

AGENDA

CABINET MEETING



Date: Monday 27 January 2014
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street,
Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Garland (Chairman), Greer, Moss,
Paine, Mrs Ring and J.A. Wilson

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Urgent Items
3. Notification of Visiting Members
4. Disclosures by Members and Officers
5. Disclosures of lobbying
6. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information
7. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 December 2013

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Continued Over/:

Issued on 17 January 2014

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

KEY DECISION REPORTS

- | | | |
|-----|--|---------|
| 8. | Report of the Head of Planning and Development - Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy | 6 - 16 |
| 9. | Report of the Head of Planning and Development - Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation Draft - Group 3 Policies | 17 - 51 |
| 10. | Report of the Head of Planning and Development - Maidstone Borough Local Plan Draft Spatial Strategy | 52 - 72 |

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 DECEMBER 2013

Present: Councillor Garland (Chairman) and
Councillors Greer, Moss, Paine, Mrs Ring and
J.A. Wilson

114. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that Councillor Greer would be late in arriving at the meeting.

115. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman said that he had agreed to take the report of the Head of Finance and Resources relating to the Budget Strategy 2014/15 – Revenue as an urgent item as the budget setting timetable for the Council necessitated urgent consideration of the information in the report to ensure that the Council was in a position to set a balanced budget by the statutory deadline.

116. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

117. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

118. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

119. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the exempt Appendix to the report of the Director of Regeneration and Communities relating to the proposed establishment of an Enterprise Hub in Maidstone town centre be considered in public, but the information contained therein should remain private.

120. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2013 AND 4 DECEMBER 2013

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meetings held 28 November 2013 and 4 December 2013 be approved as correct records and signed.

121. STRATEGIC PLAN REFRESH 2014-15

DECISION MADE:

- a) That the refreshed Strategic Plan 2014-15, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Chief Executive, be agreed for consultation and consideration by the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee subject to the following:

Page 30 of the agenda - Outcome: By 2015 Maidstone has decent, affordable housing in the right places across a range of tenures

Second paragraph – Amend the first and second sentences to read:

The independent housing needs analysis conducted as part of the Local Plan process identifies that Maidstone has an objectively assessed housing need of 19,600 new dwellings from 2011-2031. The Council will be working to get a suitable housing target agreed.

- b) That it be noted that the performance measures and targets in the plan will be further updated and reported as part of the annual performance management cycle at the end of the financial year.

To view full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IIId=21416&Opt=0>

122. BUDGET STRATEGY 2014/15 ONWARDS - CAPITAL

DECISION MADE:

- a) That the following be approved for consultation:
- i) the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy for capital as set out in Appendix B to the report of Corporate Leadership Team;
 - ii) the capital funding projection as set out in Appendix C to the report of Corporate Leadership Team adjusted to include an additional £63,911 of New Homes Bonus for 2014/15; and
 - iii) the proposed capital programme 2014/15 onwards as set out in Appendix D to the report of Corporate Leadership Team adjusted to incorporate the additional New Homes Bonus funding within Transport and Highways.
- b) That the use of the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's budget working group as the all-party sounding board for capital proposals be agreed.

To view full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IIId=20569>

123. BUDGET STRATEGY 2014/15 - FEES & CHARGES

DECISION MADE:

- a) That the proposed fees and charges for 2014/15, as set out in detail in Appendix A to the report of the Corporate Leadership Team, be approved; and
- b) That the proposed changes to income budgets that occur as a consequence of the proposed fees and charges, as set out in paragraph 1.3.7. of the report of the Corporate Leadership Team, be approved.

To view full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IIId=21459>

124. MAIDSTONE ENTERPRISE HUB

DECISION MADE:

- a) That the Enterprise Hub project be progressed;
- b) That the former Crown Post Office at 1 King Street be confirmed as the preferred location for the Enterprise Hub, as recommended by the Enterprise Hub Project Board;
- c) That the project be part funded to the sum of £700,000 by the Capital Programme;
- d) That a bid be submitted to KCC's Workspace Kent Challenge Fund to support the Enterprise Hub project;
- e) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Legal Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development, to agree lease terms with the Landlord of 1 King Street;
- f) That delegated authority be given to the Director of Regeneration and Communities to develop and agree the final design, specification and operational management plan for the Hub in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development;
- g) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Legal Services to enter into a contract for the leasehold acquisition of 1 King Street (on terms to be agreed by the Director of Regeneration and Communities) subject to the bid to KCC being successful, and the Operational Management Plan being approved; and
- h) That, following a tender process, authority be given to the Head of Legal Services to enter into the necessary contracts for the refurbishment of 1 King Street, subject to g) above being completed.

To view full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IIId=21507>

Note: Councillor Greer entered the meeting during consideration of this item (6.47 p.m.).

125. CHANGES TO THE MAIDSTONE LOCALITY BOARD AND PROPOSALS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A MAIDSTONE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

DECISION MADE:

- a) That the formal establishment by Maidstone Borough Council of a Maidstone Partnership Board in partnership with Kent County Council and other partner organisations, which builds on the working arrangements of the previous Maidstone Locality Board, be approved;
- b) That the draft terms of reference of the Maidstone Partnership Board, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report of the Director of Regeneration and Communities, be approved; and
- c) That the review of the delivery groups referred to in paragraph 1.3.14 of the report of the Director of Regeneration and Communities be approved.

To view full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IIId=21513>

126. REFRESH OF THE CORPORATE IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR 2014-17

DECISION MADE:

That the draft Corporate Improvement Plan 2014-17, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Head of Finance and Resources, be approved for consultation with the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

To view full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IIId=21450>

127. COUNCIL TAX 2014/15 - COLLECTION FUND ADJUSTMENT

DECISION MADE:

That the anticipated balance on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2014, as set out in the report of the Head of Finance and Resources, be agreed and that the surplus be distributed as follows:

Preceptor	£
Maidstone Borough Council	70,705
Kent County Council	298,876
Kent Police Authority	40,354
Kent and Medway Towns Fire Authority	19,361
Total	429,296

To view full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IIId=21755>

128. BUDGET STRATEGY 2014/15 ONWARDS - REVENUE

DECISION MADE:

- a) That the report and the financial settlement for 2014/15 be noted, and that the Officers be requested to bring forward additional savings proposals to meet the shortfall of £62,000 for presentation to Portfolio Holders and the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2014;
- b) That the Cabinet notes the earlier than anticipated significant reduction in Revenue Support Grant for 2015/16 and, in the light of the full review of the Council's Strategic Plan during 2014, requests proposals for prioritisation, transformation and commercialisation of services that reflect this reduction of resources at the earliest opportunity;
- c) That the provisional allocation of the local council tax support funding, as set out in Appendix B to the report of the Corporate Leadership Team, be notified to parish councils along with their tax base;
- d) That the proposed savings, as set out in Appendix C to the report of the Corporate Leadership Team, be agreed; and
- e) That the proposed actions with regard to the recommendations of the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in section 1.9 of the report of the Corporate Leadership Team, be agreed.

To view full details of this decision, please follow this link:

<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IIId=21455>

129. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.10 p.m.

Agenda Item 8

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MONDAY 27 JANUARY 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Report prepared by Tim Hapgood

1. MAIDSTONE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

1.1 Issue for Decision

1.1.1 To approve the refined vision and objectives of the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) and consider the work programme for developing the ITS in to a full draft document.

1.2 Recommendation of Head of Planning and Development

1.2.1 That Cabinet approves the refined vision and objectives for the ITS.

1.2.2 That Cabinet approves the work programme for developing the ITS in to a full draft document.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 This section provides the background and context to show how the ITS has developed since the previous draft ITS went out for public consultation in August 2012. Information is provided on the actions taken to review the ITS and refine the direction of the transport strategy and produce a new vision and objectives. It also identifies a programme of further work now required to develop a full draft ITS.

The ITS is a joint document, prepared by both Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council. The existing traffic situation in Maidstone is one of significant congestion on our roads. It is accepted that traffic congestion will increase as the borough grows, so the ITS is designed to minimise this increase and to mitigate the associated impacts on the local economy and air quality. The ITS is also directed towards improving road user safety and education.

1.3.2 Transport Strategy Development

1.3.3 The previous draft ITS was based on the results of multi-modal transport modelling commissioned by Kent County Council (KCC) and

Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). The model was used in 2011 and early 2012 to test the impact of planned housing and employment growth, together with background traffic growth, on the local transport network. The previous local plan housing target of 10,080 (to 2026) was used. The baseline data that informed the model was collected in 2007 at inner and outer cordon points around the Maidstone urban area. The data showed that the vast majority of vehicular traffic crossing the outer cordon in the morning peak hour was heading to destinations within the town itself, usually passing through the town centre to destinations including the secondary schools and the hospital. On this basis, the modelling strongly indicated that the provision of strategic highway capacity around the town (for example, the South East Maidstone Strategic Link scheme) would not represent a cost-effective solution to existing and forecast traffic congestion in and around the town centre.

1.3.4 These considerations, together with the significant peak period congestion and poor air quality across the urban area, require the ITS to complement one of the core principles in the NPPF, which is to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling. The ITS therefore focuses primarily on demand management measures (such as park and ride services, bus priority measures and enhanced walking and cycling infrastructure), combined with targeted highway capacity improvements at strategic junctions. This will enable people to make informed choices about how and when they travel to and from the town centre and other destinations in the borough.

1.3.5 KCC and MBC jointly identified three transport strategy options to address the impact of forecast trip growth over the local plan period; namely, Option 1: 'Do Minimum', Option 2: 'Radial P&R Sites' and Option 3: 'North / South P&R Spine'.

Transport Strategy Options		
Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thameslink rail services to London; • M20 traffic signals; • Increased bus frequencies on all main radial routes into the town centre to at least every 10 minutes; • Romney Place bus lane; 	Option 1 plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A229 and A274 inbound bus / high occupancy vehicle lane; • Bus priority measures; • Bluebell Hill park and ride site; • Sutton Road park and ride site; • Linton Corner 	Option 1 plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park and ride facilities and services along a north / south spine corridor; • Inbound bus / high occupancy vehicle lanes to support park and ride; • Bus priority measures; • New north west

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus priority measures; • Upgrade existing park and ride site facilities; • Walking and cycling infrastructure; and • Travel plans for new development sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • park and ride site; • Newnham Court park and ride site; • Improved through bus services to key destinations; • Reduction in town centre car parking supply; and • Increase in long-stay parking charges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • express loop bus service; • Improved through bus services to key destinations; • Reduction in town centre car parking supply; and • Increase in long-stay parking charges.
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1.3.6 Each of the options was modelled and subject to cost benefit analysis. Option 3 was found to have the most beneficial impact on traffic flows and to represent the greatest value for money. However, concerns over the existing subsidy requirement for park and ride and the capital cost of options 2 and 3 resulted in a modified option 1 being selected for public consultation in the summer of 2012.

1.3.7 Responses to the public consultation exercise on the ITS were collated to help inform its development. Responses ranged from those related to specific development sites and areas linked to the local plan, which will be considered through the planning process, to general comments regarding the overall strategy and specific comments regarding particular measures and actions. In terms of the issues raised, these varied from the need to tackle traffic congestion (approximately 12% of respondents), whilst not forgetting the needs of motorists, improving public transport provision including park and ride (approximately 23% of respondents), carefully considering town centre parking and enhancing walking and cycling infrastructure (approximately 12% of respondents). The need to ensure the strategy is deliverable and funding sources are identified was also raised.

1.3.8 In October 2012, the Joint Transportation Board (JTB) resolved that the level of forecast journey time increase on arterial routes associated with option 1 was not acceptable. In order to progress the ITS, it has therefore been necessary for officers to review and redefine the available options. At the meeting of the JTB in January 2013, an Informal Member Group (IMG) was established to progress the ITS and address the JTB's concerns.

1.3.9 **Transport Strategy Review**

1.3.10 The technical studies completed to date, together with the outcome of the public consultation exercise and the resolution of the JTB, demonstrate that any 'Do Minimum' option would not satisfactorily address existing or forecast congestion. They also provide a strong indication that deliverable and cost-effective demand management measures, such as a north/south park and ride spine with bus priority measures on routes serving the sites, should continue to form the basis of the ITS.

1.3.11 These principles were accepted by the IMG, which agreed to recommend that new and /or enhanced park and ride services should feature in the revised ITS, alongside measures to increase highway capacity at strategic junctions in and around Maidstone. The IMG also expressed a clear view that any measures to increase the attractiveness of non-car modes should not disadvantage car or freight traffic.

1.3.12 On the advice of the IMG, KCC and MBC officers visited colleagues at Essex County Council and Chelmsford City Council to view the city's new park and ride service and associated bus priority measures, and to discuss the critical success factors which could be applied in Maidstone. The meeting strengthened the findings of the earlier modelling exercise that a small number of large, purpose-built park and ride sites serving distinct catchment areas offer the strongest prospect of becoming commercially viable in the medium term. The park and ride service would also need to include bus priority measures along the route to provide journey time savings.

1.3.13 Alongside the enhanced park and ride facilities, highway capacity and pedestrian accessibility improvements at the Maidstone bridges gyratory are also proposed. The preferred option, which was endorsed by the JTB in October 2013, is to progress the previous 'A229 Through Link' scheme, involving the provision of two northbound lanes on the eastern side of the River Medway.

1.3.14 **Defining the Transport Strategy Framework**

1.3.15 It is considered that the ITS review exercise provides a sound basis on which to progress and develop a transport strategy framework. There are a number of essential elements to the strategy, which are then supported by discretionary elements.

1.3.16 The essential elements include:-

- A more targeted park and ride service, with new and / or improved sites in the vicinity of M20 junction 7 and at Linton Crossroads on

the A229 corridor to the south of the town, aimed at long-stay commuters into the town centre;

- Bus priority measures in tandem with the enhanced park and ride service;
- Highway capacity improvements at the bridges gyratory and at other key junctions in and around the strategic development areas of north west Maidstone, south east Maidstone and M20 junction 7, to improve journey time reliability and air quality;
- Increased bus service frequencies (to at least every 7 minutes) on radial routes serving Maidstone town centre;
- Walking and cycling infrastructure, focusing on improved wayfinding, safer crossing points at the town centre gyratory, and improvements to the River Medway towpath;
- A car sharing initiative in partnership with local employers; and
- A refreshed town centre parking strategy, which will look to increase long-stay car parking charges and reduce car parking supply to promote the use of park and ride, and a reduction in short-stay car parking to prioritise shoppers and visitors.

