

AGENDA

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING



Overview and Scrutiny

Date: Tuesday 16 September 2014
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors: Chittenden, English (Vice-Chairman), Munford,
Powell, Ross, Round, Springett (Chairman),
de Wiggondene and Willis

Page No.

- 1. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be webcast**
- 2. Apologies**
- 3. Notification of Substitute Members**
- 4. Notification of Visiting Members/Witnesses**
- 5. Disclosures by Members and Officers**
- 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 19 August 2014** **1 - 7**
- 8. Cabinet Member Priorities for 2014-2015** **8 - 11**
Priority of Councillor David Burton, Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development for the Municipal Year 2014-2015.
- 9. Engaging Communities in Maidstone's Local Plan - Design South East Report on the Local Plan consultation events** **12 - 66**
An interview with Sue Whiteside, Team Leader, Spatial Policy.

Continued Over/:

Issued on 3 September 2014

Alison Broom

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

10. Community Infrastructure Levy - key issues arising from consultation (regulation 15) **67 - 79**

A report considering the key issues arising from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) preliminary draft charging schedule (PDCS) (regulation 15) public consultation presented by Darren Bridgett, Principal Planning Officer, Spatial Policy.

11. Update on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan

A verbal update by Darren Bridgett, Principal Planning Officer, Spatial Policy.

12. Future Work Programme and SCRAIP update **80 - 104**

Report attached for consideration.

The reports included in Part I of this agenda can be made available in **alternative formats**. For further information about this service, or to arrange for special facilities to be provided at the meeting, **please contact Tessa Mallett on 01622 602524**. To find out more about the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, please visit <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/osc>

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Planning, Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 19 AUGUST 2014

Present: Councillor Springett (Chairman), and
Councillors Chittenden, B Mortimer, Munford, Powell,
Ross, Round, de Wiggondene and Mrs Wilson

Also Present: Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Burton,
Edwards-Daem, Ells, Mrs Gooch, Hogg,
Mrs Joy, McLoughlin and Sargeant

36. THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER WHETHER ALL ITEMS ON THE AGENDA SHOULD BE WEBCAST

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be webcast.

37. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors English and Willis.

It was noted Cllr de Wiggondene would be a few minutes late but would be attending.

38. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitute members were noted:

- Councillor B Mortimer for Councillor English, and;
- Councillor F Wilson for Councillor Willis.

39. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS/WITNESSES

Councillor Burton, Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development was present as a witness for items 8 Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update and item 9 Maidstone Borough Local Plan – key issues arising from consultation (Regulation 18).

Also in attendance reserving their right to make representations were Councillors Blackmore, Gooch, Hogg and McLoughlin.

In attendance as observers were Councillors Ells, Edwards-Daem, Joy and Sargeant.

40. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

41. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

42. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 JULY 2014

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed after the following amendments were made:

Page 6 – the name of the café in Tunbridge Wells corrected to read 'Vello Café'.

Page 7 – third bullet from the bottom – remove the words 'and provide improvements to the Maidstone gyratory system.'

43. STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Sarah Anderton, Principal Planning Officer presented her report on the key findings arising from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Addendum report. The firm, G L Hearn, had been commissioned jointly by Ashford, Tonbridge and Malling and Maidstone Borough Councils to undertake separate SHMAs for each authority following a common methodology.

Ms Anderton explained the original SHMA carried out for Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) had reported an 'objectively assessed housing need' figure for the borough of 19,600 homes for the period 2011 to 2031. Cabinet had agreed this figure at its meeting of 27 January 2014.

Ms Anderton went on to explain MBC commissioned a focused update of selective elements of the SHMA as an addendum to the main report. The majority of the main SHMA was unchanged and would continue to be a key part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan. Two specific pieces of information published since the main SHMA were:

1. The publication of the Office of National Statistics' 2012-based Sub-National Population Projections (SNPP) on 29 May 2014, and;
2. The finalised National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) published in March 2014 – this indicated that Local Planning Authorities should assess and quantify future needs for elderly person's accommodation, including residential care homes.

The 2012-based SNPP were significant because they were the first to be published taking full account of the 2011 census results and covered the period to 2037, the full Local Plan period.

The methodology used was the same as for the original SHMA.

The revised projection for future dwelling requirements (2011-31) ('objectively assessed need') was 18,600. This showed a reduction in the total requirement of 1,000 dwellings compared to the main SHMA report.

Ms Anderton explained the importance of noting this figure (18,600) as this was the estimated housing need figure (the demand) for the period of the Local Plan. This was different and separate from the supply of housing land available in the borough, the housing target figure for the borough, which would be set in the emerging Local Plan.

Ms Anderton continued to explain that the NPPG indicated local planning authorities needed an understanding of their residential care home needs for the future. This was confirmed in March 2014 and was not in the guidance for the original SHMA.

The assessment of care home needs (residential care homes and nursing homes) had drawn on data from Kent County Council's Adult Accommodation Strategy (July 2014) together with the ONS' projections for the increase in the institutional population aged 75+.

The need identified for elderly care home spaces (2011-31) was 960. This was in addition to the need for 18,600 new dwellings over the same period.

During lengthy discussion the Committee raised the following points:

- Concerns regarding the reliability of the revised figure were raised after it being explained earlier in the year that the Committee had to accept the figure of 19,600. It was explained it would not have been prudent to wait for the up to date figures to be published before agreeing a figure as it would have put the consultation of the draft Local Plan behind by six months. It was explained further that new projection figures would always be issued and that officers would keep a watching brief and report back any significant changes. It was further explained that both NPPG and National Planning Practice Framework (NPPF) guidance required planning to be flexible and adaptable enough to respond to market signals and projections.
- Clarification of the care home needs figure was explained. The projected need for care home spaces of 960 was separate to the 'objectively assessed housing need' figure of 18,600.
- The latest position regarding housing supply, as reported to Committee on 21 January 2014, showed a shortfall of 2,500 dwellings. This figure took into account houses completed, planning permissions granted, sites identified and broad locations in the draft Local Plan. It was explained that the 2013/14 position, on houses completed and permissions granted, would be available in October

2014. As it stood, with the 21 January 2014 position and the revised 'objectively assessed housing need' figure, the shortfall would be 1,500.

- The latest NPPG guidance regarding 'windfall' sites, dated March 2014, stated some form of 'windfall' allowance could be made in the last ten years of the adoption of the Local Plan.
- Concern was raised regarding the expectation of international migration and what affect it had on the figures. It was explained that the methodology used to arrive at the figures was Government specific and ONS/CLG population and household projections were used as a starting point. Because the figures for the 'objectively assessed housing need' figure were a projection there would always be an element of judgement of how much the population would grow. The Planning Inspector would test that the methodology had been followed and would expect the latest national projections to have been used. If net migration stopped, demand would reduce and the figure would be revised and updated accordingly.
- The issue of mixed tenure was raised and it was explained the adopted policy required 40% of affordable housing in new developments across the borough. The draft Local Plan breaks the percentage of affordable housing down across the borough; 40% in villages, 30% in periphery of the urban area and 15% on brownfield sites. The higher figure of 40% was a disincentive for developers wanting to develop on greenfield sites and encouraged more development on brownfield sites where the percentage was lower.
- The methodology used to arrive at the 'objectively assessed housing need' figure was questioned. It was explained the methodology used was that of the NPPG. It was the same methodology used in the original report. The methodology had been checked in detail by the Planning Advisory Service, an independent demographer and two other local authorities had used it. It was explained, even if MBC designed its own methodology the Local Plan would still need to go through the same government inspection process.
- The point was raised that the NPPF stated the Local Plan should meet the 'objectively assessed housing need'. It also stated the authority could demonstrate it was unable to meet this need due to constraints such as road congestion, lack of infrastructure, out dated sewage provision. This would be reflected in a lower housing target figure in the Local Plan. However, in order to do this MBC had to accept the revised 'objectively assessed housing need' figure of 18,600.
- The Committee discussed how clear evidence could be gathered to demonstrate the borough was unable to provide the sites and infrastructure for the 'objectively assessed housing needs' and use this to come up with a reduced housing target figure. It was

agreed the Local Plan was the best possible means of providing protection for the borough against unwanted development.

- The Committee agreed quality homes and placement of them was more important than the number of homes built and everyone wanted what was best for the residents of the borough.

RESOLVED:

- a) That it be noted the Committee remained very concerned at the high value housing need figure but reluctantly recommended it be accepted by the Cabinet as the current bench mark need figure from which to do the work to arrive at the housing target figure;
- b) That it be recommended officers be fully supported, including if necessary the provision of additional resources, to ensure all aspects are fully investigated to allow Maidstone Borough Council to achieve the minimum target figure possible;
- c) That it be recommended assistance be given to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development to produce interim policies, to include parking, gardens and open space, and housing standards, to protect the borough and ensure development is only carried out where and how the Borough wanted it.
- d) That it be recommended any evidence provided by the public, to assist in reducing the housing need figure, be taken into account.
- e) That Cabinet be recommended to accept the figure of 960 for additional care home places in the Borough.
- f) That the Head of Planning and Development be asked to present a report at a meeting date, to be agreed, providing details on Affordable Housing; what it is; the impact of the percentages outlined in the draft Local Plan, etc. in order to better understand the detail and make informed decisions regarding the Local Plan.

44. MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN - KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM CONSULTATION (REGULATION 18)

Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development presented the report.

Mr Jarman explained the report was a summary of the issues arising from representations on the draft Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan, submitted during public consultation (Regulation 18) which ran from 21 March to 7 May 2014.

Mr Jarman went on to say Officers had made no judgements on the representations made. Representations on land allocations would be presented at a later meeting.

Mr Jarman then gave the Committee a brief overview of the report.

Mr Jarman explained if everything went according to the plan the Maidstone Borough Local Plan would go before examiners in February 2016 and would be adopted in July 2016.

During discussions the following points were raised:

- All representations made during the consultation would be considered by Members and Officers. However, the Council would have to justify any changes made to the draft plan.
- Mr Jarman explained the public consultation process was fundamental to the local planning process. The Council had spent a considerable amount of time on the consultation and confirmed the public would be listened to when shaping the Local Plan.
- Neighbourhood Plans and the Local Plan should be aligned. There should be no competition between them. Mr Jarman confirmed Officers were timetabling in meetings with parish councils to discuss the differences between Neighbourhood Plans and the Local Plan to achieve alignment between the two.
- Mr Jarman confirmed the next stage was to carefully consider all representations made. It was confirmed by Mr Jarman that parties who had made representations, which had been used to change the Local Plan, would be notified.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the key issues arising from representations submitted during the Maidstone Borough local Plan Regulation 18 public consultation be noted;
- b) That it be recommended when representations to the Local Plan are collated, each representation be provided with a response explaining why the representation had been / not been taken forward and included in the Local Plan using the template report attached to the agenda for the meeting.

45. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE - REVIEW UPDATE

RESOLVED: That the revisions to Article 6 of the Council's Constitution, set out in Appendix A to the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Officer, be noted.

46. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME AND SCRAIP UPDATE

RESOLVED: That the draft Future Work Programme, set out in the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Officer, be agreed subject to the following amendments:

- That Cabinet Member priorities be provided in a written report and included with the agenda for the meeting of 16 September 2014 for noting;
- That the Community Infrastructure Levy – preliminary draft charging schedule be included on the agenda for the meeting of 30 September 2014;
- That a report on Affordable Housing policy for the draft Local Plan be provided for the 18 November 2014 meeting.

47. DURATION OF MEETING

6:30pm to 10:13pm.

Agenda Item 8

Maidstone Borough Council

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 16 September 2014

Cabinet Member Priorities for 2014-2015

While reading the following report you may want to think about:

- What you want to know from the report;
- What questions you would like answered.

Make a note of your questions in the box below.

As you read the report you may think of other questions.

Questions I would like to ask regarding this report:

-
-
-
-
-

Maidstone Borough Council

Planning, Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 16 September 2014

Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development Priorities for the Municipal Year 2014 - 15

Report of: Tessa Mallett, Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development portfolio is aligned to this Committee's terms of reference.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee are advised to consider the priority for the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development for the 2014-15 Municipal Year as outlined in point 3 below.

3. Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development Priority for the Municipal Year 2014-2015

- 3.1 The Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development has confirmed that their priority for the Municipal Year 2014-2015 will be to maintain or improve the published timetable for the Local Plan. The main objective being to limit on-going costs and uncertainty for the residents of the borough that comes with an un-adopted Local Plan.

Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee are responsible for holding the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development to account.
- 3.2 The areas of responsibility for the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development, outlined in the Council's Constitution, are detailed at **Appendix A**.
- 3.4 The Committee may find their responsibilities cross over with other Scrutiny Committees. The Committee should focus primarily on its terms of reference but can make recommendations to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee or the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee should a piece of work be highlighted that falls outside its jurisdiction.

4. Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 4.1 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council'
- 4.2 This Committee will primarily consider reports that deliver against the Council priority: 'For Maidstone to be a decent place to live' and 'for Maidstone to have a growing economy'.

Responsibilities of Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development

To take the lead within the Cabinet for ensuring that the Council delivers its strategic objectives for Maidstone to be a decent place to live and have a growing economy including a transport network that supports the economy.

Strategic Planning – in liaison with the Leader of the Council to oversee the development, review and implementation of the Council's:

- Spatial planning strategy including the Local Development Framework and other spatial planning documents including Development Plan Documents, Development Management policies and development briefs
- Integrated Transport Strategy Infrastructure Delivery Plan

Performance Management - to ensure excellent standards of performance and improvement with respect to the Council's services for:

- Development Management including planning enforcement and land charges
- Spatial Planning
- Landscape
- Conservation
- Building Control
- Parking Management and Enforcement
- Park and Ride service and the development of public transport initiatives
- Local (District) Highways functions
- Capital projects and programmes relevant to the portfolio

External Affairs and Partnerships

- To represent the Council on all relevant partnerships To foster close links with key stakeholders including parish councils, the Developers' Forum, English Heritage and transport interest groups
- To take responsibility for relationships with funders including Kent County Council, Highways Agency

Agenda Item 9

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2014

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Report prepared by Sue Whiteside and Cheryl Parks

- 1. ENGAGING COMMUNITIES IN MAIDSTONE'S LOCAL PLAN –
REPORT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY DESIGN
SOUTH EAST**
 - 1.1 Issue for Consideration
 - 1.1.1 To consider the interim report 'Engaging communities in Maidstone's local plan' attached at Appendix A. The final report, together with an action plan, will be presented to the Committee following the multi-stakeholder event planned for 17 September 2014.
 - 1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Planning and Development
 - 1.2.1 That the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the report 'Engaging communities in Maidstone's local plan' attached at Appendix A, and notes the recommendations made by Design South East that encourage meaningful engagement with the rural communities of Maidstone.
 - 1.3 Reasons for Recommendation

Background

 - 1.3.1 Community engagement is an essential part of the local plan process. The council's Statement of Community Involvement, adopted in 2013, sets out how and when stakeholders and the local community can participate in the preparation of local planning policy documents and planning applications. Community engagement in planning should be appropriate and proportionate to the planning issues, transparent, accessible and well planned.
 - 1.3.2 In February 2014, Cabinet approved the Maidstone Borough Local Plan for public consultation. At this stage in the plan-making process, consultation is carried out under Regulation 18 of the

Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, allowing for a reasonably flexible and informal consultation. The consultation ran for over six weeks from 21 March to 7 May 2014, during which time some 35 events were held at various locations across the borough, as highlighted in a previous report to this committee. This included specific events in each of the settlements proposed for housing growth plus three collective events for KALC (7th April), for the proposed Rural Service Centres (28th April) and for the Larger Villages (24th April). Prior to, during and after the period of consultation on the Local Plan a dedicated Principal Planning Officer was available for enquiries and assistance by phone and email, and attended a large number of meetings with parish and neighbourhood representatives on topics relating to growth, infrastructure and neighbourhood planning. On 21st May 2013, a 'drop in' day had been held for officers to hear parish council views on the submitted SHLAA sites.

- 1.3.3 The Maidstone Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2014) determined the borough's objectively assessed housing need for the local plan, at around 19,600 dwellings¹ for the period 2011-2031. To deliver new homes in a sustainable manner, and taking account of land capacity and constraints, policy SS1 of the draft local plan set a housing target of 17,100 dwellings to be delivered through a sustainable settlement hierarchy. This target will be reviewed in the context of responses to the consultation plan and the council's second call for potential development sites from landowners, developers and their agents.
- 1.3.4 With a focus on making the best use of brownfield sites and existing infrastructure, the settlement hierarchy for the borough comprises: the expansion of the Maidstone urban area as the most sustainable location; followed by the five rural service centres of Harrietsham, Headcorn, Lenham, Marden and Staplehurst as the secondary focus for development; and finally the five larger villages of Boughton Monchelsea, Coxheath, Eythorne Street (Hollingbourne), Sutton Valence and Yalding, where additional limited development is acceptable.
- 1.3.5 The level of development proposed at these village locations is significantly higher than that proposed in the 2011 Core Strategy and the 2012 Core Strategy Strategic Site Allocations. Consequently, as part of the Regulation 18 consultation process, the council sought to engage more fully with the rural communities most affected by the proposed development.

¹ Recommended to be reduced to 18,600 dwellings as set out in the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny report of 19 August 2014 and Cabinet report of 10th September: The Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update

Engaging with rural communities

- 1.3.6 Design South East, an independent not-for-profit organisation, was commissioned to engage with the ten parish councils during the consultation period of the draft local plan. The organisation provides built environment design support for local authorities, the development sector and communities, and helps to facilitate these forums. Design South East strongly advocates the importance of talking to, and getting to know each local community, to understand their design requirements to help foster trust between residents, local authorities, parish councils and developers.
- 1.3.7 The main aim of the brief was to find out how much understanding there was of the local plan process and to ensure that parish councils felt that their views had been listened to constructively. Design South East facilitated workshops that focused on identifying a consensual vision for the place, the physical characteristics of each area, and developing a clear and constructive expression of the community's expectations for the quality of any new development.
- 1.3.8 Design South East quickly found that, very broadly, the parish councils fell into three groups:
- Those with a good understanding of the local plan process and have produced a draft neighbourhood plan, but need to understand the relationship between local plans and neighbourhood plans, and the policy "hooks" that connect them;
 - Those whose main issues are site based; and
 - Those who have questions relating to infrastructure, communication or the local plan process.
- 1.3.9 This grouping allowed Design South East to tailor the workshops to each specific audience.
- 1.3.10 Workshops were split into two parts. The first dealt with individual parish council concerns about the draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan in order that these could be documented and reported to the council in full. The second part included a village walkabout (dependent on daytime/evening meeting), and focused on the housing site allocations and design and place-making issues that would need to be addressed if the character and integrity of each village were to be maintained. Additionally, each parish council was encouraged to hold a further 'advanced design' workshop to further their understanding of the place-making process.

- 1.3.11 These workshops were held with all designated rural service centre and larger village parish councils, with the exception of Hollingbourne parish council who elected not to take part in the process due to the parish council's unavailability.

Design South East - Conclusions and recommendations

- 1.3.12 The full documentation of engagement with each village is set out in Annex 1 of the Design South East report. The main conclusions are set out in the table below, together with recommendations of how they can be achieved and/or overcome.

	DSE Conclusion	DSE Recommendation	Officer Response
1	There is frustration within the parish councils about the lack of communication from the borough council on local plan matters.	It is suggested that this could be overcome with the production and implementation of an inclusive coherent community communications strategy.	<p>Public consultation on the local plan was undertaken in accordance with the council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. A range of stakeholders were notified of the consultation (by email, letter and public notices) and invited to submit comments on the draft plan. Stakeholders included parish councils, statutory bodies, infrastructure providers, and individuals and organisations who had requested to be notified at all stages of local plan production. Additionally a number of exhibition events were publicised, at which officers were in attendance to answer questions.</p> <p>The council has an overarching Communications Plan; and a specific Local Plan Consultation Plan (approved by Cabinet Member via Overview & Scrutiny Committee) ensured as many different stakeholders and the wider community were engaged in the development of the local plan. Further workshops were developed through Design South East, specifically for the parish councils identified in the local</p>

			<p>plan settlement hierarchy where sustainable development is proposed.</p> <p>It is important to note that the council has engaged in many discussions with parishes in the run up to, and during the consultation, but that these have not often ended with agreement on the need for growth or the proposed locations for it. As noted by DSE, place and village identity are very important to those living outside the urban area and the resultant reservations around allocations in these areas have fuelled the concerns around communication and dialogue. The council is duty bound to adhere to the NPPF and its intention to “boost significantly the supply of housing” by planning for the borough as a whole in the most sustainable location. Reducing the housing numbers allocated at a particular settlement may well mean the need for more dwellings to be accommodated at alternate locations.</p> <p>There is a commitment to engage further with the parish councils as the local plan progresses and, in addition to the September stakeholder event, a series of meetings will be arranged for the autumn.</p>
2	<p>There is confusion within the parish councils regarding how the local plan and neighbourhood plans coalesce. It is acknowledged that the local plan takes a ‘top down’</p>	<p>It is suggested that this could be overcome by developing a strategy that ensures parish councils have an active part in the decision making process.</p>	<p>As far as practicable the local plan aims to: reflect the needs of the borough, its communities and stakeholders; be technically robust and demonstrate at public examination that it is based on sound information and evidence; and achieve broad consensus. A local plan must be in conformity with the National Planning Policy</p>

