully connected into the pedestrian/cycle route networks in the various villages. The actual needs will be clarified once the specific development sites have been identified through the Land Allocations process.

This overall package is intended to be completed by the end of the LDF period, but some measures are already in operation, and will continue throughout this period, and others will be implemented in phases as development comes forward.

The package measures continuing through all phases of the LDF will be :-

Table 2 Continuous Improvement Measures

TP1	Car Park Management
TP2	Travel Plans for new Developments
TP3	KCC promotion of School Travel Plans
TP5	Maintenance and Promotion of Car Sharing (website www.kentjourneyshare.com)
TP6	Maintenance and Enhancement of County Hall Car Club (www.streetcar.co.uk)
TP7	Cycle Network Improvements (inc. parking facilities)
TP13	Bus Stop Improvements
TP15	Quality Bus Partnership priority routes improvements
TP16	General increase in bus service frequency
TP18	Improvements to pedestrian mobility, legibility and accessibility
TP21	Improvements at M20 Junctions
TP24	Rural Service Centre infrastructure improvements

Table 3 Phased Transport Package Measures
Phase 1 2011-2016

TP4	Refreshment of MBC and KCC in-house Travel Plans
TP8	Enhanced pedestrian route between Maidstone East and Barracks/Buckland Hill
TP9	High Street Public Realm Enhancement
TP12	Upgrade to existing Park and Ride sites at London Road and Willington Street
TP20	Romney Place Bus Lane

Phase 2 2016-2021

TP10	A274 Sutton Road Park and Ride site
TP11	A229 Bluebell Hill Park and Ride site
TP23	Thameslink Rail service from Maidstone East to London

Phase 3 2021-2026

TP14	Maidstone East Bus/Rail Interchange
TP17	A229 Barracks (White Rabbit) Roundabout conversion to signals
TP19	Pedestrian/Cycle bridge (Earl Street to St Peters Street)
TP22	Enlargement of A20 Park and Ride site

Measures TP14, TP17, and TP19 are dependent on specific development sites, rather than an overall network improvement.

Transport issues in the borough are not generally new in nature. Some of the issues can be seen as reactive such as road safety, traffic calming and goods vehicle management that will continue to evolve as needed to deal with the constantly changing situation on the network. Some general processes will be continuous and will therefore be subject to change in accordance with any amendments to the statutory obligations of the highways authority and central government highway and transport policy direction.

Table 4 – Reactive Measures

MBTS1	Road Safety – Continuous approach to safety through engineering, education and enforcement. Bids for crash remedial schemes will be made through the LTP programme (KCC)
MBTS2	Cross border liaison will be undertaken to promote sustainable transport, particularly the A20 bus corridor in Tonbridge & Malling linking Maidstone with West Malling and the Medway Gap (KCC & MBC)

MBTS3	Support, where possible, for the Community Rail operation of the Medway Valley Line. Explore potential for a combined Maidstone stations working group as suggested by Network Rail (KCC & MBC)
MBTS4	Continue to support non-commercial bus services in both the urban and rural areas of the Borough wherever funding permits (KCC)
MBTS5	Maintain and extend the Kent Freedom Pass initiative to encourage the use of buses by young people (KCC)
MBTS6	Monitor and manage heavy goods vehicle movements on the minor road network, and introduce management measures where appropriate (KCC)
MBTS7	Monitor and manage general traffic movements on the rural road network, and consider measures where appropriate to protect pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians (KCC)
MBTS8	Make appropriate connections between the urban and rural cycle networks, including liaison with the Valley of Visions project in the Medway Valley beyond the Borough boundary (KCC & MBC)
MBTS9	Explore emerging advances in vehicle technology to reduce emissions and improve air quality (KCC & MBC)
MBTS10	Make full use of the Urban Traffic Management and Control system to achieve the most efficient use of the

	existing highway network, communicate useful information to car drivers and bus passengers, and coordinate wider network management with the Highways Agency (KCC)
MBTS11	Continue to seek a solution to the disruption caused by Operation Stack (KCC)
MBTS12	Maintain and improve Public Rights of Way/Countryside Access, including publicity and public confidence in their use (KCC)

It is inevitable that concerns will also be raised by Parish Councils and other groups as well as individual members from both KCC and MBC and members of the public. Small improvements may be funded via the main LTP programme. Member Highway

In addition to the more formal processes described above, concerns will also be raised by Parish Councils and other groups, as well as individual MBC/KCC Councillors and members of the public. Small improvements funded through the main LTP programme and the Member Highway Funds will continue to contribute traffic and transport benefits to local communities. These

improvements can cover a wide range of work, including footways, bus stops, traffic calming, interactive speed limits signs, road markings, warning signs, and Traffic Regulation Orders.

The Action Plan as outlined above is supported by a number of appendices to this document. These appendices provide the background information behind the specific action plan items detailed in the plan. The appendices include information about the current transport situation in the borough and details a set of results arising from a multi modal transport model. The appendices also identify a set of suggested targets and a monitoring programme¹⁰

¹⁰ Appendix 4 Targets and Monitoring

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Maidstone Cycling Strategy

Appendix 2 – Draft Sustainable Integrated Parking Strategy

Appendix 3 Transport Option Testing

Appendix 4 Targets and Monitoring