1.3.17 The discretionary elements include:-

- A reduced town centre long-stay parking supply;
- A Maidstone public transport smartcard, similar to London's oyster card;
- A new park and ride service on the A229 corridor linked to the route 101 bus service, in partnership with Medway Council;
- Inbound bus and / or High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on the A229 Royal Engineers Road and / or A229 Loose Road corridors; and
- Greater use of the River Medway as a transport corridor.

1.3.18 The development of the transport strategy framework as shown above allowed the vision and objectives for the ITS to be redefined with the aim of making them more concise and targeted.

1.3.19 **A Transport Vision for Maidstone**

1.3.20 The transport vision for Maidstone set out in the draft local plan states that "by 2031, Maidstone will have a transport network that supports a prosperous economy and provides genuine transport choices to help people make more journeys by sustainable modes such as public transport, walking and cycling. The transport network will promote Maidstone town centre as a regionally important transport hub and will

have sufficient people and goods-moving capacity to support the growth projected by the local plan to 2031. The borough will have a safe environment for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists and its air quality will be better with more low carbon vehicles travelling on our roads. Both the rural service centres and Maidstone town centre will be better connected to facilities and employment within the borough. Strategic links to locations outside of the borough will be improved, and destinations such as London will be more accessible. Overall, Maidstone will be a better place to live with an enhanced quality of life supported by an improved transport network”.

1.3.21 **Transport Objectives**

1.3.22 The transport objectives for the borough and how these will be achieved are as follows:

1.3.23 **Ensure the transport system supports the growth projected by Maidstone’s local plan and facilitates economic prosperity**

1.3.24 This will be achieved by:

- Integrating transport and land use planning to support sustainable development, particularly in the growth areas identified in the local plan;
- Securing travel plans and appropriate developer contributions to ensure that the impacts of new development are adequately mitigated;
- Securing construction environmental management plans to minimise the impacts from new developments during construction;
- Investing in better public transport provision, in partnership with commercial bus and rail operators;
- Improving walking and cycling infrastructure, focusing on routes across the River Medway and the town centre gyratory;
- Enhancing the accessibility and safety of the borough’s transport network;
- Highway capacity improvements at the Maidstone bridges gyratory and at other key junctions in and around the strategic development areas of north west Maidstone, south east Maidstone and M20 junction 7; and
- Facilitating the safe and efficient movement of goods and servicing trips across the borough.

1.3.25 **Manage demand on the transport network through enhanced public transport and park and ride services and walking and cycling improvements**

1.3.26 This will be achieved by:

- An enhanced park and ride service, with new and / or improved sites in the vicinity of M20 junction 7 and on the A229 corridor to the south of the town, aimed at long-stay commuters into the town centre;
- Bus priority measures on park and ride routes in tandem with the enhanced service;
- Increased bus service frequencies (to at least every 7 minutes) on radial routes serving Maidstone town centre;
- Inbound bus and / or High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes on the A229 Royal Engineers Road and / or A229 Loose Road corridors;
- Improved walking and cycling infrastructure, focusing on routes across the River Medway and the town centre gyratory; and
- Securing travel plans and appropriate developer contributions to ensure that the impacts of new development are adequately mitigated.

1.3.27 Improve highway network capacity and function at key locations and junctions across the borough

1.3.28 This will be achieved by:

- Highway capacity improvements at the Maidstone bridges gyratory and at other key junctions in and around the strategic development areas of north west Maidstone, south east Maidstone and M20 junction 7.

1.3.29 Manage parking provision in the town centre and the wider borough to ensure it is fair and proportionate and supports demand management

1.3.30 This will be achieved by:

- A refreshed town centre parking strategy, prioritising shoppers and visitors;
- Giving consideration to a reduction in town centre long-stay parking supply;
- Utilising town centre parking tariffs to encourage a shift to sustainable modes of transport such as park and ride; and
- Reviewing the residents' parking zones to ensure they are fair, simple and meet the needs of all road users.

1.3.31 Improve transport choice across the borough and seek to influence travel behaviour

1.3.32 This will be achieved by:

- Implementing an Influencing Travel Behaviour (ITB) programme;
- Securing travel plans for new development in order to influence their associated travel behaviour patterns;
- Improved walking and cycling infrastructure, focusing on routes across the River Medway and the town centre gyratory;
- A high-profile car sharing initiative in partnership with local employers;
- Introducing a Maidstone public transport smartcard, similar to London's oyster card; and
- Greater use of the River Medway as a transport corridor.

1.3.33 Improving strategic links to Maidstone across the county and to wider destinations such as London

1.3.34 This will be achieved by:

- Investigating the feasibility of a new park and ride service on the A229 corridor linked to the route 101 bus service, in partnership with Medway Council;
- Improved train service frequency and capacity to London through working with central government and the train operating companies; and
- Working with the Highways Agency to continue to enhance Maidstone's strategic road network connections.

1.3.35 Ensure the transport network provides inclusive access for all users

1.3.36 This will be achieved by:

- Reducing traffic dominance and severance;
- Improving road safety across all modes;
- Encouraging modes of transport that are affordable and easily available to everyone, such as walking, cycling and public transport;
- Improving the provision of transport information; and
- Removing physical barriers and ensuring transport modes are accessible to all users.

1.3.37 **Address the air quality impact of transport**

1.3.38 This will be achieved by:

- Implementing the Maidstone Air Quality Action Plan and Low Emission Strategy;
- Encouraging the take up of low carbon vehicle technology; and
- Providing the necessary supporting infrastructure to enable the use of low carbon vehicle technology.

1.3.39 **Next Steps and Timetable**

1.3.40 It is considered that the data derived from existing strategic transport modelling is now out of date. The previous modeling work was based on a housing figure of 10,080 and a future year of 2026. The housing figure is set to change significantly and in order to ensure the local plan is supported by a robust and sound transport evidence base it is considered necessary to undertake a new strategic transport modeling exercise once a new housing target and distribution strategy has been agreed.

1.3.41 The new modeling will factor in the trips generated by any housing and employment sites allocates in the draft local plan, and will cover the plan period 2011-2031. However, notwithstanding the fact that new modeling will be undertaken, the results of the previous modeling exercise combined with recent data obtained from transport modeling undertaken for the strategic sites in the south east and north west of the urban area, is considered robust enough.

1.3.42 On this basis, a number of steps need to be taken to develop the ITS further and to gain agreement to undertake a new public consultation exercise. The actions to be taken and approximate timings are as follows:

- **Action:** Agree a brief for carrying out the strategic transport modeling work based on a new agreed housing target, distribution strategy and package of transport mitigation measures.
- **When:** Spring 2014.
- **Action:** Undertake strategic transport modeling work to understand the transport impact of the proposed local plan growth. Test the package of transport mitigation measures in order to identify the measures required to manage the identified transport impact.
- **When:** Spring 2014.

- **Action:** Based on the outcomes of the modeling work, refine the ITS and develop an action plan. Produce a full draft ITS document and bring it to Scrutiny and Cabinet for agreement to go out to public consultation.
- **When:** Spring / Summer 2014.
- **Action:** Carry out public consultation of the draft ITS.
- **When:** Summer 2014.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 Not progressing the ITS would undermine the robustness and soundness of the evidence base of the emerging local plan.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 **For Maidstone to have a growing economy** – the ITS, in support of the local plan, will allow the council to have more certainty over the transport network and its function and capability to support growth. This in turn will foster confidence that the borough is a more attractive place to locate for residents and business.

1.5.2 **For Maidstone to be a decent place to live** – the ITS and local plan are in essence tools to allow Maidstone borough to continue to be a decent place to live.

1.6 Other Implications

1.6.1

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

1.6.2 Financial – progressing the ITS will have financial implications. The transport modelling work proposed will be accommodated by the local plan budget.

1.6.3 Environmental / sustainable development – the ITS will support the delivery of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan aims and objectives. The plan is written to deliver environmental / sustainable development as a key aspect.

1.7 Relevant Documents

1.8 None

1.8.1 Appendices

1.8.2 None

1.8.3 Background Documents

1.8.4 None

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

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MONDAY 27 JANUARY 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Report prepared by Michael Murphy

1. MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT – GROUP 3 POLICIES

1.1 Issue for Decision

- 1.1.1 To approve the third group of draft local plan policies for Maidstone Borough (attached at Appendix A). The policies will be incorporated in a full draft of the local plan to be published for Regulation 18 (Preparation) public consultation. This group of policies comprises two spatial policies which were withdrawn from the agenda at Cabinet in December 2013, a number of transport based development management policies, two park and ride site allocation policies and new policies addressing air quality and development on previously developed land.
 - 1.1.2 The spatial policies SP3 (Rural Service Centres) and SP4 (Larger Villages – now called Larger Settlements) were considered by Scrutiny Committee in December 2013 where the Committee recommended that the policies should be withdrawn from the Cabinet agenda pending discussions with the parish councils on the methodology used in determining the designations.
 - 1.1.3 Development management Policy DM12 (Sustainable Transport) was approved by Cabinet in March 2013 as an interim local plan policy but has been amended to ensure consistency with changes to the Integrated Transport Strategy. Development management policies DM14 (Public Transport) and DM15 (Park and Ride) were considered at Scrutiny Committee in August 2013. The park and ride allocations and development management policies addressing air quality and brownfield development have not been seen by Members previously.
- 1.2 **Recommendation of Head of Planning and Development**

1.2.1 That Cabinet approves the proposed policies and associated plans of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (attached at Appendix A), and for public consultation purposes.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

1.3.1 The Cabinet report of 4 December 2013 explains that development management and spatial policies are being taken to Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in three groups because of the number of policies that comprise the new local plan. The first and second groups of policies were approved by Cabinet on 22 October and 4 December 2013 respectively.

1.3.2 This report focuses on a third and final group of local plan policies before the local plan as a whole is brought to Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in February 2014. The list of Group 3 policies is included in the table below.

Group 3 Policies	
Spatial Policies	
SP3	Rural Service Centres (<i>previously CS4</i>)
SP4	Larger Settlements
Development Management Policies (borough wide)	
DM1	Development on Brownfield Land
DM13	Sustainable Transport (<i>previously CS7</i>)
DM14	Public Transport
DM15	Park and Ride
DM16	Air Quality
Park and Ride Land Allocations	
PKR1(1)	Linton Crossroads
PKR1(2)	Old Sittingbourne Road

1.3.3 The group of policies above includes a mixture of Core Strategy policies which have been seen by Members before, some of which have since been amended for inclusion in the local plan, and a number of new local plan policies. The following paragraphs add some detail on the amendments made to existing policies, where relevant, and the content of the new policies.

1.3.4 SP3 & SP4 Rural Service Centre and Larger Settlements

The Cabinet decision to withdraw spatial policies SP3 and SP4 from the draft plan followed a recommendation from Scrutiny Committee (2 December 2013) that officers meet with the parish councils and Ward Members for the settlements not previously designated in the settlement hierarchy for the borough, namely; Coxheath, Yalding, Boughton Monchelsea, Eyhorne Street (Hollingbourne) and Sutton

Valence. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss the methodology used in making the designations and to hear any concerns that the parish councils may have with the policies going forward.

- 1.3.5 The settlement hierarchy for Maidstone establishes the most sustainable locations in the borough. The town centre and urban area sit at the top of the hierarchy because this is where the infrastructure is best and where the majority of the borough's population is situated in closest proximity to a wide range of services and facilities. The edge of the urban area is considered the next most sustainable location because any additional population in these areas can easily access services and facilities in the urban area and can make best use of existing infrastructure, e.g. public transport.
- 1.3.6 Outside of the urban and edge of urban areas, the rural service centres (RSC) are considered the next most sustainable locations in the borough. The RSCs have more services and facilities, larger populations and better infrastructure than any other settlements in the borough. They serve their local communities and surrounding hinterland and are therefore considered more sustainable than the larger settlements, which are smaller in population and range of services, and tend to provide for the day-to-day needs of their local populations, therefore sitting below the RSCs in the settlement hierarchy.
- 1.3.7 Meetings have now taken place with the parish councils (and Ward Members) with respect to the Cabinet decision to withdraw policies SP3 and SP4, where officers have had the opportunity to better explain the need for a settlement hierarchy and the reasons why certain settlements are included in the hierarchy. Concerns were expressed by a number of the parish councils, which mainly focused on slight inaccuracies in the audit of services and facilities supporting the policies, and the perceived role the respective settlements play in the hierarchy.
- 1.3.8 Officers have given further consideration to the policies following the recent meetings and have decided to retain the designations as set out in the Scrutiny report of 2 December 2013. The settlements of Coxheath and Yalding are still considered suitable as rural service centres based on population, range of services and facilities, role of the settlement in serving a wider hinterland and potential to improve the range of services, facilities and infrastructure with respect to any future new development. However, Policy SP3 has been amended with respect to both settlements based on information received at the meetings. The amendments to the supporting text have focused on improving the accuracy of reporting on healthcare provision in Coxheath and highlighting the importance of flood mitigation in Yalding, particularly for the Syngenta site. The policy itself has been

strengthened to provide more clarity on the fact that new development will only be approved within the settlement boundaries once they are redrawn in the new local plan. This will ensure that coalescence of settlements cannot occur.