	<p>site based approach whilst the neighbourhood plans take a 'bottom up' place based approach, however the parish councils feel that the local plan is based on numbers and sites without due consideration of the context of place and setting.</p>		<p>Framework and Guidance, and comply with European and national legislation.</p> <p>A neighbourhood plan must also comply with European and national legislation, take account of the National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance, and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the local plan. It should not promote less development than that identified in the local development plan for the local area (such as new housing allocations) but can allow greater growth levels.</p> <p>Officers are taking steps to offer better support to parish councils preparing a neighbourhood plan. An officer has been designated as a first point of contact for enquiries. Advice notes on neighbourhood planning are being prepared for the council's web site. A consultant has been appointed to offer advice, and to ensure compliance with neighbourhood plan making regulations and general conformity with national policies and the strategic policies of the adopted local plan. Meetings with each parish council that is in the process of preparing a neighbourhood plan are currently being arranged.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>The parish councils are passionate about retaining the rural character of their villages and would like to see clear policies for how this is to be achieved in the</p>	<p>It is suggested that this could be achieved by setting a clear vision for each of the rural service centres and larger villages.</p>	<p>The Parish Charter is currently being refreshed for Maidstone and aims to set a standard for the Borough and Parish Councils to work together, respecting a vision for partnership working and acknowledging the borough's rich and diverse character.</p> <p>The setting of a clear vision for</p>

	long term.		each rural service centre and larger village can be considered as the action plan is developed.
4	The parish councils acknowledge that the sites identified in the local plan so far form a starting point to a more community/ place based approach. In taking this forward, many parish councils have articulate and knowledgeable neighbourhood plan sub-groups and feel that this valuable resource should be harnessed.	It is suggested that knowledge could be shared among parish councils in order to foster a more coherent understanding of the local plan and neighbourhood plan processes.	Neighbourhood Plans provide a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation of an area. Support from neighbourhood plan champions would be welcomed and the Borough Council can support and help facilitate this resource in partnership with the parish councils.

Feedback from parish councils

- 1.3.13 At the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny committee meeting on 9 June 2014, the Committee requested that feedback be sought from the rural service centre and larger village parish councils on their experience of working with Design South East.
- 1.3.14 A short questionnaire was emailed to each of the nine parish councils involved, and seven responses were received. A summary of the responses is as follows:
- i. 43% were satisfied with the engagement Design South East had with their parish council compared to 14% who were dissatisfied;
 - ii. 57% felt that the engagement had helped with their understanding of the local plan compared to 43% who felt that it had not;
 - iii. 57% felt that the engagement had helped with the development of their neighbourhood plan compared to 14% who felt that it had not;

- iv. 17% felt that there had been an improvement in dialogue with Maidstone Borough Council following the engagement compared to 83% who felt that there had not;
- v. 83% would be happy to engage further with Design South East compared to 17% that would not;
- vi. 100% said that there is more that Maidstone Borough Council could do to better facilitate conversations with their parish council. Some of these suggestions include listening more, engaging in meaningful dialogue sooner in the process, and engaging more with the parish councils in respect of their neighbourhood plans.

Next steps

- 1.3.15 Given the conclusions and recommendations from Design South East, together with the feedback from the parish councils, it is important to adopt an inclusive approach to communication, consultation and engagement with the parish councils.
- 1.3.16 As a first step, a multi-stakeholder workshop is being held on Wednesday 17 September 2014. The rural service centre and larger village parish councils will have the opportunity to meet face to face with key infrastructure providers in order to discuss and find solutions to issues that the parish councils feel are a barrier to development. Design South East will facilitate the event, and Borough Council officers will be in attendance to respond to any queries that may arise.
- 1.3.17 The event will assist in the preparation of an action plan for future community workshops where parish councils will be invited to discuss the issues facing their villages and the options for any future development as part of their emerging neighbourhood plans.
- 1.3.18 The report 'Engaging communities in Maidstone's local plan', attached at Appendix A, will be amended following the multi-stakeholder workshop on 17 September in order to include the conclusions of the event and the action plan for future work. The recommendations set out in the action plan will be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.
- 1.3.19 Meanwhile, further engagement with the rural service centre and larger village parish councils (and their local ward members) will be undertaken through a series of consultation meetings, to ensure active involvement in the development of the local plan. Concurrently, officers and members of the cabinet will meet with other parish councils, including those groups preparing a neighbourhood plan, together with local ward members, to ensure neighbourhood plans are robust and based on sound evidence prior

to their examination, and that the concerns and issues of all are fully understood, discussed and addressed. The schedule of meetings is still to be finalised at the time of writing but will be made available to members of the committee at the meeting.

Conclusion

- 1.3.20 In conclusion, Maidstone Borough Council will continue to work with parish councils to improve the way in which the council engages and consults its residents and partners on important issues.
- 1.3.21 Through the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and the Parish Charter, the council will discuss how parish councils see their communities growing over the next few years in order to understand what local people feel is important, to identify local problems and opportunities, and to understand how residents want their community to develop. This can be achieved by:
- Strengthening the Borough Council's relationship with parish councils;
 - Helping parish councils (and their communities) to enhance their status;
 - Harnessing and encouraging parish councils to share and provide their expertise and knowledge on local issues, for example, through neighbourhood planning; and
 - Encouraging and supporting partnership working, involvement from other agencies and increased local voluntary action.
- 1.4 Alternative Action and why not Recommended
- 1.4.1 The Committee could choose not to consider the report and its' recommendations but that would result in a missed opportunity to build on the engagement with Parish Councils.
- 1.5 Impact on Corporate Objectives
- 1.5.1 The commissioned work 'Engaging communities in Maidstone's local plan' impacted on all three corporate objectives as set out in the Strategic Plan 2011-15.
- 1.5.2 **For Maidstone to have a growing economy** – all parish councils have had an opportunity to comment on how best to achieve a growing economy in the borough.
- 1.5.3 **For Maidstone to be a decent place to live** – all parish councils have had an opportunity to comment on the policies that will shape how the borough will grow over the period until 2031.

1.5.4 **Corporate and customer excellence** – this objective deals with delivering cost effective services to the right people in the right places at the right time, and also delivering the information in an understandable format. The commissioned work 'Engaging communities in Maidstone's local plan' focused on reaching the nine parish councils in a cost effective manner but ensured that nobody was disadvantaged because of where they live or who they are, and the council ensured that people were listened to.

1.6 Other Implications

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

1.6.1 Financial – Costs associated with the commissioning of Design South East to undertake engagement with the parish councils can be accommodated within the local plan budget. Future costs arising from the action plan will be considered alongside proposed recommendations.

1.6.2 Staffing – The impact of the action plan on staff resources arising from recommended actions will be considered at a future meeting of the committee.

1.7 Relevant Documents

1.7.1 Appendices

Appendix A – 'Engaging communities in Maidstone's local plan'

IS THIS A KEY DECISION REPORT?

THIS BOX MUST BE COMPLETED

Yes

No

If yes, this is a Key Decision because:

.....

Wards/Parishes affected:

.....

1.7.2 Background Documents

None

2014

Engaging Communities in Maidstone's Local Plan



Design South East-
Interim Report

7/31/2014

Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	2
Area Context	4
Methodology	7
Conclusions & recommendations	11
Annex 1 - Documentation of engagement with each village	12
Annex 2 – Design South East Facilitators	41

1: Executive Summary

1.1 Background

Like many places in the South East, Maidstone is set to experience significant population change over the next 15 to 20 years. As a result of this growth, Maidstone is expected to have a higher objectively assessed housing need than previously anticipated. The changes will affect how the borough delivers homes, jobs and transport over the coming years.

In March 2013 the council decided to amalgamate the Maidstone Borough Core Strategy and the Development Delivery DPD into a single Maidstone Borough Local Plan and the plan period was rolled forward from 2006-26 to 2011-31. The cabinet approved the draft local plan, including site allocations for consultation, in February 2014. The consultation ran from 21 March 2014 to 7 May 2014. The revised Local Plan will go out to consultation again in 2015.

As part of the consultation process, Maidstone Borough Council appointed Design South East to engage with the Parish Councils who were designated as 'Rural Service Centres' or 'Larger Villages' where development was proposed. The aim was to find out how much understanding there was of the Local Plan process and to ensure that these Parish Councils felt their views had been listened to constructively. Additionally, DSE would lead workshops with these Parish Councils to help them develop 'Place making' elements of their Neighbourhood Development Plans. Maidstone Borough Council would like this process to lead to an on going positive dialogue with these parishes and the Council on the Local Plan. If successful, this process could be rolled out to other parishes, were development is proposed.

The workshops were divided into two parts, the first section of the workshop dealt with individual Parish Councils concerns about the current Local Plan. The second part of the workshop dealt with housing site allocations and design and place making issues that need to be addressed if the character and integrity of each village were to be maintained. The results of these can be found in Annex 1.

1.2 Recommendations

Many of the frustrations experienced by the parish councils result from confusion about how the Local Plan and emerging Neighbourhood Development Plans coalesce. The Local Plan takes a 'top down' site based approach, while the Neighbourhood Plan takes a 'bottom up' place based approach. Moreover, a strategy for an active part in the decision making process by the parishes is not clear.

However, the work done on the Local Plan so far has successfully identified potential housing sites that can be said to form a starting point to a more community/place-based approach.

Many of the parish councils have very articulate and knowledgeable Neighbourhood Plan sub committees and this valuable resource should be harnessed.

Design South East would make the following recommendations for future action:

- There should be a defined and coherent role into the Local Plan process by Parish Councils.
- Emerging Neighbourhood Plans, should be fully supported by Maidstone Borough Council in order that meaningful discussion might take place to ensure that they are in general conformity with national policy and the strategic policies of the Local Plan.
- This process can be started by running a stakeholder workshop in September where an inclusive approach should be adopted.
- This should be seen as the start of a round of community workshops where members of PCs are invited to discuss the issues facing their settlement and the options for any future development.
- These meetings might be held on a regular basis, each might take a different topic or theme for discussion and agreement
- The meeting in September should include infrastructure stakeholders to clarify some key concerns, but its core aim should be to produce an **Action Plan &** timetable for the Local Plan process over the coming months. If seen as successful by the Council, this methodology might be rolled out to other parishes where development is proposed.

This approach will also provide the Council with valuable feedback on proposals emerging within their parishes and may result in innovative alternative approaches as well as a consensus.

A final version of this report will be produced at the end of September detailing the results of the September workshop and outlining the Action Plan for the future.

2: Area Context

2.1 Background

Maidstone is set to experience significant change over the next 15 to 20 years. The population is forecast to increase by 15.2% by 2026, with the biggest increase being in those aged 85+, and a decrease of 11.5% of those aged 25-44. With more people living longer, Maidstone Borough Council will need to provide additional homes and enough suitable properties for an ageing population.

As a result of this growth, Maidstone is expected to have a higher objectively assessed housing need than previously anticipated. The changes will affect how the borough delivers homes, jobs and transport over the coming years. With a diminishing resident working population, attracting more skilled people to live and work in the borough is vital to sustaining and growing a vibrant economy.

Maidstone also faces issues around the cost of housing, with families and individuals being priced out of the market, particularly in rural areas. Providing a more diverse range of homes to suit different tastes and incomes, including affordable and local needs housing in rural areas, will help relieve the strain on the housing market.

In addition, attracting inward investment and new businesses to the area as well as supporting start-up businesses will be required to help deliver the jobs for Maidstone's growing population.

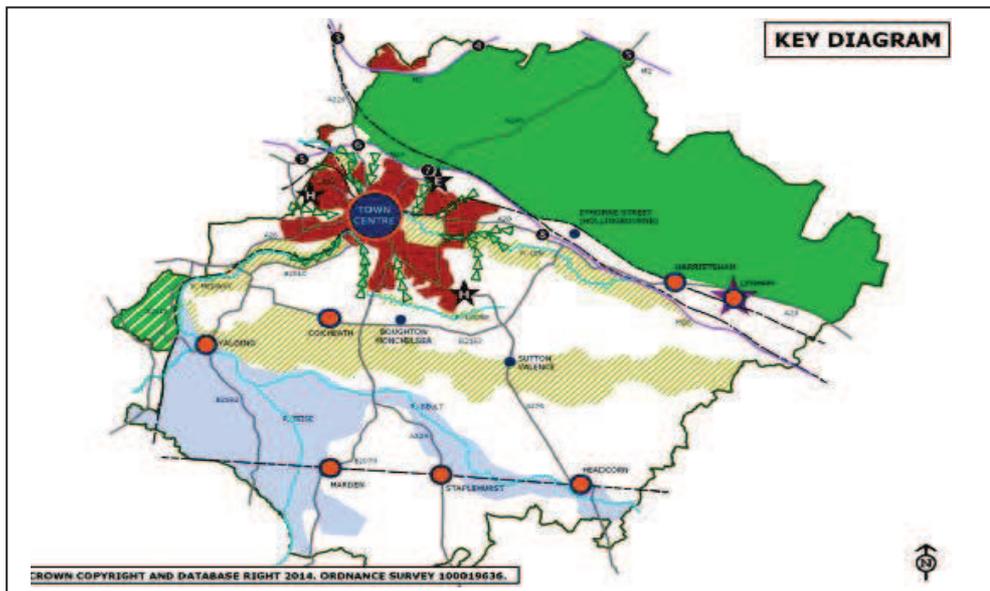
2.2 The Local Plan

In September 2011 the council consulted the public on its draft Maidstone Borough Core Strategy, which planned for dispersed development pattern across the borough for the period 2006 to 2026. The draft Core Strategy identified broad strategic locations for housing and employment development rather than allocating specific sites, and detailed development management policies and land allocations were to follow in the form of a Development Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD).

In March 2012 the government published the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at the heart of which is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. So in May 2012 the council advertised a 'call for sites' exercise inviting landowners, developers and their agents to submit information about available sites within the strategic housing and employment locations identified on the key diagram of the Core Strategy. A Core Strategy Site Allocations consultation period followed.

In March 2013 the council decided to amalgamate the Maidstone Borough Core Strategy and the Development Delivery DPD into a single Maidstone Borough Local Plan, an approach supported by the NPPF, and the plan period was rolled forward

from 2006-26 to 2011-31. The cabinet approved the draft Local Plan, including site allocations for consultation, in February 2014. The consultation ran from 21 March 2014 to 7 May 2014. The revised Local Plan will go out to consultation again in 2015.



2.3 The Brief to Design South East

As part of the consultation process, Maidstone Borough Council appointed Design South East to engage with the Parish Councils who were designated as ‘Rural Service Centres’ or ‘Larger Villages’ where development was proposed. The aim was to find out how much understanding there was of the Local Plan process and to ensure that these Parish Councils felt their views had been listened to constructively. Additionally, DSE would lead workshops with these Parish Councils to help them develop ‘Place making’ elements of their Neighbourhood Development Plans. Maidstone Borough Council would like this process to lead to an on going positive dialogue with these & other parishes and the Council on the Local Plan. One of the key issues for Maidstone Borough Council is the relationship between the Local Plan & Neighbourhood Plans. In summary, the brief to DSE was as follows:

- To engage Parish Councils who were designated as ‘Rural Service Centres’ or ‘Larger Villages’ in constructive dialogue with Maidstone Borough Council about the Local Plan.
- To work with local communities toward developing a checklist for the physical development of their parish.
- To design & facilitate workshops & meetings with parish representatives and Maidstone Borough Council.
- To document the process throughout and present a final report with lessons learnt & recommendations for the next stage of consultation.

The workshops would also endeavour to assist these Parish Councils to:

- To have a clear understanding of how the settlement is organised and how these principles underpin character and can be used to guide future development that reinforces this character
- To be able to assess the locations of housing in the local plan against the core principles of their settlement – is there an opportunity to strengthen character?
- To have the tools to engage constructively with developers and local authorities about the quality of planning applications.

Despite attempts to engage them, Hollingbourne did not take part in this process. Sutton Valence asked to join the process during the two joint meetings held with the Council in April and this was agreed.

The Parish Councils worked with were as follows:

- Harrietsham
- Yalding
- Coxheath
- Staplehurst
- Marden
- Headcorn
- Lenham
- Boughton Monchelsea
- Sutton Valence

3: Methodology

3.1 Development of the methodology

DSE started by meeting with representatives of these Parish Councils to gauge their level of engagement and understanding of the Local Plan. It was clear at the outset that the level of understanding of the current document was very good, but there was significant confusion and frustration about process. However, many of the Parish Councils had an articulate and committed Neighbourhood Planning group, and a few parishes had made significant progress toward an adopted Neighbourhood Plan. Moreover, the desire to engage their communities in either a Neighbourhood Plan or a Village Design Statement was compelling.

Very broadly the Parish Councils fall into three groups:

- Parish Councils with a good understanding of process & have a draft Neighbourhood Plan but need to know what the relationship is between the Local Plan & a Neighbourhood Plan – what are the policy ‘hooks’ that connect them.
- Parish Councils whose main issues are site based – why choose this site rather than another.
- Parish Councils who have questions relating to infrastructure/communication or process.

3.2 Modification of the methodology

It was clear that there was a level of frustration within the Parish Councils with the Local Plan process. Whilst there had been dialogue with MBC about the local plan, many felt that their views had not been addressed. Common areas of concern were:

- The rationale behind the housing numbers for each parish – how they were arrived at & why.
- What were the criteria for deciding whether a settlement would be a Rural Service Centre or Larger Village?
- Many parishes were keen to get on with a Neighbourhood Plan, but felt that MBC were not actively supporting them in this process.
- Many parishes felt that their role in the local plan process was unclear, they did not seem to have any influence in either the plan making or decision taking. For example, what scope was there for some of the decision taking to be devolved to the Parish Councils such as the distribution of housing numbers, particularly if they are able to distribute the numbers over a range of identified sites through a Neighbourhood Plan.
- Site selection criteria – was there a weighting to the criteria in terms of importance?

- What happens if a development comes forward during the period when the LP is still in draft form and there is no NP or it is still emerging? Parish Councils felt vulnerable to appeals by developers.
- Affordable Housing – can Parish Councils influence this? For example, more affordable housing may mean less money for other community infrastructure.
- Can Parish Councils influence the timescale of development numbers – so that the parish does not become overwhelmed in one go? What is the position on phasing and what can be said in the LP to protect parishes from a large number of houses/site developments in a short time period?
- Infrastructure – many Parish Councils were unclear how new infrastructure would be phased and implemented.

3.1 Workshop Approach

This initial consultation influenced the workshop approach. In order to fulfil the brief DSE felt that the workshops should, if possible, be divided into two parts:

The first section of the workshop would deal with individual Parish Councils concerns about the current Local Plan in order that these could be documented and reported to MBC in *full*. These have been sent to the parishes for their approval and can be found in Annex 1.

The second part of the workshop would include a village walkabout (this was dependant on whether it was possible to run a daytime or evening workshop) and deal with housing site allocations and design and place making issues that need to be addressed if the character and integrity of each village were to be maintained.

Additionally, each settlement would be encouraged to hold a further ‘advanced’ design workshop to further their understanding of the place making process, if they were in a position to do so. This second workshop would be specifically tailored to the village its character and design as well as its individual circumstances. Common themes include:

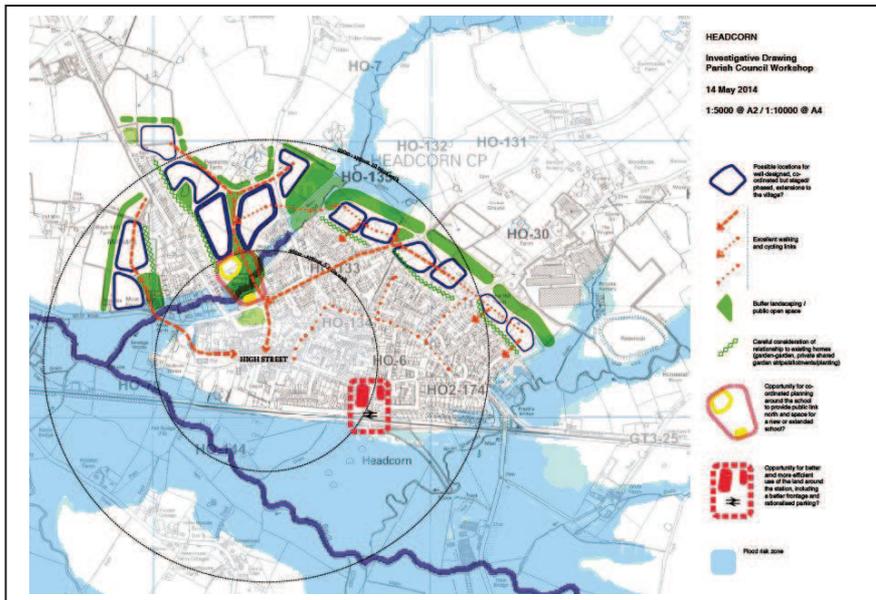
- Village metrics & defining characteristics (heritage, edges, landscape, ground conditions, connections, community, architecture,
- Village assets, settlement patterns & spatial patterns
- Exploring potential policy links/hooks between the Neighbourhood Plan & the Local Plan



Photos from village tour with Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council



Workshop with Headcorn Parish Council – starting the place making process



Headcorn Parish Council – Investigative Drawing produced following second workshop

3.4 The programme

2014

ACTIONS	Inception & Development of methodology		Facilitated Workshops with Parish Councils			Final Report & Workshop	
	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
Step 1 - Preliminary discussions with the Parish Councils							
Step 2 - Collective facilitated sessions with parishes							
Step 3 - Follow up workshops with individual parishes where required to capture final consultation							
Step 4 - Final Report & recommendations							
Final workshop with stakeholders – Action Plan							

4: Conclusions & Recommendations

Many of the frustrations experienced by the parish councils worked with result from the need for a coherent community communications strategy, along with confusion about how the Local Plan and emerging Neighbourhood Development Plans coalesce. This is to some extent exacerbated by the fact that tension is created between these two different styles of plan. The Local Plan takes a 'top down' site based approach, while the Neighbourhood Plan takes a 'bottom up' place based approach. The parishes feel that the Local Plan is based on numbers & sites without due consideration of the context of place and setting. Moreover, a strategy for an active part in the decision making process by the parishes is not clear.