- 1.3.9 Policy SP4 remains unchanged. Boughton Monchelsea, Eyhorne Street (Hollingbourne) and Sutton Valence are considered suitable to include in the settlement hierarchy for the borough because each settlement has enough key services and facilities to support the day-to-day needs of its local population, and the population of these settlements is greater than a number of others with a similar level of services.
- 1.3.10 DM13 – Sustainable Transport (previously CS7 (2013))
Policy DM13 was approved as an interim local plan development management policy by Cabinet in March 2013. The policy is linked to the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS), which supports the local plan with the aim of improving accessibility across the borough and to the town centre, in order to promote Maidstone as a regionally important transport hub. The supporting text and the policy have been further improved since Cabinet in March to add greater detail on air quality mitigation measures and adding a commitment to an enhanced public transport system which focuses on linkages to and from the town centre and to the rural service centres.
- 1.3.11 DM15 – Park and Ride Sites
Policy DM15 was approved by Cabinet for public consultation in August 2013 and sets the range of criteria that must be met if a new or replacement park and ride site is proposed. The only amendment to this policy is the inclusion of Linton Crossroads (to serve the A229 corridor) as a designated bus park and ride site along with the existing sites at Old Sittingbourne Road, Willington Street and London Road.
- 1.3.12 Linton Crossroads has been included in this policy based on transport modelling undertaken in 2011 and 2012, which has been used to support the ITS, part of the local plan evidence base. The evidence base shows that a site near Linton Crossroads is the most suitable location for park and ride to the south of the borough because it is at an appropriate distance from the town centre to intercept traffic movements early enough along the A229 corridor, and because the site would provide easy access to the identified catchment area, and particularly long stay commuters travelling to the town centre from the south of the borough. The ITS is the subject of a separate report on this Committee agenda.
- 1.3.13 The park and ride sites policy DM15 is supported by two park and ride site allocation policies, namely; the new site allocation at Linton Crossroads and an improved policy for the existing park and ride site at Old Sittingbourne Road (Eclipse Business Park) near the M20

junction 7. The "Eclipse" site is still considered the most appropriate site for park and ride to the north of the town based on the transport modelling and the fact that the site is already established and well integrated into the landscape in this location near the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The policies include detailed criteria to mitigate for any adverse impacts the sites may have on the landscape or the surrounding highways network and to ensure that any proposals for these sites are designed to a high standard to make them as attractive as possible for commuters. Both park and ride site allocation policies are included as in Appendix A to this report.

1.3.14 Policy DM16 - Air Quality

This is a new policy that has been developed to address growing air quality issues in the borough and to complement the National Planning Policy Framework requirement for councils to sustain compliance with EU limit values and national objectives for pollutants. The council has a responsibility to work towards achieving these targets and does this through the Local Air Quality Management regime. Through this function the council has identified 6 areas currently exceeding EU guideline values and has an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in place in order to identify measures aimed at reducing air pollution at these locations.

- 1.3.15 The supporting text to the Air Quality policy gives examples of appropriate mitigation measures for proposals that will affect air quality, and links the evaluation of air quality impacts to the principles set out in the AQAP. This is taken forward into the policy where mitigation measures are required which are locationally specific and proportionate to the likely impacts of any new development proposals.

1.3.16 Policy DM1 – Development on Brownfield Land

The council has been very successful in recent years in delivering development on brownfield land. A large proportion of brownfield sites in the urban area have been developed at high densities for housing, particularly in and adjacent to the town centre along the River Medway. This new policy sets to build on this success and responds to one of the core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework, which encourages the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed, provided it is not of high environmental value.

- 1.3.17 Policies in the new Maidstone Borough Local Plan have been designed to avoid repetition, so the local plan should be read as a whole when determining planning applications. A table of all local plan policies is included at Appendix B. The draft local plan (including site allocations) will be presented to Cabinet, via Scrutiny Committee, in February 2014. This will give Members the opportunity to see the draft local plan as a single document and to see how a number of the policies are

interconnected. It is hoped that the document will be approved by Cabinet to go forward for Regulation 18 public consultation, which is currently scheduled to commence in March 2014.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The policies (attached at Appendix A as Group 3) could have been presented to Cabinet for approval as part of the new Maidstone Borough Local Plan as a whole. However, deliberation of these policies, some of which have not been seen by Members since October 2011, at this point offers the opportunity for early debate, and the chance to identify new local issues that have not been addressed through these and/or other policies that will be carried forward to the local plan. This is the final batch of policies that will be brought to Cabinet in advance of the whole local plan being brought for consideration and approval in February 2014.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The new Maidstone Borough Local Plan covers the period 2011-2031 and will assist in delivering the spatial objectives of the Community Strategy and the Strategic Plan over the plan period. The local plan is linked to objectives set out in other Council documents, such as the Economic Development Strategy and the Housing Strategy. The local plan will support the council's priorities for Maidstone to have a growing economy and to be a decent place to live, and the consultation processes will strive to meet corporate and customer excellence.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 The council still has a local planning policy framework that comprises adopted development plan documents and supplementary planning documents, endorsed guidance, and saved policies from the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000. These policies are still relevant and carry weight in the decision making processes provided there is no conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

1.6.2 However, the council has a duty to maintain an up-to-date policy framework, and current policies are increasingly becoming outdated or are in conflict with the NPPF. The policies that are the subject of this report, together with other policies of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, will provide a robust framework for the development management process and will reduce the risk of inappropriate development.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

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

1.7.2 Legal: Legal services offer advice on document content and processes to ensure the Maidstone Borough Local Plan is found sound at examination. A number of meetings have been held with Counsel and the Head of Legal Services. These services can be managed within the existing budget for local plan production.

1.7.3 Environmental/Sustainable Development: A sustainability appraisal, incorporating a strategic environmental assessment is required for all local plan policies¹, including site allocations. Consultants have been appointed to undertake this technical exercise, and costs can be managed within the existing budget for local plan production. The sustainability appraisal is an iterative process, and the policies that are the subject of this report have undergone initial appraisal and have been amendment as a result.

1.8 Relevant Documents

None.

1.8.1 Appendices

Appendix A: Draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan Policies 2013 – Group 3.

Appendix B: List of All Local Plan Policies

¹ **SEA Directive:** European Directive 2001/42/EC 'on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment'. Transposed into UK law via The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004.

1.8.2 Background Documents

None.

<u>IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?</u>		<u>THIS BOX MUST BE COMPLETED</u>	
Yes	<input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
This is a Key Decision because it affects all wards and parishes.			
Wards/Parishes affected: All.			

Policy SP3 - Rural service centres

Rural service centres (RSC)

5.36 Outside of the town centre and urban area, rural service centres are considered the most sustainable settlements in Maidstone's settlement hierarchy. The planned development and maintenance of sustainable communities underpins the council's approach to rural areas where the primary aim is to direct development towards rural settlements that can best act as service centres for their local population and surrounding rural communities. Rural service centres play a key part in the economic and social fabric of the borough and contribute towards its character and built form. They act as a focal point for trade and services by providing a concentration of public transport networks, employment opportunities and community facilities that minimise car journeys.

5.37 An assessment of population and the services and facilities available in each settlement in the borough forms part of the basis for determining the villages that can be designated as RSC. Other factors like the accessibility of the villages, their potential to accommodate additional growth, and the role each village plays as a service centre for its surrounding hinterland are also important. The following villages have been designated as rural service centres based on the above:

- Coxheath
- Harrietsham
- Headcorn
- Lenham
- Marden
- Staplehurst
- Yalding

5.38 The rural service centres are difficult to compare because they do not all share the same level of key services and facilities. However, all of the service centres have a good range of services and facilities and serve a wider community. They will continue to be focal points where improved infrastructure and the strategic location of new development will reduce the need to travel and will help to maintain and improve on the range of essential local services and facilities. It is important that the RSCs remain sustainable settlements with the services and facilities necessary to support a growing population. The following text provides a summary of the distinctive character of each RSC.

Coxheath

5.39 Coxheath has the advantage of a compact urban form and a good offering of key services and facilities to support a growing population. Healthcare services in the village are particularly strong and include two GP surgeries, a dentist, community trust clinic, chiropractic clinic and a pharmacy. However, the GP surgeries are currently at capacity and any further development in Coxheath will be expected to contribute towards ensuring healthcare facilities can meet the demands of future growth. Unlike the other RSCs Coxheath does not have a train station but it has a regular bus service which connects the village to Maidstone town centre. Coxheath also has the advantage of being in close proximity to the town centre in comparison to other RSCs, which affords good access to a number of secondary schools and other facilities.

Harrietsham

5.40 Harrietsham has the population to support key services. Provision of, and access to, schools and community facilities in the village are adequate but will require improvement with any increase in population. The village has good public transport connections to Maidstone and other retail and employment centres. There is a local aspiration for replacement almshouses to support the local elderly population and for additional retail and play facilities, which are limited.

Headcorn

5.41 Headcorn has a diverse range of services and community facilities which are easily accessible on foot or by cycle due to the compact form of the village. There are local employment opportunities and there is a local wish to ensure that existing employment sites are kept in active employment use. A regular bus service runs between Headcorn and Maidstone and the village has good rail linkages to other retail and employment centres, including London. Flooding is an issue in Headcorn as the village is surrounded on three sides by the functional

floodplain of the River Beult and its tributaries. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment advises strict controls on the location of development within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

Lenham

5.42 Lenham has the key services and community facilities expected of a rural service centre. The village performs the best in terms of education facilities, with a primary school and nursery school located on the same site, and as the only village to have a secondary school within the village boundary. Transport links to Maidstone and other retail and employment centres by bus and rail are good. There is a local aspiration for housing development in the village to sustain the thriving village centre and local businesses in general. The need for housing is centred on young people to ensure long term sustainability.

Marden

5.43 Marden is a successful service centre, particularly in terms of employment opportunities, and also has strong key community facilities such as a medical centre, library and village hall. Marden has frequent rail connections to London and other retail and employment centres, which has created a demand for new development. This has to be balanced with the desire to ensure local people have access to affordable housing. Public transport connections to Maidstone are less frequent and require improvement. Flooding is an issue in Marden and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment advises strict controls on the location of development within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

Staplehurst

5.44 Staplehurst is the largest of the rural service centres in terms of population and size, and has a number of the key community services and facilities one would expect, including good health care services consisting of a health centre, pharmacy, optician and chiropractic clinic. The village also has more employment providers than most of the other service centres with the exception of Marden. Current transport infrastructure in Staplehurst is good but improvements are essential to cope with high levels of demand at peak times. Local aspirations for Staplehurst express a need for improvement to highways infrastructure in line with any new large scale housing developments.

Yalding

5.45 Yalding has a number of the key services and facilities expected of a rural service centre. Retail and healthcare opportunities in the village are not as strong as in some RSCs but the village does have a local shop, post office and GP surgery. The village is served by a nearby train station and has connections by bus to Maidstone town centre, which is essential in terms of access to secondary education. Yalding also has sustainable connections to nearby Paddock Wood, which also has a range of services and facilities, including a secondary school.

5.46 The Syngenta site to the west of Yalding village is the primary site proposed for development and is a potential mixed use development site for housing and employment which affords an opportunity to improve the range of services and facilities in the service centre. It is important to ensure that safe

and sustainable linkages between the Syngenta site and the village are provided if this development comes forward. Flood mitigation measures will have to form an essential part of any development proposal in the settlement. The size of the Syngenta site offers an opportunity for a sustainable drainage mitigation approach to flood prevention.

5.47 The Water Cycle Study indicates that a number of the rural service centre catchment areas have at least some known problems with surface water and sewer flooding. It is therefore important that surface water run-off from new development does not make this problem worse. Future developments in the rural service centres should include the implementation of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) that reduce surface water run-off. To ensure consistency across each rural service centre with respect to the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, a detailed flood risk assessment is required prior to any development with the obvious intention of ensuring new development is located outside areas liable to flooding.

5.48 Whilst Maidstone town will be the focus for most new development, development in the rural service centres with associated infrastructure improvements is considered far more sustainable than the ad hoc growth of smaller settlements. New sites are allocated at all rural service centres for housing development.

Policy SP 3

Rural service centres

At the designated rural service centres of Coxheath, Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden, Staplehurst and Yalding defined on the policies map the council will:

1. Focus new housing and employment development within the settlement boundaries when it is:
 - i. An allocated site in the local plan;
 - ii. Minor development such as infilling; or
 - iii. The redevelopment of previously developed land that is of a scale appropriate to the size of the village.
2. Retain and improve existing employment sites and encourage new employment opportunities provided the site is in an appropriate location for, and suited to, the use; and
3. Resist the loss of local shops and community facilities, whilst supporting new retail development and community services to meet local need.

Policy SP4 - Larger settlements

5.49 Maidstone borough contains a number of settlements that have a more limited range of services than the rural service centres but still offer some services that meet the day-to-day needs of their local communities. The overall amount of development that will be acceptable in these settlements will be less than in the rural service centres as they are less sustainable locations for meeting the development needs of the borough as a whole.

5.50 The assessment of population, village services and facilities identifies three villages that can be designated as larger settlements, namely:

- Boughton Monchelsea
- Eyhorne Street (Hollingbourne)
- Sutton Valence

5.51 Similar to the rural service centres, all three villages have different characteristics and there is variation in the limited range of services and facilities they provide. The following text provides a summary of the distinctive character of each larger settlement.

Boughton Monchelsea

5.52 Boughton Monchelsea lies to the southeast of Maidstone's urban edge adjacent to the scarp face of the Greensand Ridge. The settlement performs well in the audit in terms of education and childcare, with a primary school, playgroup, nursery and nearby secondary school. It performs poorly in terms of healthcare, with no GP surgery or other health care service. The village has a local shop, post office, village hall and recreation areas. Although the settlement is close to the urban area, public transport connections to Maidstone town centre are infrequent, and this is not helped by the fact that residential areas within the settlement are quite dispersed. Local employment opportunities in the settlement are also limited.

Eyhorne Street (Hollingbourne)

5.53 Hollingbourne (Eyhorne Street) is a linear settlement which lies to the northeast of Maidstone's urban area in the setting of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The primary school, pre-school and one of the local playing fields are approximately 0.5km from the village centre. The village does not have a GP surgery or healthcare facilities apart from an osteopath clinic, but does have some good key facilities, including a village hall, local shop, post office, pubs and a restaurant. Rail connections to Maidstone town centre and other retail and employment destinations are good, and the village also has a regular bus service to the town centre.

Sutton Valence

5.54 Sutton Valence lies to the southeast of Maidstone's urban area on a plateau above the Greensand Ridge. The settlement performs well in the audit in terms of education facilities. There is a pre-school, primary school and the Sutton Valence boarding school, which caters for children from the age of 3 to

18. In terms of services and community facilities there are pubs, a church, a village hall, mobile library service and good playing pitches. The village has a medical practice but no dentist or pharmacy. Public transport connections to Maidstone town centre and Headcorn are good due to a regular bus service. The settlement does not have a train station.

5.55 Based on the analysis of population, services and facilities, all three settlements are considered sustainable locations for limited new housing development provided that it is of a scale in keeping with their role, character and scale. An appropriate increase in population would help to support village services and facilities. The continued sustainability of these settlements as places to live and work is dependent on the retention of local services that meet community needs coupled with the retention of adequate transport services to enable access to larger centres for those services that are not available locally.

Policy SP 4

Larger settlements

At the designated larger settlements of Boughton Monchelsea, Eyhorne Street (Hollingbourne) and Sutton Valence defined on the policies map the council will:

1. Focus new development within the settlement boundaries, when it is:
 - i. An allocated site in the local plan;
 - ii. Minor development such as infilling; or
 - iii. The redevelopment of previously developed land that is of a size appropriate to the role, character and scale of the village.
2. Resist the loss of local shops and community facilities, whilst supporting new retail and community services to meet local need.

Policy DM1 - Development on brownfield land

Development on brownfield land

11.1 One of the core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework encourages the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed, provided it is not of high environmental value. This is known as brownfield land and, in Maidstone, a large proportion of brownfield sites in the urban area have been developed at high densities for housing in recent years, particularly in and adjacent to the town centre along the River Medway. Making the best use of previously developed land will continue to be encouraged throughout the lifetime of this plan.

11.2 Development of brownfield land is favoured ahead of greenfield development because in most cases it is more sustainable. It is important to ensure that brownfield land is not underused and that the most is made of vacant and derelict land and buildings in order to reduce the need for greenfield land, which is a finite resource and often of higher quality in terms of landscape and biodiversity.

11.3 Brownfield development is essential for urban regeneration and if done to a high design standard it brings homes, jobs and services closer together; reduces dependency on the car; and strengthens communities.

Policy DM 1

Development on brownfield land

Proposals for development on previously developed land (brownfield land) that make effective and efficient use of land and which meet the following criteria will be permitted:

1. The site is not of high environmental value; and
2. If the proposal is for residential development, the density of new housing proposals reflects the character and appearance of individual localities, and is consistent with policy H2 unless there are justifiable planning reasons for lower density development.

Policy DM13 - Sustainable transport

Transport

11.58 Working in partnership with Kent County Council (the local transport authority), the Highways Agency, infrastructure providers and public transport operators, the council will facilitate the delivery of transport improvements to support the growth proposed by the local plan. An Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS), prepared by the council and its partners, will have the aim of facilitating economic prosperity and improving accessibility across the borough and to the town centre, in order to promote Maidstone as a regionally important transport hub. The ITS needs to address a number of transport challenges as set out below.

Highway network

11.59 Maidstone has an extensive highway network which provides direct links both within the borough and to neighbouring areas including Ashford, Tonbridge and Malling, the Medway Towns, Tunbridge Wells and London. Four north-south and east-west primary routes pass through the town centre and numerous secondary routes run in concentric rings around the town, providing local links to the rural parts of the borough. Maidstone also enjoys good connections to the motorway network, including direct access to four junctions of the M20.

11.60 The principal constraint on the borough's urban road network is the single crossing point of the River Medway at the town centre bridges gyratory, where the A20, A26 and A229 meet. From this point, congestion spreads along the main radial approaches to Maidstone during the morning and evening peaks, leading drivers to seek alternative routes for longer journeys around the periphery of the town.

11.61 Modelling conducted in 2012 indicates that by 2026, a combination of background traffic growth and planned housing and employment development will increase the number of person trips in Maidstone during the morning peak hour by 42%. Significantly however, background growth associated with increased economic activity and greater car ownership is expected to have over one-and-a-half times the impact on trip generation of new housing and employment, demonstrating that robust solutions to Maidstone's transport challenges are required regardless of the development proposed in the Local Plan.

11.62 Maidstone has an average vehicle occupancy of approximately 1.23 persons per car, which is significantly lower than the UK average of 1.6 persons per car. This represents an inefficient use of road space and contributes to greater traffic congestion and air pollution. Whilst it is recognised that the private car will continue to provide the primary means of access in areas where alternative travel choices are not viable, the traffic data suggests that the ITS should focus on demand management measures that enable a higher people-moving capacity over the existing road network. Specifically, the strategy should aim for a reduction in the number of single-occupancy car trips into Maidstone town centre by long-stay commuters – particularly during peak periods – which can be achieved through interventions such as enhanced Park and Ride and walking and cycling infrastructure. This approach, combined with targeted capacity improvements to strategic junctions such as the bridges gyratory, would improve the reliability and hence attractiveness of public transport, as well as providing businesses and freight operators with greater journey time reliability.

Car Parking

11.63 The provision of an adequate supply of well-located and reasonably priced car parking is essential to support the borough's retail economy, to facilitate access to areas where alternative travel modes are limited or unavailable, and to ensure that mobility impaired persons are able to access key education, employment and leisure opportunities. However, the supply of car parking also drives demand for limited road space and can therefore contribute to traffic

congestion and poor air quality, as well as making more sustainable modes of travel less attractive. Therefore it is crucial that MBC and its partners avoid an overprovision of parking, particularly in and around Maidstone town centre.

11.64 The ITS will seek address parking issues by producing a refreshed Town Centre Parking Strategy, prioritising shoppers and visitors; giving consideration to a reduction in town centre long-stay parking supply; utilising town centre parking tariffs to encourage a shift to sustainable modes of transport such as Park and Ride and reviewing the Residents' Parking Zones to ensure they are fair, simple and meet the needs of all road users.

Park and Ride

11.65 MBC has been operating Park and Ride services in Maidstone since the early 1980s and was one of the first local authorities in the UK to introduce the concept. The service aims to address the growing peak time congestion in the town centre and has met with varying levels of success to date. Three sites are currently in operation at London Road, Sittingbourne Road, and Willington Street, which in total comprise some 1,450 parking spaces.

11.66 During the 2012/13 financial year some 400,000 transactions were recorded on Park and Ride bus services, which equates to a fall of 7% from the previous year . The Park and Ride services are also available for use by concessionary pass holders, and indeed approximately half of the trips recorded in 2012/13 were made by this group.

11.67 The reduction in patronage can be partially explained by the recession and suppressed economic activity in the town centre. Usage of the Park and Ride service should also be considered in the context of the supply of town centre car parking (both public and private) and the associated parking tariffs. The Park and Ride service is used by both commuters and shoppers; however it accounts for just 2% of all person trips into the town centre during peak periods (excluding walking and cycling), compared to 12% for bus and 77% for private car . The service currently requires a significant annual subsidy and therefore the ITS is seeking to take a targeted approach to address this situation.

11.68 The ITS is targeting the provision of an enhanced Park and Ride service, with an improved site on Old Sittingbourne Road in the vicinity of M20 Junction 7 and on the A229 corridor at Linton Crossroads to the south of the town, aimed at long-stay commuters into the town centre. Bus priority measures will also be provided on Park and Ride routes in tandem with the enhanced service.

Bus services

11.69 Maidstone has a well established bus network provided principally by Arriva, together with a number of smaller independent operators. The network is centred on Maidstone town centre and combines high frequency routes serving the suburban areas with longer distance services providing connections to many of the outlying villages and neighbouring towns, including Ashford, Sittingbourne, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and the Medway Towns.

11.70 Although KCC and the council do not directly influence the provision of commercial bus services, both authorities work closely with the operators to improve the quality of services and to ensure that the highway network is planned and managed in a way that facilitates the efficient operation of buses. This relationship has been formalised through the signing of a voluntary Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) agreement, which includes commitments by Arriva, KCC and MBC to work collectively to improve all aspects of bus travel and to increase passenger numbers.

11.71 A number of services cannot be provided commercially and are classed as socially necessary services that require subsidy from KCC. These primarily consist of school, rural, evening and weekend services, which provide access to education, employment, healthcare, or essential food shopping. KCC also completed the countywide roll out of the Kent Freedom Pass during 2009. The County Council now provides free travel on almost all public bus services in Kent for an annual fee of £100 for young people living in the county and in academic years 7 to 11. The County Council also assumed responsibility from MBC for the administration and funding of the statutory Kent and Medway Concessionary Travel Scheme for disabled people, their companions and those aged over 60, in April 2011. As the Local Education Authority, KCC also provides free or subsidised home-to-school transport to children who meet the criteria.

11.72 Through the ITS bus service frequencies will look to be increased (to at least every 7 minutes) on radial routes serving Maidstone town centre. Bus priority measures will be provided in order to encourage the use of public transport and services will continue to be made more accessible to all users.

Rail services

11.73 Three railway lines cross Maidstone borough, serving a total of 14 stations. The operator of the vast majority of rail services in the area is the south east franchise holder, Southeastern.

11.74 The principal rail route serving Maidstone town is the London Victoria to Ashford International line (also referred to as the Maidstone East Line), which includes stations at Maidstone East, Bearsted, Hollingbourne, Harrietsham and Lenham. The average journey time between Maidstone East and London Victoria is an hour and runs half-hourly. The London Charing Cross / Cannon Street to Dover Priory / Ramsgate line passes through the south of the borough, with stations at Marden, Staplehurst and Headcorn. Charing Cross and Cannon Street stations are located in close proximity to the City of London and hence services on this line are heavily used by commuters, which places pressure on the limited station car park capacity in these villages.

11.75 The Medway Valley Line, connecting Strood and Paddock Wood, runs from north to south across the borough, with stations at Maidstone Barracks, Maidstone West, East Farleigh, Watlingbury, Yalding and Beltring. The line operates as part of the Kent Community Rail Partnership, which has delivered improvements to the stations and promoted the service widely. In May 2011, Southeastern commenced the operation of direct peak-time services between London St Pancras and Maidstone West via Strood and High Speed 1 on a trial basis. This has reduced rail journey times between Maidstone and London to 48

minutes and provided commuters from the town with the option of travelling to an alternative London terminus closer to the City. Collectively, these enhancements have contributed to a 25% increase in passenger numbers on the Medway Valley Line since 2007, putting it in the top 10 lines nationally for ridership growth according to the Association of Train Operating Companies.

11.76 KCC published its Rail Action Plan for Kent in 2011, which sets out the County Council's objectives for the new South Eastern Franchise. The reinstatement of services between Maidstone and the City of London is the plan's top priority. It also recognises the need for the level of rail fares charged in Kent to offer better value for money and for the roll out of Smartcard ticketing offering combined bus and rail travel, similar to Transport for London's Oyster card.

Air quality

11.77 Vehicle emissions are a major contributor to poor air quality at both the local level and on a wider global scale. Indeed the entire Maidstone Urban Area has been declared an Air Quality Management Area, primarily due to the level of traffic congestion at peak times. The ITS will therefore support the delivery of the measures identified in the Maidstone Air Quality Action Plan to deliver an improvement in the air quality of the urban area and to reduce pollutant levels below the Air Quality Objective Levels set out by European legislation.

11.78 Development in or affecting Air Quality Management Areas should where necessary incorporate mitigation measures which are locationally specific and proportionate to the likely impact. Examples of mitigation measures include:

- Using green infrastructure to absorb dust and other pollutants;
- Promoting infrastructure to encourage the use of modes of transport with low impact on air quality
- Contributing funding to measures, including those identified in the air quality action plans and low emissions strategies, designed to offset the impact on air quality arising from new development

Influencing travel behaviour

11.79 Through the ITS the council, together with KCC, will seek to promote and support a range of initiatives to influence travel behaviour in the borough. This can be achieved through the use of Travel Plans, behaviour change programmes and introducing improvements to encourage greater levels of walking and cycling and the use of transport, car sharing and car clubs.

11.80 The council, together with KCC, will continue to promote and support the use of Travel Plans as a way of influencing travel behaviour away from journeys by private car to more sustainable modes. Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council will continue to implement and monitor their own corporate Travel Plans as well as securing Travel Plans for new development as part of the planning process. Workplace and School Travel Plans will also continue to be developed, implemented and monitored through partnership working across the borough where appropriate.

Cycling and walking

11.81 Both KCC and MBC are therefore committed to the provision of a comprehensive cycle network for residents and visitors to Maidstone.

11.82 The borough currently has a number of cycle routes that link the town centre to the suburban areas; however connections within the town and further afield are limited and there is a lack of cycle parking at key destinations. Consequently, cycle use in Maidstone is very low, the 2011 Census travel to work data indicated that 1% of work trips were undertaken by bike. However 12% of journeys to work were made on foot.

11.83 The provision of attractive and safe walking and cycling routes with adequate cycle parking will be incorporated within the ITS. The borough's walking environment, its walking routes and its public realm will be developed and improved through local plan policies, the ITS, the IDP, and through the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy. The Maidstone Cycling Strategy will be developed through the ITS. These strategies and documents will have the aim of increasing the proportion of trips made by walking and cycling in the borough by 2031.

Assessing the transport needs of development

11.84 New developments have the potential to generate a considerable number of vehicular and pedestrian trips which in turn has both a direct and cumulative impact on the transport network. Improvements to public transport, walking, cycling and highway infrastructure to mitigate these impacts need to be in place to ensure the increase in trips generated will not lead to an unacceptable level of transport impact. To further minimise these impacts, measures and initiatives must be incorporated into the design of development to minimise vehicular trip generation. Transport Assessments and Travel Plans, developed in accordance with KCC guidance will be expected to accompany all planning applications for new developments that reach the required threshold. New development proposals will also be expected to enter into legal agreements to mitigate both their direct and cumulative impact on the transport network. The council will also seek to secure Construction Management Plans to minimise impacts from new developments during construction.

Policy DM 13

Sustainable transport

1. Working in partnership with Kent County Council (the local transport authority), the Highways Agency, infrastructure providers and public transport operators, the borough council will facilitate the delivery of transport improvements to support the growth proposed by the local plan. An Integrated Transport Strategy, prepared by the council and its partners, will have the aim of facilitating economic prosperity and improving accessibility across the borough and to the town centre, in order to promote Maidstone as a regionally important transport hub.
2. In doing so, the council and its partners will:
 - i. Ensure the transport system supports the growth projected by Maidstone's Local Plan and facilitates economic prosperity;
 - ii. Manage demand on the transport network through enhanced public transport and Park and Ride services and walking and cycling improvements;
 - iii. Improve highway network capacity and function at key locations and junctions across the borough;
 - iv. Manage parking provision in the town centre and the wider borough to ensure it is fair and proportionate and supports demand management;
 - v. Improve transport choice across the borough and seek to influence travel behaviour;
 - vi. Develop the strategic and public transport links to and from Maidstone, and connections to the rural service centres;
 - vii. Improve strategic links to Maidstone across the county and to wider destinations such as London;
 - viii. Ensure the transport network provides inclusive access for all users; and
 - ix. Address the air quality impact of transport.
3. Development proposals must:
 - i. Demonstrate that the impacts of trips generated to and from the development are remedied or mitigated;
 - ii. Provide a satisfactory Transport Assessment and a satisfactory Travel Plan in accordance with the threshold levels set by Kent County Council's Guidance on Transport Assessments and Travel Plans; and
 - iii. Demonstrate that development in, or likely to adversely affect, Air Quality Management Areas incorporates mitigation measures to reduce impact to an acceptable level.