Some of the rural areas to the south of this Borough are defined by attractive rolling countryside, which offer an intrinsic character, heritage and beauty with a diverse mix of rich landscape features and characteristics. It plays a key recreational role for residents and visitors alike, whilst supporting an array of wildlife, habitats and natural resources. As a result, many of the parishes are passionate about retaining their rural character and want to see clear policies for how this is to be achieved in the long term. Many of these settlements have historic village centres and are set within what has come to be known internationally as the 'Garden of England' - possibly one of the most well recognised British landscapes. As such a clear vision for the rural areas of the borough is recommended.

However, the work done on the Local Plan so far has successfully identified potential housing sites that can be said to form a starting point to a more community/place-based approach. Many of the parish councils have very articulate and knowledgeable Neighbourhood Plan sub committees and this valuable resource should be harnessed. The parishes themselves are mostly at different stages with their NPs and this could also foster a more coherent understanding of the process. This can be started at the September workshop where an inclusive approach should be adopted. This pilot process might be seen as the start of a round of community workshops where members of PCs are invited to discuss the issues facing their settlement and the options for any future development. This approach will provide the Council with valuable feedback on proposals emerging within their parishes and may result in innovative alternative approaches as well as a consensus.

The enhancement of the rich and varied landscapes that contribute so much to the character of this part of Kent with the need for rural communities to grow and evolve in ways that will not overwhelm or damage their own, often unique, attributes is a major challenge that must be addressed. Good design must therefore, play a vital part in the development of new residential areas. It will be necessary for applicants to produce designs that are complementary to the local vernacular, although this should not prevent the scope for innovation and contemporary designs where these can be justified in the context of a site and where they may create additional visual interest and richness into an area.

Annex 1-Documentation of engagement with each village

Harrietsham Friday 4th April 2014 – Parish Office

Workshop 1. *Facilitating a constructive dialogue with Maidstone Borough Council about common issues to do with the Local Plan & helping the Parish Council articulate the identity & character of the village*

Present :

Design South East – Annette Hards, Geoff Noble, Irene Seijo

Harrietsham PC – Amanda Broadhurst, Dennis Clifton, Tony Taylor

Current Position:

- Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is likely to be submitted in May 2014,
- Six week consultation Period
- Inspector
- Referendum - September
- Adoption

Consultant on Neighbourhood Plan - Richard Eastman – Feria Urbanism

Harrietsham

The village of Harrietsham is designated as a Rural Service Centre. They have a well advanced NP (post regulation 15 consultation, but pre-reg16).

HPC has worked with Consultants to produce their NP, this process, along with the work done on the 2004 Parish Plan has given them the skills to really understand the issues that affect the long term development and sustainability of the parish. They are well informed on the strategic growth position and spatial planning. The NP is nearly ready for submission. A central part of the plan is to facilitate a good walking route around the village to encourage sustainable transport and healthy living. They are keen that the village is perceived as a dynamic – growth & change are positive qualities if well planned for.

Local Plan Issues

The draft Maidstone Local Plan (Regulation 18 Consultation 2014) is currently out to consultation until 7 May. The draft plan has been published concurrently with a consultation on the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for the Borough.

HPC feels that MBC is not supporting the NP process. They have spent a lot of money to produce it & have had very little support from MBC given that funding was made available from DCLG for this purpose. They feel they have had support from KCC in developing their NP.

Aspects of the LP process are baffling to the PC particularly to do with the criteria of the site selection process through the SHLAA process. For example, there is a particular site, at Court Lodge Farm which the NP has identified as a possible site for development as it could provide a footpath link to the station and school for residents in the north of the village, this has been excluded by MBC on the grounds that it is adjacent to the AONB. However, the Tongs Meadow site, which is also adjacent to the AONB, has been included. The PC cannot understand why it is not subject to the same criteria. Moreover MBC have also ruled-in a site in the conservation area at the heart of the village.

There is a fear that prospective development (which is imminent) is premature until they have sorted and agreed plan. They also have concern about developments being brought forward in outline (a DHA scheme and sites South of the A20 were cited) as they wish to secure the quality of the development.

They do not have confidence, ahead of MBC adopting CIL (likely late 2015), that they will get any of the infrastructure they feel they require (mainly roads and community space/doctors etc). They are working hard with MBC look at calming traffic on the A20 as it passes through the village. Again they are concerned about issues of prematurity as there is a scheme currently being promoted which might affect their plans for the future shape of the highways in the centre of the village.

Core Issues to address with Maidstone Borough Council:

- Numbers - are they evidence based?
- Density - will this be tested against character?
- Housing mix & tenure - % affordable housing
- Will the Local Plan reference Neighbourhood Plan as decision making tool or make more reference to village based policies in the plan?
- Infrastructure anomalies (pp 127) will CIL be available or will it be pooled for infrastructure & not for local needs?
- What is MBC strategy for dealing with this emerging NP – as it is broadly in conformity with the LP - during the adoption process?

From reviewing the NP it appears that a large number of the 'Character Issues' (which we have suggested will be the subject of the second workshop) have already been explored by the Parish and Feria team through the Neighbourhood Planning process. With this in mind, we suggest that it would be more the helpful for all parties if we were to carry out an independent critique of the part of the

Harrietsham Neighbourhood Plan document that deals with the analysis of the settlement pattern and how this then guides development proposals. This could be undertaken as a workshop involving MBC. The results of this review could then be shared with others to further all parties' understanding of these issues, and how they relate to both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans.

Yalding Thursday 10th April 2014 – Parish Office

Workshop 1. *Facilitating a constructive dialogue with Maidstone Borough Council about common issues to do with the Local Plan & helping the Parish Council articulate the identity & character of the village*

Present :

Design South East – Annette Hards, Geoff Noble, Irene Seijo

Yalding Parish Council - Cllr Andy Sanders, Cllr Nick Thomson, Cllr Michael Stewart, Clerk Angela Gent, Chairman Geraldine Brown

Current Position:

Yalding do not as yet have a Neighbourhood Plan & have no plans at the moment to do one. They are, however, interested in potential alternatives – a check list for example, that might set out their vision for the village and its future development.

Yalding

The historic village of Yalding is set in the confluence of three rivers and has suffered from significant flooding issues in the last few months. The village has a thriving community; there are 96 different organisations in the parish and a very good network. 96% of the common land in Maidstone Borough is set in Yalding, this area is maintained by the PC.

The High Street represents the heart of the village – hosting farmers markets and Christmas Fairs etc. Top & soft fruit production represents the main farming activity in the surrounding landscape. Yalding is one of the most rural of the Maidstone Borough parishes. It has been categorised as a ‘Larger Village’ in the Local Plan. There is confusion about the categorisation of ‘Rural Service Centres’ and ‘Larger Villages’.

There is a good understanding of the Local Plan & its potential impact on the village. The PC would consider growth but is concerned that the approach taken in the Local Plan is not a ‘joined up’ process.

The chair of Yalding PC, Geraldine Brown, is also the chair of KALC. At as recent meeting with MBC members of KALC were able to express their frustration with the Local Plan consultation process so far. Of particular concern is the lack of overall vision in the plan, housing numbers and sites, the lack of an infrastructure model, employment & transport strategies and the lack of cohesiveness between these. The key issues for KALC were:

- The lack of a ‘Vision for the Borough’

- Process & Communication
- Need for an inclusive 'place based' approach

KALC have agreed a further consultation period with MBC.

Local Plan Issues

The PC feel that sites for development (housing & employment) have been allocated to without due consideration of the current infrastructure and flooding issues. Connectivity is a real concern, village roads are connected by three bridges which are all listed structures and severely limit the capacity of traffic to move freely – particularly at key commuter times. There are also three railway crossings. The railway station is 1.5 miles outside the village and there is no pedestrian or disabled friendly route to it. Moreover, there is no direct rail route to London. Most villagers shop outside the area, although there are small retail outlets in the centre. The Post Office is subsidised by the PC. Schools are currently oversubscribed. Social housing in the area is under pressure.

Transport and access is a particular concern throughout the parish.

The PC are very concerned that the current growth strategy in the Local Plan fails to take account of these very real infrastructure issues.

Syngenta Site

The PC feel this is only suitable for employment because of flooding issues. It would require CIL for flood defences.

Core Issues to address with Maidstone Borough Council:

- Consultation has been poor
- Significant infrastructure issues - where is the modelling?
- Consideration of Yalding's limited capacity for major growth
- Housing mix & tenure - % affordable housing?

How will the Local Plan deal with planning applications while it is in draft form?

Having spent time talking with the PC and walking around the village, the DSE facilitators would concur with most of the concerns raised – there is limited capacity for growth but careful 'stitching in' that is in character with the village would add to its vitality. While the PC is not considering a Neighbourhood Plan, a check-list or some other mechanism that might sit within the planning framework would help to articulate their vision for the future of the village & ensure that development is sensitively placed.

DSE would be happy to facilitate a further 'visioning' workshop if it would be useful for the PC.

Coxheath Tuesday 15th April 2014 – Parish Office

Workshop 1. *Facilitating a constructive dialogue with Maidstone Borough Council about common issues to do with the Local Plan & helping the Parish Council articulate the identity & character of the village*

Present :

Design South East – Chris Lamb, Geoff Noble, Irene Seijo

Coxheath Parish Council - Elizabeth Potts, Rodney Direll, Colin Pain, Val Page, Clive Parker, John Hughes, Terry Ketley, Denise

Current Position: Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted ahead of the Local Plan. The NP is well worked out & has been developed through extensive work with the wider community. It has a strong community strategy.

Coxheath

The 230 acre village of Coxheath is not a typical parish, it was mostly created in the 1960's. The result is a tight built up area with smaller green areas, but it still maintains its 'rural village' character, which it is very keen to maintain. Its proximity to the countryside is highly valued, but it would like more green space within the village. 25% of the current population is retired. It has been designated as a Larger Village.

The community are not adverse to receive housing growth, provided it is planned and delivered well and helps support community and infrastructure improvements.

The PC is keen to do a further workshop in order to develop the design & character elements of their Neighbourhood Plan, provided a member of MBC planning team also attends.

Local Plan Issues

The draft Maidstone Local Plan (Regulation 18 Consultation 2014) is currently out to consultation until 7 May. The draft plan has been published concurrently with a consultation on the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for the Borough.

Key Issues raised during the discussion:

Coxheath feel that dialogue with MBC has been poor, the PC do not feel they have been listened to.

The Local Plan 'Vision for Borough' is not articulated, it is hard to read & is not well presented graphically. It is based on numbers & sites without due consideration of

the context of place and setting. For example, what is the strategy for a 'buffer zone' between the urban edge of Maidstone & rural areas?

There is not an integrated transport strategy for the borough, there are significant traffic issues in and around Coxheath which growth will exasperate.

Rural Service Centre v Larger Villages – the criteria for these is not understood. For example, Coxheath has more growth designated than some of the RSCs. Housing numbers & employment land seem disproportionate.

The planning and delivery of suitable and sufficient infrastructure alongside any housing growth is not understood.

The PC fear that some local landowners see the LOCAL PLAN as a 'way in' for developing their site via the 'call for sites'.

Core Issues to address with Maidstone Borough Council:

- Coxheath feels that the character & sense of place of the village has been ignored.
- PC would like more dialogue with MBC & would like to understand how they can have a proactive role.
- Housing numbers – 200 in NP 400 in LP
- Site allocations /Density – how can this be made site specific? Will this be tested against character?
- What is MBC's strategy for dealing with emerging NPs during the adoption process?

SECOND WORKSHOP

The PC are keen to have a 'character & place' workshop, to develop the design dimension of their NP in order to identify the 'village' qualities that they value, so that these can be articulated clearly in their plan. They are particularly keen to have a member of MBC planning team involved in this workshop. MBC have agreed that if a date for the second workshop is set in the consultation period then it would be possible to hold this second workshop slightly beyond that date.

The PC will look at dates & come back to DSE.

Staplehurst Wednesday 16th April 2014 – Parish Office

Workshop 1. *Facilitating a constructive dialogue with Maidstone Borough Council about common issues to do with the Local Plan & helping the Parish Council articulate the identity & character of the village*

Present :

Design South East – Robert Offord, Clare Wright

Staplehurst Parish Council – Mick Westwood, Steve L, Joan Buller, John Perry, Dave, Catherine A, Graham S, Barrett Manning, Robin, Margaret Ashby, Colin, Adele Sharp.

Current Position: Neighbourhood Plan is likely to be submitted and approved ahead of the Local Plan. The draft NP has been developed through extensive work with the wider community, the formal consultation period on the plan has not yet started.

Consultant on NP - Richard Eastham - Feria Urbanism (not present)

Staplehurst

The village of Staplehurst is designated as a Rural Service Centre in the Maidstone Draft Local Plan. The community are not averse to receive housing growth, provided it is planned and delivered well and helps support community and infrastructure improvements. A well advanced draft Neighbourhood Plan sets out the community's aspirations regarding further growth of the village including, infrastructure and utilities provision.

The Parish and wider community are well informed on the strategic growth position and spatial planning; but there remains concern relating to key decisions by the Local Planning Authority which have shaped certain policies.

The discussion focused on two areas:

- 1) The planning and delivery of suitable and sufficient infrastructure alongside any housing growth
- 2) The design, layout and character of any future developments, including housing, to ensure they are well connected to the community and the wider rural setting of the village. Including a more detailed understanding of local environmental constraints such as areas at risk of flooding and how the village and new development relates to surrounding rural setting.

The NP is nearly ready for submission and its role, while being in 'general conformity' with the NPPF and draft LP, is to add further consideration to the particular needs of

Staplehurst. Additionally the NP has a role in shaping the nature of new development to ensure it takes on and enhances the character of Staplehurst as the village grows.

A part of the plan is to facilitate a good walking route around the village to encourage sustainable transport and healthy living. They are keen that the village is perceived as dynamic – they feel it is important to plan well for growth & change. There was a joint desire that new homes are planned to integrate with the existing community to support community development and the livelihood of the village's social and economic function, and not to act as isolated estates, e.g. for commuters.

Local Plan Issues

The draft Maidstone Local Plan (Regulation 18 Consultation 2014) is currently out to consultation until 7 May. The draft plan has been published concurrently with a consultation on the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for the Borough.

Place making and holistic development:

We understand that the Infrastructure Delivery Plan is in the process of being developed. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) seeks to provide a coherent Framework for all the separate existing infrastructure investment plans (by utilities and other infrastructure providers), to show that they are deliverable relative to planned-for development. It should also identify how any gaps in delivery may be bridged.

Concern remains regarding how existing issues in the village (most notably waste water) can be addressed, alongside the impact of new development, on infrastructure which is already at or over capacity. Elements of infrastructure which are of particular concern include schools (both primary and secondary), dealing with drinking water supplies, sewage disposal, highways and traffic management, community facilities.

Neighbourhood Planning Support:

SPC and the community feel that MBC is not supporting the NP process. They have invested a lot of time and money to produce it and feel that they have had struggled to access support from MBC.

The PC believes there should be a correlation between housing delivery and infrastructure development, but this is not currently apparent in the LP.

There is little confidence in decision making in the planning system following examples of developments failing to follow approved plans, including seemingly

removing significant trees without consent. The quality of delivered schemes living up to the drawings/aspiration of local people, the role of conditions and enforcement in ensuring new development is commenced and completed in line with approved plans, are all areas which have in the past frustrated the community's engagement in the planning process.

Core Issues to address with Maidstone Borough Council:

- Numbers - are they evidence based? There is a strong feeling that the numbers are the result of a desk top calculation without taking local conditions in to account. How is support being offered to accommodate this amount of development?
- Affordable housing – there is great concern about the current policy
- Site allocations /Density – how can this be made site specific? Will this be tested against character? Ground conditions of certain major sites may affect deliverability of MBC aspirations
- Housing mix & tenure – especially regarding the % affordable housing and impact on the village and future occupiers
- What is MBC's strategy for dealing with this emerging NP during the adoption process?
- Will the Local Plan reference Neighbourhood Plans as decision making tool or make more reference to village based policies in the plan?
- The PC feels they are affected by proposals outside their immediate area – for example the Linton Park & Ride proposal and its likely impact on traffic from the south into Maidstone.

It was discussed that these could perhaps be explored in a single concise document which brings together each of the on-going consultations (IDP, CIL, LP, NP) and their relation to each other to help holistically plan the future development of Staplehurst.

SECOND WORKSHOP

From reviewing the NP it appears that a large number of the 'Character Issues' (which we have suggested will be the subject of the second workshop) have already been explored by the Parish, community and FERIA team through the Neighbourhood Planning process. With this in mind, we suggest that it would be more helpful for all parties if we were to carry out a workshop looking into the policy links/hooks between the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan, with particular reference to the identified housing sites within the village. This might be able to explore and describe the defining characteristics of each site (inc. density, edges, landscape, ground conditions/ water management, open space, connections, community), and suggest the best location for this 'guidance' within either the LP or NP.

Staplehurst Parish Council - 15.05.14 - Parish Office

Workshop 2. *Securing Character in new development in Staplehurst through the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plan.*

Present:

Design South East – Robert Offord, Liz Gibney

Staplehurst PC – Mick W, John P, Joan B, Dave, John, Graham S, Margaret, Colin.

Current Position:

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is likely to be submitted and approved ahead of the Local Plan. The draft NDP has been developed through extensive work with the wider community, the formal consultation period on the plan has not yet started, but is imminent.

Consultant on NP - Feria Urbanism – Richard Eastman (not present)

The workshop session with Parish and community representatives was preceded by a tour of the village, with particular emphasis on the two main development areas, north of Marden Road and Headcorn Road.

The key findings of the workshop included:

- Understanding the impact of the new development in terms of quality rather than solely in terms of numbers
- The discussion of character in the NDP needs to consider a wide range of issues including hierarchy of streets (not just architecture)
- Development sites must be viewed as areas where new identity can be created (while responding to existing trees etc.)
- Response to the character of the area around the station needs to be considered alongside the changing nature of the adjoining routes and sites.

The wider discussion focused on three areas:

PLACEMAKING – The content of the NDP as it relates to Character of new development

SPATIAL POLICY – How we can best and most clearly communicate the communities aspiration around placemaking and urban design with particular regard to the two identified site.

PROCESS – How best the aspirations of the NDP can be achieved

1. PLACEMAKING

It was agreed that the focus of the NDP should be on the quality of the future development and how they will reinforce the success of Staplehurst as a place. As such the discussion focused not on housing numbers but rather on the particular qualities that new development should possess to ensure that they are successful. This place-based approach could then be used to test the appropriateness of the numbers suggested in the plan.

It is equally important to ensure that the more detailed consideration of sites is used to test the policies in the NDP. The proposed sites can be used as case studies to see how NDP policies would be applied to control inappropriate new development. For example we discussed how character could be established through control of street hierarchy, landscape and density; however these aspects are not discussed in the draft policies that we had the opportunity to review (which appeared to place greatest/sole emphasis on architectural style).

Character – is as much, if not more, to do with streets hierarchy (including their width and planting), landscape, views, car parking and connectivity as it is to do with architectural style.

2. SPATIAL POLICY

Applying village wide policy to particular sites could help Plan ensure their positive interpretation and therefore application by applicant teams (rather than misinterpretation). To achieve this, each key area of the village might be supported by a spatial statement drawing out key moves and exploring how the village wide statements/policy could be successfully delivered on each site. The particular areas which would benefit from this approach are undoubtedly the two largest housing development sites and the station arrival area.

The indicative plans produced so far represent one way in which the sites could be developed. While it would be unrealistic for development to come forward on these sites which directly mirrors those drawn out in the plans produced so far, we need to ensure that any proposed development respects the underlying intention of the diagrams. These key intentions could be described as principles, each of which will need to be explained and evidenced. By drawing out which of the village wide policies are relevant (or are not relevant) to the site, and how they might be successfully applied will assist in focusing attention on key issues. If there are particular aspects which are not defined by the existing policies, then these may need to be extended/expanded to ensure these elements are discussed and defined in policy.

The indicative plans need to develop it to a greater degree, and then distilled into a series of principles, which can be evidenced. Each principle needs to be reasoned so that it can be defended, and should not constitute a 'wish list'. These principles can be drawn out particularly with reference to critical areas within the new development sites. These might be the proposed avenue (Lodge Avenue?), the new village edge and the arrival space adjoining the station. The consequences of certain of these decisions might benefit from greater exploration; for example what will the impact of turning Lodge Road into a through route (and the consequential increase in footfall) be on the commercial and industrial uses in the short-medium term?

The discussion of particular sites (spatial policy) within the NDP has two different roles:

- To assist the controlling authority in making decisions about the acceptability of proposed development, but equally importantly
- To assist developers and design teams, to lead them to produce a development which can be supported by the community.

As such, the NDP should not focus on any scheme proposed by a developer but rather on leading the developer/design team's response.

3. PROCESS

The NDP can discuss process as well as product.