A parking standards supplementary planning document will be produced to provide greater detail in support of the policy.

Policy DM14 - Public transport

Policy DM 14

Public transport

1. Within the bus and hackney carriage corridors, as defined on the policies map, the council and the highway authority will develop preference measures to improve journey times and reliability and make public transport more attractive, particularly on park and ride routes. Such measures may include:
 - i. Dedicated bus lanes, including contraflow lanes where appropriate;
 - ii. Bus priority measures at junctions;
 - iii. Prioritisation within traffic management schemes; and/or
 - iv. Enhanced waiting and access facilities and information systems for passengers, including people with disabilities.

2. Proposals for major development will be permitted if adequate provision is made, where necessary and appropriate, within the overall design and site layout for the following facilities for public transport secured through legal agreements:
 - i. Priority or exclusive provision for public service vehicle access to or through the proposed development area;
 - ii. Safe and convenient passenger waiting facilities, information systems and signed pedestrian access routes;
 - iii. Suitable provision for disabled access to the waiting facilities from all parts of the development area; and
 - iv. Suitable provision for disabled access onto buses from the waiting facilities.

Policy DM15 - Park and ride sites

Policy DM 15

Park and ride

1. The following sites, as defined on the policies map, are designated bus park and ride sites:
 - i. Old Sittingbourne Road (to serve the A249 corridor);
 - ii. London Road (to serve the A20 west corridor);
 - iii. Willington Street (to serve the A20 east corridor); and
 - iv. Linton Crossroads (to serve the A229 corridor).

2. The provision of new or replacement park and ride facilities should meet the following criteria:
 - i. Satisfactory access, layout, design, screening and landscaping;
 - ii. Provision of suitable waiting and access facilities and information systems for passengers, including people with disabilities; and
 - iii. The implementation of complementary public transport priority measures both to access the site and moreover along the route. Measures will include dedicated bus lanes (including contraflow lanes where appropriate), together with bus priority measures at junctions.

Policy DM16 - Air quality

Air Quality

11.85 Pollution due to dust and poor air quality, resulting from either existing sites or proposed developments, has the potential to adversely affect human health and the environment in Maidstone. It is therefore essential that these issues are adequately assessed through the development management process.

11.86 The National Planning Policy Framework requires planning policies to sustain compliance with EU limit values or national objectives for pollutants and the cumulative impacts on air quality from individual sites in local areas. The council has a responsibility to work towards achieving these targets and does this through the Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) regime. Through this function the council has identified 6 areas currently exceeding EU guideline values and has an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) in place in order to identify measures aimed at reducing air pollution at these locations.

11.87 The hotspots are located at key transport junctions but the AQAP covers the wider Maidstone Urban Area designated by the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in recognition of the nature of road networks and traffic movements. This action plan contributes to the delivery of the national air quality strategy.

11.88 The air quality action plan identifies key partners and their responsibility for delivering measures to improve air quality in the exceedance areas. The primary focus is placed on achieving modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport and low emission transport. The council's Integrated Transport Strategy is in place to address this objective. This policy will support the ITS and AQAP by:

- Promoting infrastructure that encourages the use of modes of transport with low impact on air quality;
- Locating development close to transport infrastructure and community services and facilities to minimise trip generation;
- Installing charging points to facilitate expected increases in electric vehicle ownership;
- Requiring developers to mitigate more effectively against emissions from new developments through soft measures such as landscaping and tree planting; and
- Requiring developers to contribute to funding measures, including those identified in the air quality action plans and low emissions strategies, designed to offset the impact on air quality arising from new development

11.89 The Council will review the significance of the air quality impacts from new proposals in line with national guidance. Evaluation of air quality impacts will take into account factors such as the number of people affected, the absolute levels and the predicted magnitude of the changes in pollutant concentrations, the scale and kind of the proposed mitigation. The evaluation will also take into account how the impacts from the development relate to the principles contained within the council's air quality action plan and other relevant strategic guidance documents.

11.90 It is recognised that planning can play an important role in improving air quality and reducing individuals' exposure to air pollutants. Whilst planning cannot solve immediate air quality issues, it has a role to play so any likely scheme impacts are reasonably mitigated. It is also important to ensure cumulative impacts of developments are responded to in a fair and proportionate way. In order to achieve this, a Low Emission Strategy will be developed going forward.

11.91 The Low Emission Strategy will outline the principles behind defining the scale of a development and its likely impact depending on its location and proximity to exceedance areas and the public. It will be developed in line with emerging best practice and national guidelines and be developed to support the Air Quality Action Plan.

Policy DM 16

Air Quality

Proposals that have an impact on air quality that meet the following criteria will be permitted:

1. Proposals located close to identified air quality exceedance areas as defined through the Local Air Quality management process will require a full Air Quality Impact Assessment in line with national and local guidance;
2. Proposals within or adjacent to Air Quality Management Areas that are likely to have a negative impact on air quality should identify sources of emissions to air from the development and an Emissions Statement identifying how these emissions will be minimised and mitigated against must be provided; and
3. Proposals in or affecting Air Quality Management Areas or of a sufficient scale to impact local communities should, where necessary, incorporate mitigation measures which are locationally specific and proportionate to the likely impact.

Policy PKR1 - Park and ride allocations

10.1 Park and ride is an important part of the council's transport vision for Maidstone and the rest of the borough. The existing park and ride service accommodates demand for access from the A249/M20 transport corridor and from east and west on the A20 transport corridor. The Integrated Transport Strategy sets out how the service can help to accommodate journeys from new housing and employment developments in the borough. The A229 transport corridor from the south of the borough into Maidstone (Staplehurst, Marden, Linton, Coxheath, Boughton Monchelsea and Loose) is an area of strong demand, which is currently not served.

10.2 The A229/B2163 Linton crossroads is allocated for a new park and ride facility. This location is at an appropriate distance from the town centre to intercept traffic movements early enough along the A229 corridor and provide easy access to the identified catchment area. Along the length of the A229 corridor bus priority measures will help provide faster access to and from the town centre in peak times than an equivalent private vehicle journey could achieve.

10.3 Landscape mitigation is key to the delivery of the site due to its prominent location at the top of the Greensand Ridge. The site will be designed to mitigate the impact of long range views, incorporating structural landscaping to lessen any visual impact. The site is also in close proximity to the Linton conservation area, which lies to the south of the site, at a lower level on the scarp slope. The development of this site will need to be such that there are no incompatible impacts on the setting of the conservation area.

10.4 The existing park and ride site at the A249, Old Sittingbourne Road, near junction 7 of the M20 will be retained and improved. The suitability of this site for park and ride will be enhanced by the addition of a single deck of car parking spaces, which will increase the capacity of the site without increasing the site's footprint. Public transport priority measures on the Bearsted Road and Sittingbourne Road will also make the site a more attractive travel mode for commuters.

10.5 Landscape mitigation will be key to the delivery of an expanded site in this location, and any design will need to be sensitively incorporated into the surrounding landscape with consideration of long distance views from the Kent Downs AONB.

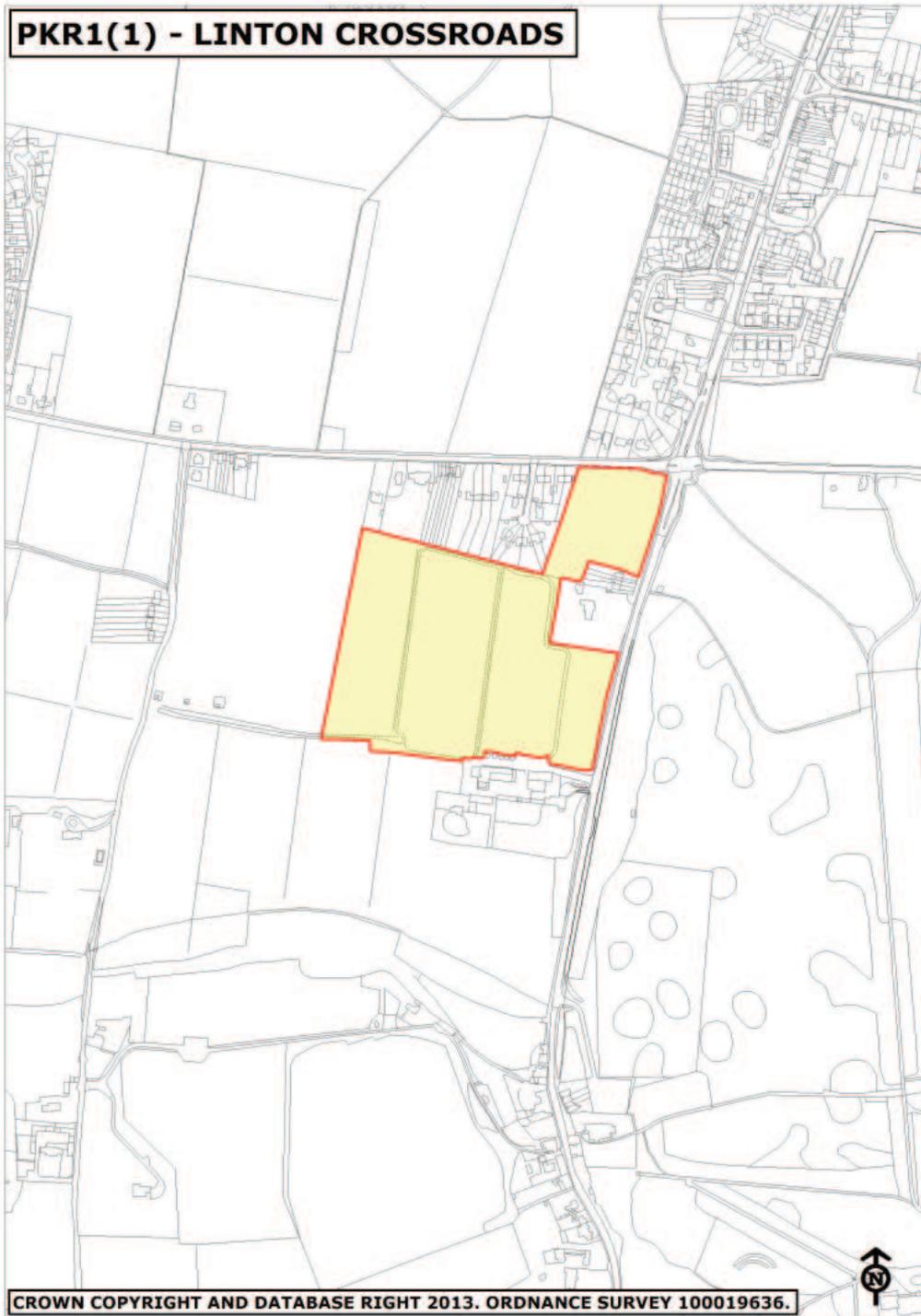
Policy PKR 1

Park and ride allocation

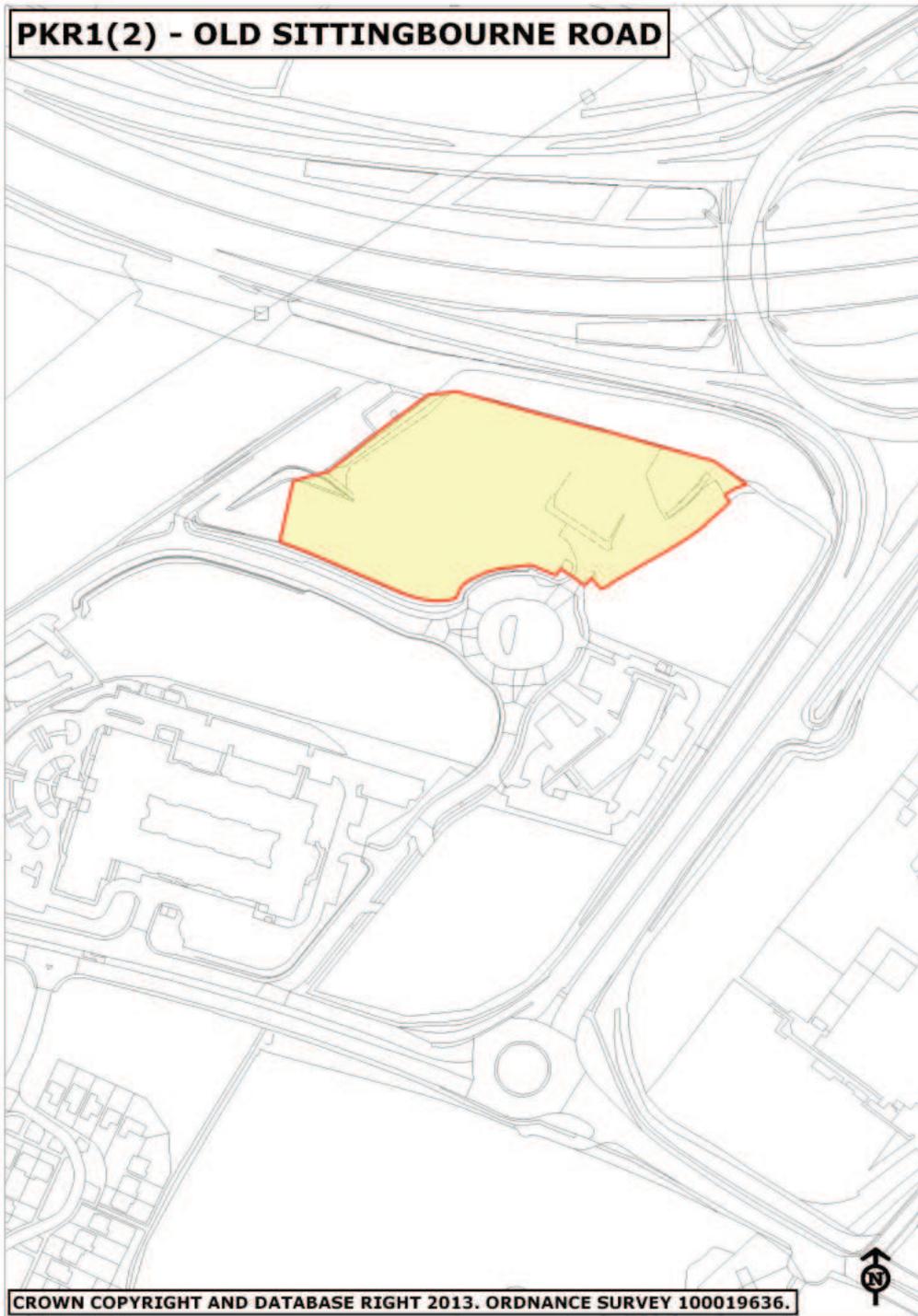
The following sites are identified on the policies map for park and ride:

Policy reference	Site name, address
(1)	Linton crossroads (A229/B2163). Capacity of 1000 car parking spaces
(2)	Old Sittingbourne Road (A249) at M20 junction 7. Capacity of 1000 car parking spaces

Site name, address	PKR1(1) - Linton crossroads		
Ward	Coxheath and Hunton	Parish	Linton
Current use	Agricultural land		
<p>Linton crossroads development criteria</p> <p>Linton Crossroads is allocated for a car park with capacity for up to 1000 spaces together with bus priority measures as defined on the policies map. Planning permission will be granted if the following criteria are met:</p> <p>On site</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The proposed facility is designed in accordance with the results and recommendations of a phase one ecological survey; 2. Primary access is taken from the A229 Linton Hill; 3. Secondary access is taken, if required, from the B2163 Heath Road; 4. A structural landscape buffer (minimum of 10m) is planted on the eastern boundary of the site, to provide screening from Linton Hill; 5. A structural landscape buffer (minimum of 10m) is planted on the western boundary of the site, to provide screening from long distance views; 6. A significant structural landscape buffer (minimum of 10m) is planted along the southern boundary of the site, to help provide screening of views from the slope of the Greensand Ridge and the Linton conservation area; 7. The terminal facility is designed to a high standard, incorporating necessary personal safety features and providing a comfortable environment for service users, including toilets and a passenger information display; 8. Directional lighting is incorporated in the car park to minimise light pollution during the hours of darkness; 9. Covered bicycle parking is provided in an appropriate location to improve the choice of travel modes for commuters; 10. Planting measures are incorporated throughout the site, to be agreed with the council, to provide breaks in an urbanising feature of the countryside; and 11. Sustainable drainage measures to minimise the impact of hardstanding on the natural hydrology of the local area. <p>Off site</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Appropriate bus priority measures to be delivered northbound on the A229 Loose Road, prior to the junction with the A274 Sutton Road, to be approved by the council and Kent County Council. 			
Gross area (ha)	6.8	Net area (ha)	6.0 (approx)



Site name, address	PKR1(2) - Old Sittingbourne Road		
Ward	Boxley	Parish	Boxley
Current use	Park and ride		
<p>Old Sittingbourne Road development criteria</p> <p>Land at Old Sittingbourne Road is allocated for a decked car park with a capacity for 1000 spaces together with bus priority measures as defined on the policies map. Planning permission will be granted if the following criteria are met:</p> <p>On site</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A structural landscape buffer (minimum of 10m) is planted on the northern boundary of the site, to provide screening from long distance views from the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; 2. Mitigation measures such as green walls are used to reduce the visual impact of the upper level of the car park, particularly from long distance views from the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 3. The terminal facility is designed to a high standard, incorporating necessary personal safety features and providing a comfortable environment for service users, including toilets and a passenger information display; 4. Covered bicycle parking is provided in an appropriate location to improve the choice of travel modes for commuters; 5. Directional lighting is incorporated in the car park to minimise light pollution during the hours of darkness; and 6. Planting measures are incorporated throughout the site, to be agreed by council. <p>Off site</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Appropriate bus priority measures to be delivered southbound on the A249 Sittingbourne Road to be approved by the council and Kent County Council. 			
Gross area (ha)	1.7ha	Net area (ha)	?



Appendix B – Local Plan Policies

NPPF Model Policy	
NPPF1	Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
Spatial Vision/Objectives & Spatial Policies	
SS1	Maidstone Borough Spatial Strategy
SP1	Maidstone Town Centre
SP2	Maidstone Urban Area
SP3	Rural Service Centres
SP4	Larger Settlements
SP5	Countryside
Land Allocations	
H1	Housing Allocations
H2	Housing Densities
RMX1	Retail and Mixed Use Allocations
EMP1	Employment Allocations
GT1	Gypsy and Traveller Allocations
PKR1	Park and Ride Allocations
Development Management Policies for Maidstone Borough	
DM1	Development on Brownfield Land
DM2	Sustainable design and development (CS6)
DM3	Renewable and low carbon energy schemes
DM4	Principles of good design
DM5	Residential garden land
DM6	External Lighting
DM7	Signage and shop fronts
DM8	Residential extensions, conversions and redevelopment
DM9	Non-conforming uses
DM10	Historic and Natural Environment
DM11	Open Space and Recreation

Appendix B – Local Plan Policies

DM12	Community Facilities
DM13	Sustainable Transport
DM14	Public Transport
DM15	Park and Ride
DM16	Air Quality
DM17	Economic Development
DM18	Retention of Employment Sites
DM19	Town centre uses
DM20	District centres, local centres and local shops and facilities
DM21	Residential premises above shops and businesses
DM22	Mooring facilities and boat yards
DM23	Housing Mix
DM24	Affordable Housing
DM25	Local Needs Housing
DM26	Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Accommodation
Development Management Policies for the Town Centre	
DM27	Primary shopping frontages
DM28	Secondary shopping frontages
DM29	Leisure and community uses in the town centre
Development Management Policies for the Countryside	
DM30	Design Principles in the Countryside
DM31	New Agricultural Buildings and Structures
DM32	Conversion of Rural Buildings
DM33	Rebuilding and Extending Dwellings in the Countryside
DM34	Change of Use of Agricultural Land to Domestic Garden Land
DM35	Accommodation for Agricultural and Forestry Workers
DM36	Live/Work Units
DM37	Expansion of Existing Businesses in Rural Areas

Appendix B – Local Plan Policies

DM38	Holiday Caravan and Camp Sites
DM39	Caravan Storage in the Countryside
DM40	Retail Units in the Countryside
DM41	Equestrian Development
Delivery Framework	
ID1	Infrastructure Delivery
ID2	Electronic Communications

Agenda Item 10

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MONDAY 27 JANUARY 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Report prepared by Sue Whiteside

1. MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN DRAFT SPATIAL STRATEGY: AN UPDATED EVIDENCE BASE, KEY ISSUES, AND THE SPATIAL VISION AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Issue for Decision

- 1.1.1 To consider the borough's objectively assessed need of 19,600 dwellings for the plan period 2011 to 2031 (980 dwellings per annum). Members received a presentation on the outputs of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) on 9 December 2013 following a series of training sessions on the SHMA. Agreement of the arising objectively assessed need as the basis for determining the borough's housing target is sought.
- 1.1.2 To note the potential to provide for up to 17,100 dwellings against objectively assessed need of 19,600 dwellings. Cabinet will be in a position to fully consider the draft provisions when recommended site allocations are presented to its February meeting.
- 1.1.3 To note the borough's objectively assessed need of 37 hectares for office, industry and warehousing based sectors and at the Maidstone medical campus during the plan period 2011 to 2031. The draft provisions for employment floorspace (offices 39,830m²; industry 20,290m²; warehousing 49,911m²; medical 98,000m²) will be given full consideration at Cabinet's February meeting when site allocations will be recommended.
- 1.1.4 To consider the key local issues to be addressed by the Maidstone Borough Local Plan together with the plan's spatial vision and objectives. These sections of the local plan have been updated (using track changes for ease of reference) to ensure conformity with changing government policy and the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and subsequent practice guidance, and to reflect any changes in local circumstances.

1.2 Recommendation of Head of Planning and Development

1.2.1 That Cabinet:

- i. Agrees the borough's objectively assessed housing need of 19,600 dwellings for the local plan period 2011 to 2031 as the basis for determining the housing provision for the borough;
- ii. Notes the currently identified potential to make provision for 17,100 dwellings, subject to full consideration of proposed housing site allocations in February 2014;
- iii. Notes the borough's objectively assessed need of 37 hectares for office, industry and warehousing based sectors and at the Maidstone medical campus for the plan period 2011 to 2031, and the draft provisions for employment floorspace (offices 39,830m²; industry 20,290m²; warehousing 49,911m²; medical 98,000m²);
- iv. Approves the key local issues, as amended, set out in paragraph 1.3.46 of this report; and
- v. Approves the spatial vision and objectives, as amended, set out in paragraph 1.3.48 of this report.

1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

Introduction

1.3.1 Since the Cabinet decision¹ to prepare a single Maidstone Borough Local Plan, Cabinet has received several reports on groups of local plan policies. Members have given consideration to spatial policies for urban and rural areas together with more detailed development management policies.

1.3.2 The spatial strategy and development targets were initially set out in the Core Strategy, which was subject to public consultation in September/October 2011. However, new government guidance, namely the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in 2012 (and subsequent draft National Planning Practice Guidance 2013), required the evidence base supporting the spatial strategy to be updated. Consequently, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), the Economic Sensitivity Testing and Employment Land Forecast report, Strategic Housing and Economic Development Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA and SEDLAA), and the Town Centre Assessment and Retail Capacity Study have been prepared as part of the local plan evidence base. In addition, a consultation draft Green

¹ Cabinet 13 March 2013

and Blue Infrastructure Strategy has been produced.

- 1.3.3 In 2011 the council sought the public's views on a housing target of 10,080 for the period 2006 to 2026, using a dispersed distribution of development. The main issues raised by respondents were reported to Cabinet on 25 July 2012. There were mixed responses to the Council's 10,080 dwelling target whereby some respondents supported the target (22 respondents or 5%) while others believed it was too high or too low (42 respondents or 9%). A proportion of the development industry proposed a higher target, while residents sought a reduction.
- 1.3.4 There was a consensus of support from both the development industry and residents for a dispersed distribution pattern of development that delivers housing at the urban fringe and at rural service centres, although a minority of respondents did object in part or as a whole.
- 1.3.5 There was support for the principle of identifying a strategic housing development location to the north west of the urban area in the vicinity of Allington, although some objections focused on reducing the amount of housing proposed. A number of residents and the adjoining local authority unconditionally objected to development in this location (47 respondents or 10%) on the grounds of increased traffic congestion, the impact on the landscape, and maintenance of the strategic gap between conurbations.
- 1.3.6 There was general support for the south east strategic housing development location around Park Wood and Otham (6 respondents or 1%). In the main, objections were from a minority section of the development industry who objected to a move away from a strategic development area that would accommodate 3,000 or 5,000 dwellings supported by a strategic link road.
- 1.3.7 There was a call for the inclusion of specific targets for rural service centres, as opposed to a single target to be distributed amongst the 5 villages² (27 respondents or 6%). Part of the development industry wished to see detailed strategic development site allocations, as opposed to the strategic development locations identified on the key diagram of the consultation document. Site allocations within strategic development locations together with specific housing targets for rural service centres were the subject of a further public consultation in 2012: Core Strategy Strategic Site Allocations. Representations on strategic site allocations were considered when the allocations were confirmed at the Cabinet meeting of 13 March 2013. Respondents to the 2012 consultation sought site specific allocations at the rural service centres as opposed to overall village targets. The move to

² Originally included Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst

prepare a single local plan overcomes this objection.

- 1.3.8 In December 2012, Kent County Council issued revised demographic and labour supply forecasts for Maidstone borough, which took account of the latest CLG household projections. The forecasts were based on the new local plan period 2011 to 2031 and revealed an interim housing provision of 14,800 dwellings³. Consideration was given to the findings of the forecasts at the Cabinet meeting of 13 March 2013. This interim figure was never tested through public consultation but superseded the 10,080 dwelling target for the former plan period (2006/26). The new SHMA, which has been prepared in accordance with national guidance using the latest data from CLG and the Office for National Statistics, will supersede all former demographic forecasts for housing provisions.
- 1.3.9 This report focuses on the outputs from updated evidence documents for housing and economic development and, also taking into account previous consultation representations together with changes to national planning policy, sets out the consequential revisions to the local plan spatial vision and objectives and the implications for the borough's development targets.
- 1.3.10 A further report bringing together all of the policies of the draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan, including the spatial strategy, development targets and site allocations, will be presented to Cabinet on 24 February 2014. At the same meeting, Members will receive supporting reports on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

- 1.3.11 A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for the borough has been undertaken as a further piece of evidence to support the preparation of the local plan. The SHMA has been prepared in partnership with Ashford and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Councils which were at a similar plan making stage to Maidstone. Medway Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Swale Borough Council were invited to take part in the exercise but declined due the stage their local plans had reached. GL Hearn, a firm of expert consultants in this field, has undertaken the work for the three authorities.
- 1.3.12 A number of briefings and training sessions that included time for questions have been held, to assist Members in understanding the complexities of the SHMA. These sessions were well attended by Members.

³ Based on 10-year trend-based projections 2011 to 2031.

- 28 August 2013 – Presentation on the methodologies validating the SHMA (and SHLAA/SEDLAA)
- 4 & 11 November 2013 – Presentations/Workshops on the NPPF/NPPG and the importance of objectively assessed needs
- 22 November 2013 – Presentation/Q&A by Planning Advisory Service representative (Jo Lee of Peter Brett Associates) on Meeting Objectively Assessed Need: The SHMA – context and practice examples
- 9 December 2013 – Presentation/Q&A by GL Hearn (Nick Ireland and Justin Gardner) on the findings of the SHMA and housing provisions.

1.3.13 A principal purpose of the SHMA is to assess the overall need for additional housing in the borough for the plan period (2011-31). The NPPF directs that Local Plans should meet “the full, objectively assessed needs” for both market and affordable housing within housing market areas as far as this is consistent with other policies in the NPPF (NPPF paragraph 47). The housing market area reflects key functional linkages between places where people live and work.