The team may wish to consider how do we foresee developers working with the community. This might include recommendations with regard to:

- The implications of positively integrating SuDS should be explored upfront of any development work being undertaken,
- Community engagement or masterplanning workshops,
- The use of Design Review and/or Building for Life to ensure the quality of the proposed development (NPPF para 62)

Precedent images (especially those of existing environments in Staplehurst or nearby) can be used to communicate particular points, and used to backup evidence.

Making direct reference to MBC Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) will help to strengthen and evidence the justification of the NDP and particular policies.

Headcorn Tuesday 22nd April 2014 – Parish Hall

Workshop 1. *Facilitating a constructive dialogue with Maidstone Borough Council about common issues to do with the Local Plan & helping the Parish Council articulate the identity & character of the village.*

Present :

Design South East – Kieran Perkins, Geoff Noble, Irene Seijo

Headcorn PC & Headcorn Matters (NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN) –

Lyn Selby (Chair) Dave Andrews (Chair of Planning) Tim Thomas (Headcorn History Society) Michael Jefferys (Business Survey, Headcorn Matters) , Rebecca Driver (Research & Evidence Headcorn Matters)

Current Position: Neighbourhood Plan emerging (Headcorn Matters) There is an excellent NP team who have very sophisticated skills. It has a very good evidence base. There have been a number of village surveys which have been very well responded to, there is a great desire to conserve the village character. These surveys are being turned into coherent draft policies which they intend to present to residents on 13th/14th June.

Headcorn

Headcorn is a compact village situated in the Low Weald of Kent. The village is a thriving community with an attractive and distinctive High Street, £1.4m Village Hall and an enviable array of services, clubs and local business for its 3700 residents. Headcorn is one of the largest villages in the area, but which retains its culture and heritage through its history and architecture. The ancient village can best be appreciated by a stroll along Church Walk. This quiet footpath with its medieval cottages was once the main road out of Headcorn. 78% of the village are owner occupiers.

Key Issues with Local Plan:

- Evidence – scale of development is an issue, the PC is not against development but is very concerned about the numbers & the potential phasing and associated infrastructure – particularly sewage, roads & schools
- Location – they would prefer smaller, scattered sites – more sustainable & more likely to retain the character of the village & its rural setting
- LP/NP – site based & place based – tension between types of plan
- It is perceived that developers are being allowed to lead the process
- Affordable/Social housing – eligibility is an issue, overstates the need (40% in rural areas in LP)
- CIL – consultation has focused on peripheral issues such as signage & bus stops rather than sewage which is a reoccurring problem.

- Employment site on Maidstone Road is OK but is in a traffic black spot – traffic calming would be needed & PC has already discussed with KCC. Safe pedestrian and cycle access from the village would also be necessary.
- Grigg Lane employment site. NP would like some control over its future .
- The Parish Council believes that the evidence base for the draft Local Plan is poor and accordingly there is a risk of over-development

SECOND HALF OF WORKSHOP – WALKABOUT/CHARACTER/DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The PC wishes to the village retain the metrics of a village rather than a town – that is small, scattered sites rather than large neighbourhoods, numbers built out at any one time would be important in this respect. Architecture and sizes would also need to be considered. Would be useful to map the historical growth of village.

Access to the countryside – the village is compact, has a rural feel & very good access, network of paths etc – this needs to be retained.

Movement & walking distances to the High Street are important. Quality of area around Church Lane & High Street is unique to the village

The High Street is thriving and highly valued. Headcorn works because towns are at least 8 miles away. Varied retail plus two pubs and restaurants. To maintain village feel important to focus on the High Street, rather than multiple/dispersed ‘local centres’.

Network of roads to the village are small scale. Roads and traffic solutions need to be tested with residents. Commuter traffic & parking can be a problem. Rail link & buses take a few people off the road.

Are there opportunities for solving some of the traffic issues. For example if development came forward- between Grigg Lane & Lenham Rd and was co-ordinated this, might help distribute traffic and direct it away from difficult/constrained existing junctions.

School – If the Ulcombe Rd site came forward could school be made bigger or could the evolution of school site – as a key location between the site and the centre of the village - be co-ordinated with any wider plans? How could access be resolved? Communal gardens around Mill Bank as buffer to existing properties?

General acceptance that village needs to evolve carefully along with associated infrastructure.

High Street beside the station feels out of town so traffic tends to speed up. Think about car parking at station & its frontage – can it work harder, it is a big site, could it be a mixed development here? Particularly backland behind High Street. Need to have similar thought process about similar sites around the village.

Think about moving library through CIL payments

Think about village as a whole NP needs to assemble precedents:

Network & settlement character , show principles, relationship of streets, how buildings relate to the landscape, are they in proportion to their setting, density of development. Types and styles of roads (For instance the enjoyable contrast being the busy, enclosed, High St & the informal, countryside quality of Oak Tree Lane)

Architectural & landscape features to be conserved – oaks/hedgerows / open space/ frontages / gardens . Landscape character analysis – surrounding rural – green links etc

How would any new development link to the village – pedestrian connections, landscape connections – village green areas, tree planting, play areas

Edges of village – eg. park like character of area around church, relates well to surrounding countryside.

Traffic calming – use of bollards to stop through routes – consider other devices. Ensure any measures to mitigate existing or potential traffic impacts relate to a village character e.g. remove white lines as roads go through town.

DSE recommend a further workshop to consolidate the above precedents so that they can be fully articulated in the NP.

Headcorn 14th May 2014 – Parish Hall

Workshop 2. *Securing Character in new development in Headcorn through the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plan.*

Present:

Headcorn PC and Headcorn Matters (NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN) – Cllr Lynn Selby (Chair), Cllr Dave Andrews (Chair of Planning), Rebecca Driver (Headcorn Matters, Research and Evidence), Michael Jeffreys (Headcorn Matters, Business Survey), Tim Thomas

Design South East – Kieran Perkins, Geoff Noble

PURPOSE

The meeting had been arranged as a follow-up to the workshop and walkabout held at Headcorn on 22 April, with the same participants.

It was agreed that this second workshop should have a practical emphasis, looking at the shape and content of a possible Village Design Statement that could in turn assist the Neighbourhood Plan. The PC would like it noted that their vision for Headcorn is over the long term - 100 to 150 years.

The session was conducted in two parts:

- HEADCORN TODAY an analysis of the characteristics and qualities of Headcorn, including its setting
- HEADCORN'S FUTURE - needs, opportunities, constraints and challenges

The session began with an update on the Maidstone Local Plan.

LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

Lyn Selby and Geoff Noble reported on the meeting held on 28 April with Parish Councils (representing the Rural Service Centres) and Maidstone Council officers on 28 April, The tenor of the meeting, chaired by DSE Director Chris Lamb, had been constructive overall. Council officers had been concerned to hear that the travelling exhibition had been received poorly, most visitors finding it too generic and lacking substance on the specific proposals for Headcorn. Much was made of the need for the plan to have a robust evidence base, both at a strategic and a local level.

Dave Andrews and Rebecca Driver had also had a useful meeting with the Leader of the Council Cllr Chris Garland in which the rationale for favouring large sites was challenged.

Headcorn PC submitted its response to Maidstone Borough Council on 6 May.

<http://www.headcornNeighbourhood>

Planc.kentparishes.gov.uk/default.cfm?pid=news&newsid=10899

Headcorn Matters was arranging residents meetings on 13 and 14 June, when the emerging policies and proposals for the Neighbourhood Plan would be discussed.

HEADCORN TODAY

Through a series of overlay diagrams on maps of different scales, the group worked through a series of themes:

- Anatomy of Headcorn – compact (almost all of the village within an 800m radius of the post office, or a 10min walk). Very little employment in the centre.
- Landscape Flood plain to south of the railway line, good hedgerow survival, mature trees, rare and cherished green spaces in the village centre. Mixed farming, hops traditionally and no large areas of woodland. Ponds are remains of old quarries for the extraction of Paludina stone (a fossiliferous limestone from the Weald Clay Formation) used in old buildings including the Parish Church.
- Connections - Good footpaths, including well used rural paths to Brook Wood, Tong Farm and elsewhere but a culture of car use means that villagers sometimes drive surprisingly short distances. Traffic manageable but growing and speeds too high on Millbank and Maidstone Road. Feeder to M20. 90 degree bend by church acts as a brake. All facilities very central except the new health centre, which is out on a limb.
- Historic growth - Tim Thomas (Headcorn History Society) sketched out the growth of the village, showing how it had evolved after the coming of the railway and grown most rapidly after electrification of the railway c 1960. It was noted that no single development had been greater than 80 houses.
- Assets – what’s great about Headcorn.

HEADCORN’S FUTURE

In the second part of the workshop, the group drew on the analysis to consider what the village needed and where it might go: a new or enlarged school, (which should be as central as possible) and housing development through self-supporting phases and sequential release.

Other discussions were held around using the flood plain as a green wedge; finding ways to calm traffic on Lenham Road, and improving first impressions when arriving by train.

The group considered how design quality could be achieved:

- Using published guidance eg Kent design guide
- Encouraging developers and Maidstone BC to use design review panels, especially for large or sensitive sites,
- On all sensitive sites - especially those where principle of development has been established through policy - only accepting full and not outline planning applications.

Boughton Monchelea Parish Council - 23.4.14 – BMC Social Club,

Workshop 1. *Facilitating a constructive dialogue with Maidstone Borough Council about common issues to do with the Local Plan & helping the Parish Council articulate the identity & character of the village*

Present :

Design South East – Liz Gibney, Steve Smith, Irene Seijo

Boughton Monchelsea Parish Council

Consultant NP - Clare Wright (present)

Current Position: Emerging Neighbourhood Plan

Boughton Monchelsea

Boughton Monchelsea parish is made up of a number of hamlets spread over 2700 acres, of which the PC own & manage c300 acres through an Amenity Trust, started 25 years ago. This innovative mechanism is a Registered Charity wholly run by the Parish Council. The aims of the Trust are to provide amenity land for the preservation and improvement for the benefit of the inhabitants of the village and neighbouring communities. It also provides a landscape 'buffer zone' between sensitive areas of countryside & the urban edge of Maidstone, providing valuable recreation & leisure facilities for both urban & rural communities.

As the parish is spread out & would be very difficult to view as a 'walkabout' the PC provided a tractor & trailer site visit, which as well as being very enjoyable was also highly informative. Without this, it would have been impossible to appreciate the unique landscape, architectural & historic character of the parish. Views of the Weald are particularly impressive, it is an outstanding example of the 'Garden of England' in this part of Kent. As such, any future development requires particularly careful & detailed analysis. Fortunately there is an excellent NP team who have very sophisticated skills to achieve this.

The PC is not anti development, but wants to conserve the unique character of the parish by being 'in the driving seat' where this is proposed.

Issues that emerged during the site visit:

The primary School is 4.5 times oversubscribed.

It has a social club but very little leisure facilities within the parish.

There is one 'general store' in the village.

There is no doctor in the parish.

The PC would have liked to secure s106 funds to help Plan to integrate new & existing communities (bridleways and pathways in particular).