1.3.14 The draft National Planning Practice Guidance 2013 (NPPG) sets out how a SHMA should be undertaken⁴. The guidance specifies that the basis for calculating the future overall need for housing must be the latest national household projections published by CLG. The SHMA has used the interim 2011 based household projections released by CLG in 2013. These are trend based projections that are an indication of the number of households that would form if recent demographic trends continued. They are interim projections, rather than official statistics, because they are based on the 2011 interim sub-national population projections (SNPP) which only project population growth to 2021. These population projections are based on the 2011 mid-year population estimates rolled forward from the Census 2011 data and applying the demographic trends used for the previous 2010-based SNPP. New SNPP data is expected in spring 2014, and updated CLG household projections are expected towards the end of 2014. This base information has then been further refined in the SHMA by examining the key local inputs that fed into the SNPP, and undertaking a critical assessment of more recent migration data, household formation rates and housing vacancy rates.

1.3.15 The conclusion of this analysis is that the SHMA predicts that some 19,600 new homes would need to be built over the 20 year plan period (2011-2031) for the full objective need for housing in Maidstone

⁴ There is further advice on how to prepare a SHMA. PAS published “10 key principles for owning your own housing number – finding your objectively assessed needs”, and there is an online tool “What Homes Where” which is a website set up by professional bodies, charities and trade association professionals with an interest in planning for housing.

borough to be met, i.e. 980 dwellings per annum.

- 1.3.16 Importantly the methodology and key assumptions which underpin the assessment are common to the reports for each of the three authorities. This helps add to the rigour of the reports and means that there has been a consistent approach to the assessment of housing needs across the whole of the Maidstone housing market area which encompasses parts of Tonbridge & Malling Borough, namely Aylesford, East & West Malling, Larkfield and Snodland. The housing market areas have been based on CLG research of 2010 (The Geography of Housing Market Areas in England – CURDS). The administrative boundary of Maidstone falls within two housing market areas: Maidstone and Ashford (Harrietsham & Lenham and Headcorn wards), although the objectively assessed needs have been disaggregated by district.
- 1.3.17 The extent of the Maidstone housing market area is an important consideration and the degree of integration with the Medway Towns to the north has been assessed. The labour market and migration move in both directions between Maidstone and Medway. However, the SHMA has analysed other factors, in particular the housing “offer” (house type, size and tenure), the London influence and housing costs, and concluded that there is justification to distinguish Maidstone from Medway in market terms.
- 1.3.18 The objectively assessed housing need for Maidstone has also been benchmarked against five and ten year migration trend projections. These provide a useful sensitivity test, but they do not take account of the impact of population age profile on migration (both in Maidstone borough and other areas from which people typically move to Maidstone). Further sensitivity testing of the objectively assessed housing need was undertaken through the modelling of two economic scenarios. This confirms that the scale of household growth necessary to generate sufficient working age people to support the expected growth in the economy over the same period (2011 to 2031)⁵ will not exceed the objectively housing assessed need of 19,600 dwellings.
- 1.3.19 The SHMA also considers the need for affordable housing over the plan period. The methodology draws together analysis of the number of households currently in housing need with estimates of how many additional households will require affordable housing in future years to 2031. The supply of affordable housing from existing stock re-lets, vacancies and developments in the pipeline is then derived to establish what the net requirement for new affordable housing will be. The SHMA concludes that of the total annual requirement of 980 dwellings needed over the local plan period (2011 to 2031), 324 new affordable

⁵ Between 15,783 dwellings and 18,560 dwellings

homes will be needed annually between 2013 and 2031. This finding assumes that households will spend up to 30% of income on housing costs although, in fact, some households will be willing to spend a greater proportion than this. The private rented sector will also continue to have some role in providing affordable accommodation.

1.3.20 The SHMA is a technical document and is a pivotal piece of the local plan evidence base. Hence an independent demographer was appointed to review Maidstone's objectively assessed need. The demographer has concluded that the objectively assessed need of 19,600 dwellings set out in the SHMA is the best scenario of the alternatives tested, and that the results for population, households and new homes are robust.

1.3.21 Representatives from local authorities, house-builders, planning agents, estate agents and registered providers attended a stakeholder presentation and workshop for the SHMA, which was held on 26 July 2013. The workshop covered the three local authority areas but also drew comparisons with wider trends in Kent and other parts of the country. The key points arising from the event were:

- Some recovery from the bottom of the market in 2007.
- Recovery has been variable across different segments of the market and in different areas:
 - Recovery in demand for family homes stronger (particularly small family homes) whilst flats remain muted
 - More established, affluent buyers returned to the market more quickly, first time buyer activity less so
 - Higher value rural locations and areas traditionally linked with the London market recovering more strongly.
- Future recovery is likely to be gradual, but in higher value areas demand and pricing pressures could return to the market more rapidly.
- Improving access to mortgage availability will be critical to the market recovery. Help-to-Buy is greatly assisting with this, but what happens after will be important. More certainty in the employment market and increases in earnings will also be needed to sustain recovery.
- Greater choice in the supply of sites (particularly more small sites) would help to improve housing delivery and provide an alternative to large scale allocations.
- The private rented sector continues to grow apace, but there is a need to ensure it is aligned with need and that standards are maintained. Demand for older persons housing and retirement accommodation is also strong.

1.3.22 Following the Members' presentation on 9 December 2013, the draft SHMA was published on 9 January 2014 and is available to view or

download from the local plan webpage. At this point in time the SHMA should remain in draft because new national data on household projections is expected to be released in 2014. Officers will monitor the implications that may arise from new releases and will report resultant actions needed to Members.

- 1.3.23 Meanwhile, subject to Cabinet decisions in February when land allocations will be recommended, there is currently potential capacity to make provision for up to 17,100 dwellings over the plan period 2011-2031. This figure includes a yield of 8,210 dwellings from potential new SHLAA sites (in addition to the approved strategic housing sites), based on the dispersed distribution strategy formerly approved by Cabinet⁶ and the borough's environmental and infrastructure constraints.
- 1.3.24 The NPPF directs local authorities to identify deliverable housing sites for the first 5 years (it is implied this starts from the date of adoption of a local plan). Deliverable sites, including integral infrastructure, must be available, offer a suitable location, be achievable (with a realistic prospect of being delivered within those 5 years), and be viable. For years 6 to 10 and, where possible, years 11 to 15 following adoption (i.e. the last 10 years of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan period), sites should be developable. Developable sites must be suitably located, and available and viable at the point of release. The greater the number of dwellings on sites that are specifically identified as deliverable/developable, the more robust the local plan will be. However, the NPPF also allows for the identification of broad locations for housing in this latter period. Three broad development locations yielding a potential 3,000 dwellings will be presented to Members in February.
- 1.3.25 This appraisal would currently result in an unmet need of 2,500 dwellings which represents 13% of the objectively assessed need. The council will need to be in a position to robustly defend any constraints to development, and to demonstrate what measures have been taken to fully meet the objectively assessed need. These measures will be discussed in more detail in the February reports when development targets are considered, but are likely to include a further call for sites as part of the public consultation process, a reappraisal of the reasons why sites previously submitted have been rejected, and ultimately whether (under the duty to cooperate) unmet need can be satisfied by neighbouring authorities.

⁶ Cabinet reports 9 February 2011, 10 August 2011 and 25 July 2012

Objectively Assessed Need and Housing Land Supply	Dwellings	Totals
Objectively assessed housing need		19,600
Completed dwellings 2011/12 and 2012/13	1,503	
Planning permissions at 1 April 2013	1,850	
Planning permissions 1 April to 1 October 2013	246	
Planning permissions – outstanding Section106 Agreements at 1 October 2013	107	
Land allocations – approved strategic sites	2,140	
Land allocations – potential SHLAA sites	8,210	
Total potential housing land supply (approx.)		14,100
Potential broad locations for housing development	3,000	
Total potential housing land supply including broad locations		17,100
Unmet housing need (19,600 less 17,100)		(2,500)

Constraints to Development

1.3.26 The NPPF makes distinctions between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status. Whilst the NPPF gives weight to the protection of international and national designations, this does not downgrade local designations for landscape or wildlife sites in plan making, and such sites are not suitable for development but a strong case for their protection must be made. Another important and common theme that runs through the NPPF is the need for viable infrastructure to support new development. The local plan must ensure that new and expanded infrastructure requirements generated by land allocations can be met.

1.3.27 Of international importance in Maidstone is the North Downs Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The borough includes 23 nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); and 63 Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and 2 Local Nature Reserves (LNR) which are locally important. A large area of the borough lies within the Kent Downs AONB, a nationally important landscape designation where a strong level of protection is given. A strong level of protection is also given to the small section of the Metropolitan Green Belt that lies to the west of the borough. These areas are protected but they are not sacrosanct.

1.3.28 All landscapes have some value, but they cannot all be protected, so at the local level the focus must be on protecting the borough's best landscapes. Of particular local significance are the borough's river valleys (the Medway, Loose and Len) and the scarp face of the

Greensand Ridge. Local plan policies identify and safeguard such areas, although there are currently no major pressures for housing development in these locations.

- 1.3.29 In other parts of the borough where sites have been submitted for consideration through the call for sites, local constraints have been examined through the site assessment pro forma⁷. The pro forma has been used to assess each potential development site submitted through the SHLAA call for sites (and the SEDLAA) in order to achieve a consistent and transparent approach. The mitigation of constraints - local landscape, ecology, highways, services, flooding and so on - has formed part of the assessments. In accordance with the requirements of the NPPF, the availability, locational suitability, deliverability and viability of each potential development site has been examined, and the results will be available to assist Member decision making in February.
- 1.3.30 There are often solutions to overcoming infrastructure constraints. A new school or community centre can be built; open space or play equipment can be provided; and increased traffic congestion can be addressed through new public transport schemes and highway improvements.
- 1.3.31 So if the council cannot fully meet its objectively assessed housing need, it must establish a strong case of constraint to development within the borough, and demonstrate that neighbouring authorities have fewer constraints.

Sustainability Appraisal and Testing of Development Options

- 1.3.32 Consultants URS have been commissioned to prepare the sustainability appraisal (SA) for the local plan. The production of an SA is required under EU regulations and planning law, and it is an appraisal of the economic, environmental, and social effects of a plan (and its policies) from the outset of the plan preparation process. An SA is an iterative process that allows decisions to be made that accord with sustainable development.
- 1.3.33 A key purpose of the SA is to appraise development options for the local plan. The emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan has a strategy of directing development to the most sustainable locations, in particular making best use of previously developed land (brownfield sites). Brownfield sites within an urban area have access to existing infrastructure and can generally be developed at higher densities, thus reducing the need to release greenfield sites for development. This

⁷ Approved by Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development, via Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 22 March 2013

approach accords with the principles of the NPPF and the aims of this council. Regeneration of the town centre is one of the key objectives of the local plan, and every effort has been made to identify potential redevelopment sites over and above those that were submitted through the SHLAA call for sites in December 2013/January 2014. Local plan policies encourage a regeneration approach through the allocation of brownfield sites for redevelopment and by requiring a lower affordable housing contribution on brownfield sites within the urban area in order to encourage regeneration.

1.3.34 In the past 10 years, a high percentage of development has been built on brownfield sites (between 85% and 96% annually). This was a result of introducing a moratorium on the release of greenfield land allocated in the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan (2000) following the publication of an urban capacity study in 2002. This trend cannot be sustained and the moratorium has been lifted to enable the council to meet short and long term housing provisions. The need for greenfield sites is compounded by national policies that are leading to considerably higher annual housing targets than previously experienced. New homes are needed because of a growing population, people are living longer and there are more elderly people in smaller households, new jobs are being created and, over the past decade, there has generally been a level of net in-migration into the borough (both internal migration from other parts of the Country and international migration).

1.3.35 There is a clear hierarchy in determining which locations are the most sustainable for allocating new development sites. Following the redevelopment of brownfield sites within settlement boundaries, the most sustainable location for greenfield development is adjacent to the currently defined⁸ urban boundary, where access to services is greatest and best use can be made of existing infrastructure. However, not all development needs can be accommodated here because of environmental and infrastructure constraints. Seven rural service centres form the second tier in Maidstone's settlement hierarchy. These centres act as a focal point for trade and services for wider communities, providing a concentration of public transport, employment and community facilities. Rural service centres are Maidstone's most sustainable villages and are able to accommodate further development. Three larger settlements form the third tier of the settlement hierarchy. These villages have a smaller range of services than rural service centres, but still meet the day-to-day needs of local communities. Where appropriate, larger settlements can accommodate some limited development.

⁸ Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000

1.3.36 The SA is appraising various options that follow the settlement hierarchy, and is also assessing the impact of the Golding Homes' proposal for a new settlement⁹, which was submitted during the call for sites. The SA will appraise three targets for housing: 19,600 dwellings (objectively assessed need), 17,100 dwellings (draft capacity to date including broad locations for development), and 14,100 dwellings (draft capacity to date excluding broad locations for development). The SA will also appraise these targets against the various distribution options for development: a dispersed pattern of development, with and without broad locations for development and/or the new settlement. This will compare a strategy of development dispersal with one of a new settlement together with a reduced dispersal of development. These options will be tested against their ability to deliver the objectively assessed need for housing, but will be balanced by sustainability indicators including flooding, health, poverty, education, congestion, climate change, biodiversity, countryside, heritage, waste, energy and economy.

Sustainability Appraisal: Housing development options		
1	19,600	Dispersed and broad locations
2	19,600	Dispersed, broad locations and a new settlement
3	17,100	Dispersed and broad locations
4	17,100	Dispersed and new settlement
5	14,100	Dispersed only
6	14,100	Dispersed and a new settlement

1.3.37 The results of the appraisal will be available prior to the February reports when Members will consider the housing target and distribution pattern of development.

Employment Land Forecast

1.3.38 An updated employment land forecast has been prepared as evidence for the local plan, which will replace the employment forecast published in 2013 that was based on housing provisions of 14,800 dwellings. The new forecast uses a different methodology than previous for a number of reasons, not least to enable economic growth opportunities to be assessed objectively and then used to inform the housing growth discussion. The forecast has been produced by the consultancy firm GVA which has undertaken such forecasting work for the council in the past.

1.3.39 The approach used in this forecast looks first at the different sectors in the local economy and establishes which sectors are projected to grow or contract (in terms of jobs), and by what percentage, over the

⁹ Proposal for a freestanding garden suburb, accommodating 4,500 new homes on greenfield sites located to the south east of the urban area.

lifetime of the plan. The basis for this assessment is the nationally recognised Experian forecast for the borough. This has then been refined where more detailed local factors support a higher or lower growth rate than is predicted by Experian, which provides a more strategic analysis of the economy. In particular, the forecast has taken account of potential employment growth at the medical campus proposed at junction 7 of the M20; an allowance has been made for market "churn", calculated from the average annual construction rate of space within the borough; and the impact of changing working practices by sectoral activity in the borough has been appraised. The output of this sectoral analysis is an employment (jobs) forecast for all of the sectors in the local economy.

1.3.40 This jobs forecast is then converted into a land requirement for those sectors which will need new office, industrial or distribution/warehousing floorspace for the full local plan period 2011 to 2031 (i.e. the B use classes). The creation of a total of 14,394 jobs between 2011 and 2031 are forecast across all employment sectors, of which 7,933 will be in the office, industrial and warehousing based sectors and at the Maidstone medical campus, including KIMS¹⁰. Total figures in the table below vary due to rounding.

2011-2031	Job creation	Floorspace (m²)	Land (hectares)
Office	3,053	39,830	2.7
Industrial	226	20,290	5.1
Warehouse	453	49,911	10.0
General requirement	3,733	110,030	17.7
Medical	4,200	98,000	19.0
Total (incl. medical)	7,933	208,030	37.0

1.3.41 The council's ability to meet its employment provisions through new land allocations, together with the distribution of development, will be given consideration by Members through the February reports.

Retail Capacity Study

1.3.42 Members have received a presentation on the Maidstone Town Centre Assessment and the Retail Capacity Study, produced by consultants DTZ, and both documents have been published on the local plan webpage. At its meeting on 4 December 2014, Cabinet approved the retail provisions set out in the appended policies to that report. Two retail allocations at Maidstone East/Royal Mail Sorting Office and Newnham Park were approved, and the Mall was identified as a future broad location for retail growth.

¹⁰ Kent Institute for Medicine and Surgery

1.3.43 The Maidstone Retail Capacity Study assessed the quantitative needs for retail development to 2031. The RECAP model was used in forecasting: an empirical step-by-step model based on the results of the 2012 Maidstone Household Survey of shopping patterns as its method of allocating retail expenditure from catchment zones to shopping destinations. The model is therefore based on consumer responses about actual shopping patterns.

1.3.44 The Retail Capacity Study was based on an interim provision of 14,800 dwellings. The consultants have considered the outputs in the context of increased provisions, and concluded that the population forecasts used for the purpose of the Maidstone Retail Capacity Study are consistent with a provision for 17,100 dwellings. For information and completeness, the retail provisions are reproduced below. The provisions are cumulative for each year.

Retail provisions□	2016	2021	2026	2031
Comparison (m ²)	5,500	12,400	18,800	23,700
Convenience (m ²)	3,700	4,400	5,250	6,100

Key Local Issues, Spatial Vision and Spatial Objectives

1.3.45 The challenge for the local plan is to manage the potential impacts of future housing and employment growth, together with supporting infrastructure, to ensure that development takes place in a sustainable manner that supports the local economy whilst safeguarding valuable natural and built assets. The borough's key local issues were initially identified in the Core Strategy¹¹, and the same document set out the council's spatial vision and spatial objectives for the borough. These have been updated to ensure conformity with changing government policy and the publication of the NPPF and subsequent guidance, and to reflect any changes in local circumstances.

1.3.46 Revisions to the key local issues set out in the Core Strategy 2011 are set out below (deletions are shown in strike through text and additions in italic text). The revisions will be carried forward to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan for further public consultation (Regulation 18) following Member decisions on the plan in February.

Key Local Issues

1. Where, when and how much development will be distributed throughout the borough;
2. Maintenance of the distinct character and identity of villages and the urban area;

¹¹ Core Strategy Public Consultation Draft 2011 (Regulation 18 consultation)

3. Protection of the built and natural heritage, including the Kent Downs AONB and its setting *and areas of local landscape value*;
4. Provision of strategic and local infrastructure to support new development and growth including a sustainable integrated transport strategy, adequate water supply, sustainable waste management, energy infrastructure and social infrastructure such as health, schools and other educational facilities;
5. Improvements to quality of air within the air quality management area (AQMA);
6. Regeneration of the town centre and areas of social and environmental deprivation;
7. Redressing the low wage economy by expanding the employment skills base *to target employment opportunities and improving higher and further education opportunities to target employment opportunities in green technologies including low carbon energy production*;
8. Meeting housing needs *by delivering of vulnerable groups including young people*, affordable housing, local needs housing, accommodation for the elderly, accommodation to meet Gypsy and Traveller needs and accommodation to meet rural housing needs;
9. Promotion of the multi-functional nature of the borough's open spaces, rivers and other watercourses;
10. Ensuring that all new development is built to a high standard of sustainable design and construction; and
11. Ensuring that applications for development adequately address the impact of climate change, especially the issues of flooding and water supply.

1.3.47 The Maidstone Borough Local Plan is the spatial interpretation of the vision and priorities set out in the Maidstone Community Strategy¹². The local plan also has regard to other corporate documents, in particular the Strategic Plan 2011-2015 (2013-2014 Refresh), the emerging Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and the Housing Strategy 2011/12 to 2014/15. Spatial Policy officers work closely with colleagues in these departments and also with other departments such as Development Management, Economic Development, and Environmental Health. The policies of the local plan aim to deliver the plan's vision and objectives.

1.3.48 Revisions to the spatial vision and objectives set out in the Core Strategy 2011 are set out below (deletions are shown in strike through text and additions in italic text). The revisions will be carried forward to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan for further public consultation (Regulation 18) following Member decisions on the plan in February.

¹² Maidstone Community Strategy 2009-2020 (refreshed July 2013)

Spatial Vision

By ~~2026~~ 2031:

- The ~~Core Strategy~~ *Maidstone Borough Local Plan* will deliver sustainable growth and regeneration whilst protecting and enhancing the borough's natural and built assets;
- Development will be guided by ~~a sustainable and~~ *the delivery of the* integrated transport strategy together with the timely provision of appropriate strategic and local infrastructure;
- *Maidstone town* will be ~~a an~~ *enhanced* vibrant, prosperous and sustainable community benefiting from ~~its an~~ exceptional urban and rural environment with a vital and viable ~~Maidstone~~ town centre
- ~~The character and identity of rural settlements will be maintained~~ *roles of the rural service centres will be reinforced* by directing suitable development and supporting infrastructure to ~~the rural service centres of Coxheath, Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden, and Staplehurst and Yalding;~~
- *The roles of the larger rural settlements of Boughton Monchelsea, Eyhorne Street (Hollingbourne) and Sutton Valence will be maintained through the delivery of limited development, where appropriate, together with supporting infrastructure;*
- *The distinctive character of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting, together with the openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt, will be rigorously protected and maintained;*
- Employment skills will be expanded to meet an improved and varied range of local jobs;
- There will be a better balanced housing market to meet the needs of the community across the whole borough; and
- Development will be of high quality sustainable design and construction to respond to climate change and to protect the environment.

Spatial Objectives

1. To provide for ~~10,080 new homes and 10,000 new jobs~~ *a balance of new homes and related retail and employment opportunities*, with an emphasis on increasing skilled employment opportunities in the borough alongside developing learning opportunities.

2. To focus new development ~~mainly within the Maidstone urban area~~ with:

i. ~~80% of new housing built within and adjacent to the urban area of Maidstone with appropriate sustainable greenfield development being well located in relation to existing services in the urban area~~ *Principally*

within¹³ the Maidstone urban area and at the strategic development locations at the edge of town, including junction 7 of the M20 motorway;

ii. The aim of providing 60% of new housing across the plan period on previously developed land and through the conversion of existing buildings

ii. New employment land allocations to be exploited in Maidstone Town Centre first co-ordinated with opportunities on the most suitable greenfield sites to provide for a suitable mix of employment opportunities To a lesser extent at the seven rural service centres of Coxheath, Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden, Staplehurst and Yalding¹⁴ consistent with their range of services and role; and

iii. The creation of opportunities to provide for local power generation Limited development at the three larger settlements of Boughton Monchelsea, Eyhorne Street (Hollingbourne) and Sutton Valence where appropriate.

3. To transform the offer, vitality and viability of the *Maidstone* town centre including *its* office, retail, residential, further and higher education, leisure, cultural and tourism functions together with significant enhancement of *its public realm* and to the natural and built environment particularly in respect of including the riverside environment.

4. To consolidate reinforce the roles of the rural service centres through the retention of existing services, the addition of new infrastructure where possible, and the regeneration of employment sites at Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst as the focus of the network of rural settlements with retained existing services and regenerated employment sites including the expansion of existing employment sites where appropriate.

5. To support new housing in the smaller villages that meet local needs and is of a design, scale, character and location appropriate to the settlement and which supports the retention of existing services and facilities.

6. To safeguard and maintain the character of the ~~district's borough's~~ landscapes including the Kent Downs AONB and other distinctive local landscapes of *local value* whilst facilitating the economic and social

¹³ Land allocations will be made within and adjacent to the boundaries of the urban area, rural service centres and larger settlements as defined in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2000. A consequence of allocating land is the amendment of boundaries so that new sites become part of those settlements. To state that allocations will be made "adjacent" to settlements implies further development would be acceptable outside settlement boundaries following adoption of the local plan.

¹⁴ The primary development site at Yalding is the former Syngenta works, where flood mitigation measures will be an essential part of new development proposals.

well-being of these areas, including the diversification of the rural economy.

7. To retain and enhance the character of the existing green and blue infrastructure and to promote linkages between areas of environmental value.

8. To ensure that new development takes account of the need to mitigate the impacts of climate change, *implementing sustainable construction standards for both residential and non-residential schemes*, ~~and adapt to climate change and also to improve air quality by locating development to minimise the use of resources, to promote sustainable travel patterns, to develop a greater choice of transport measures, to support water and energy efficiency measures and to encourage renewable energy sources and sustainable drainage solutions.~~

9. To ensure that new development is of high quality design, making a positive contribution to the area including protection of built and natural heritage and biodiversity.

10. To provide for future housing that meets the changing needs of the borough's population including provision for an increasingly ageing population and family housing, an appropriate tenure mix, affordable housing, and accommodation to meet the needs of the local Gypsy and Traveller community.

11. To ensure that key infrastructure and service improvements needed to support delivery of the ~~Core Strategy Maidstone Borough Local Plan objectives and policies~~ are brought forward in a coordinated and timely manner, and that new development makes an appropriate contribution towards the infrastructure needs arising as a result of such new development.

1.3.49 The need (or otherwise) for junction 8 of the M20 motorway to assist in delivering the borough's employment requirements will be given consideration by Members in February. This may result in an amendment to objective 2(i).

Conclusion

1.3.50 This report seeks Members' approval of the amendments to the key local issues, the spatial vision and spatial objectives of the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan; and seeks agreement of the objectively assessed housing need of 19,600 dwellings. Members are requested to note the current draft housing provision of 17,100 dwellings; and the draft provisions for employment floorspace (offices 39,830m²; industry 20,290m²; warehousing 49,911m²; medical 98,000m²).

Targets for housing, employment and retail will be given consideration by Members in February, together with site allocations.

1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended

1.4.1 The key decision arising from this report is the agreement of the borough's objectively assessed need of 19,600 dwellings. The NPPF aims to significantly boost the supply of housing land and the basis for calculating a borough's housing need is the most up-to-date Office for National Statistics data releases and CLG trend based population and household projections. The SHMA takes account of the latest national demographic data and has examined local factors such as migration patterns, household formation and vacancy rates. The next step is for the local authority to use its evidence base to demonstrate how (and if) it can fully meet objectively assessed need through the SHLAA, constraints mapping, infrastructure assessments and sustainability appraisal. To reject the objectively assessed need of 19,600 dwellings would result in the local plan being found unsound at examination.

1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives

1.5.1 The Maidstone Borough Local Plan will assist in delivering the spatial objectives of the Maidstone Community Strategy and the Strategic Plan. It will also have regard to objectives set out in other corporate documents, in particular the Housing Strategy. The local plan will support the council's priorities for Maidstone to have a growing economy and to be a decent place to live, through the policy framework against which planning applications are judged and through the allocation of land for development. The consultation processes will strive to meet corporate and customer excellence.

1.6 Risk Management

1.6.1 The council still has a local planning policy framework that comprises adopted development plan documents and supplementary planning documents, endorsed guidance, and saved policies from the Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan 2000. These policies are still relevant and carry weight in the decision making processes provided there is no conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). However, the council has a duty to maintain an up-to-date policy framework, and current policies are increasingly becoming outdated or are in conflict with the NPPF. It is important to maintain the momentum for the preparation of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and to reach a consensus that the local plan is fit for public consultation. Establishing objectively assessed housing need is part of that process.

1.6.2 The borough's objectively assessed need has been determined through the SHMA using expert consultants in this field. To give greater

confidence that the SHMA, as a critical part of the local plan’s evidence base, will be found sound at examination, an independent demographer has reviewed the assumptions behind the figures and concluded they are robust.

1.7 Other Implications

1.7.1

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

1.7.2 Financial: A dedicated budget has been identified to undertake the work relating to the preparation of the local plan. The commissioning of consultants and legal advice can be accommodated within that budget.

1.7.3 Legal: Legal services have been retained to offer advice on document content and processes to ensure the Maidstone Borough Local Plan is found sound at examination. A number of meetings have been held with Counsel and the Head of Legal Services. These services can be managed within the existing budget for local plan production.

1.7.4 Procurement: Although additional evidence base work is being prepared in-house where possible, it is necessary to employ consultants on short term contracts to undertake specialist pieces of work. Appointments are in accordance with the Council’s procurement procedures and the costs can be managed within the existing budget for local plan production.

1.8 Relevant Documents

Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013

http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/44656/Strategic-Housing-Market-Assessment-2014.pdf

Retail Capacity Study 2013

http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0013/34150/Retail-Capacity-Study-2013.pdf

1.8.1 Appendices

None

1.8.2 Background Documents

None

<u>IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?</u>		<u>THIS BOX MUST BE COMPLETED</u>	
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
If yes, this is a Key Decision because: the report affects local plan policies, plans and strategies			
Wards/Parishes affected: all wards and parishes			