Key Issues with Local Plan raised during the discussion:

- Its status as a 'Larger Village' designated within the draft LP. The Parish have seen the criteria but consider it so weak and inadequate in its assessment with no proper weight associated with services and facilities.
- LP/NP – site based & place based – tension between types of plan. The PC would like more control over the process. Particularly the PC want to conserve the rural character of the parish
- The timeline for proposed development
- Affordable/Social housing – eligibility is an issue, overstates the need (40% in rural areas in LP)

SECOND HALF OF WORKSHOP –CHARACTER/DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The PC wishes the parish to retain the metrics of a group of hamlets or dispersed village. 'A collection of hamlets set within a distinctive landscape, a lot of which is publically accessible. A walkable parish. A network of hamlet hubs in a strong landscape framework'

The PC would prefer connected nodes of granular development, 5 character 'strips or bands' defined by the topography were identified, during the workshop (see illustrations) different strategies would be applied in each zone. Starting from the north:

- Suburban Edge
- Countryside buffer
- Quarry Landscape – buffer/transition zone, with publically accessible pedestrian routes
- Central Village Zone/ Heath Road (No development beyond this point)
- Greensand Ridge
- Wealden Landscape

Roads and other infrastructure would need to be carefully considered, particularly in relation to development in adjacent parishes funnelling through main roads in BM to Maidstone. Phasing of development is particularly important.

Changing employment patterns need to be considered – home working v commuters.

The hamlet hubs should have different characters/density/social organisations. Multi functional village facilities might be located in the main village of BMC.

DSE recommend a further workshop to consolidate the above so that they can be fully articulated in the NP

Marden 1st May 2014 – Parish Hall

Workshop 1. *Facilitating a constructive dialogue with Maidstone Borough Council about common issues to do with the Local Plan & helping the Parish Council articulate the identity & character of the village*

Present:

Design South East – Robert Offord, Clare Wright

Marden PC/NP reps – Andy T, Maria, Steve M, Pam, Kate, Catherine.

Current Position: The Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) has been in development for a long while. The Parish and NDP representatives are considering if the NDP can be adopted ahead of the Local Plan.

INTRODUCTION

The workshop session with Parish and community representatives was preceded by a self-guided tour of the village, with particular emphasis on the main development areas, at Stanley Farm and the Hockey Club. An informal discussion about the village, the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Development Plan, including proposed growth, followed. We are grateful to all participants for their input to the conversation.

THE LOCAL PLAN AND THE NDP

The NDP group have taken the opportunity to reflect on the MBC draft LP and its implications for the draft NDP and, as well as making their direct representations to the Borough, have considered how the Local Plan policies will impact on the content of the NDP itself. The role of the NDP is to extend the application of LP policies to the local context, and not just repeat policies in the Local Plan; the community has the opportunity to define particular areas which are of local importance through defining how policy applies to particular sites in the village. It was suggested that, while there should not be a need for the NDP to repeat policies within the LOCAL PLAN, there is little harm in the NDP reinforcing areas which are particularly critical to Marden (and ensuring and being aware that while these remain in-draft there is a possibility that they may be subject to change).

Making direct reference to MBC Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) will help to strengthen and evidence the justification of the NDP and particular policies.

The critical issues relate to infrastructure delivery, especially with regard to transport and dealing with water. These issues should be seen as a web or network with the impact of growth in each village in the area feeding into, and directly connected, to impacts elsewhere. Additionally, the cumulative impact of developments need to be considered and tested.

The Parish are keen to hear more about the work going towards the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP); and would welcome the opportunity to hear more. (post-meeting note: *DSE are working with MBC to facilitate a workshop, which will look at these infrastructure issues in more depth with adjoining villages and NDP areas*).

Additionally there is a related concern that with the rapid growth of the village that social infrastructure will not be able to keep up, meaning that new residents will not benefit from the ability to integrate into the life of the village. The community spirit of the village is consistently highlighted as one of Marden's strongest attributes. There is a concern that the sequencing of development has not been able to take this into account.

The majority of identified sites in the village are well advanced; many have outline or detailed planning permission, or are currently under consideration. The community do not have confidence that development being promoted in the village will be of the high quality, reflecting the village's context. They are eager that MBC support them in their demands for higher quality development. Additionally there is concern that investment associated with developments is followed through; in terms of infrastructure delivery and investment in facilities.

THE ROLE OF THE NDP

As noted the majority of identified sites in the village are well advanced; many have outline or detailed planning permission, or are currently under consideration. It was suggested that the NDP group should not lose focus or energy simply because many sites are so well advanced, but rather should continue to promote desired practice within the NDP. There is always the possibility that proposed developments might change in the future and the NDP will then be a valuable resource to call upon to ensure they meet community aspirations. Additionally, sites with outline planning will still need to be considered at a detailed level, where a NDP can offer both advice and control. The NDP could include;

- Commentary on design as a process, and the means of attaining and assessing good design can be incorporated in the NDP – including the assumption that developers should engage in Community Design Workshops, Design Review, and the use of Building for Life.

- Continued consideration of design and place-making with relation to the identified sites, particularly how policies in the LOCAL PLAN might be successfully applied within the Marden context
- The NDP has a role as advice and help developers and designers create places which are acceptable, rather than solely being a controlling tool for helping reject inappropriate schemes.

TESTING THE NDP

The current application at the Hockey Field provides a test case for how the draft LP and draft NDP would be used in dealing with, and supporting the design of new development in the village.

This site could be used as a case study to:

1. Assess the clarity and application of the NDP policies on a 'live' site,
2. Test the quality of the scheme, and see how it measures up against the aspirations of the NDP.

This process will allow us to refine the NDP to ensure its policies are clear and help us achieve our aims.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTARY

- There was particular feedback regarding the Park and Ride initiative and how it could be used to support the wider transport network in South Maidstone, which is currently very poor. Greater consideration of the wider network of villages would again extend the understanding of the context in which any new investment in infrastructure would be made helping to fulfil multiple objectives.
- Greater clarity in the presentation of the Local Plan at community workshops would have helped communicate with local residents, rather than raise potential confusion.

Sutton Valence Parish Council - 29.5.14 – Cheyne House

Workshop 1. *Facilitating a constructive dialogue with Maidstone Borough Council about common issues to do with the Local Plan & helping the Parish Council articulate the identity & character of the village*

Present :

Design South East – Clare Wright, Geoff Noble, Irene Seijo

Sutton Valence PC & Residents – Peter Coleman, Eileen Riden, Janet Burnet, Barry Armstrong, Chris Smith

Summary: Sutton Valence is a very attractive village some five miles SE of Maidstone, Kent on the Greensand Ridge overlooking the Vale of Kent and Weald. One of the main landmarks in the village is Sutton Valence Castle, of which only the ruins of the 12th century keep remain, under the ownership of English Heritage. Sutton Valence lies on the main A274 road from Maidstone to Tenterden and is linked by bus to both towns, as well as Headcorn. The village has no railway station.

The village of Sutton Valence can be said to be split into two. The principal and older part occupies the upper slope of the Greensand Ridge and is a conservation area, while the remainder is located at the bottom of the hill. The village has a post office (soon to close) and three pubs and two doctors surgeries. There is also a recreation ground next to the village hall. There is a public school and a primary school, which is nearby.

Current Position: Sutton Valence Parish Council applied for permission to Maidstone Borough Council to designate the whole of Sutton Valence Parish as a “Neighbourhood Area” for the purposes of the plan in November 2013. Consultation commenced in late November & will take place throughout 2014. It was approved as a Neighbourhood Plan Area by MBC in February 2014. The Parish have developed a provisional vision statement as follows:

“Our vision for Sutton Valence is one of a strong and thriving community where our history and heritage are celebrated and sustained and where our rural setting and character are preserved and enhanced for both residents and visitors. In order to meet the needs of the Parish in the 21st Century, we aspire to:

- Maintain and enhance the built and natural environment for present and future generations.
- Support well designed small scale housing and business developments that meet local needs and are in keeping with the character scale and demands of a small rural Parish.
- Encourage opportunities for parishioners across the generations to find enjoyment and fulfilment through a range of educational, sporting and leisure activities.
- Foster partnership working between Parish organisations and institutions for the mutual benefit of all.

- Support local businesses and services that contribute to the quality of life for residents and visitors, including support for suitable diversification and use of new technology.
- Ensure the Parish is a welcoming setting for visitors by improving facilities within the context of a safe and rural environment.

The PC are extremely well informed about planning matters. They produced an excellent Parish Plan in 200(?) and will test the evidence collected in this to develop their NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN. They aim to develop the NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN on place-making principles. As with other parishes developing Neighbourhood Plans, there is tension between this 'place based' approach as opposed to the Borough's 'site based' approach. The PC perceive that the sensitivity of their geographic position and location (North Downs & Greensand Ridge) is not given due consideration in the draft Local Plan.

Key Issues with Local Plan raised during the discussion:

The first call for sites identified 7 sites, all of which were excluded. The second call for sites has identified 14 sites (some of which also came up in the first call)

- The PC feel there has been a marked lack of consultation during the process of developing the LOCAL PLAN, and is particularly concerned about its designation as a 'Larger Village', the criteria for which are not apparent. For example, the playing pitches owned by the public school have been classed as available recreational open space which is not the case.
- Scale of development is an issue, the PC is not against development but is very concerned about the numbers & the potential phasing and associated infrastructure.
- Pace of development. 500 houses are proposed which doubles the size of the village
- Location & design – they would prefer smaller, dispersed sites more likely to retain the character of the village & its rural setting - like the Haven Close development - rather than large numbers of four & five bedroom properties.
- Infrastructure – The PC has major concerns regarding the lack of a properly funded and agreed infrastructure programme to support the draft Local Plan, particularly in regard to pressure on roads and proposed development in neighbouring parishes. Two thirds of the village is not on mains sewerage. The majority of secondary school children already travel to school outside the parish.
- The PC feels that the latest housing need assessment represents an unrealistic assessment of the Borough's future housing needs and will have a negative effect on the overall quality of life, particularly in rural locations. They support the submission put forward to Maidstone by KCC.
- It is perceived that developers are being allowed to lead the process, the PC believe that developers have been 'signposted' to look at sites within Sutton Valence.
- The PC would like to see a robust 'landscape strategy' which retains the rural, agricultural character of the parishes in the south of the Borough from the growth of the urban town centre.

- Concern about overall quality of approach of MBC officers and members to parishes about both the Draft Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans
- The PC would like more dialogue with MBC as they want to be able to support a Local Plan for the area, but this Draft Plan requires amendments
- NDPs can help MBC achieve their goals if MBC understand the potential and opportunities within NDPs where provision is properly included within Local Plans.

Discussion & recommendations on way forward:

- In short term – PC should develop a succinct check list which articulates the main points and potential solutions for the long term future of the village.
- Set out the characteristics of each area of the village & appropriate design. Develop criteria & identity of the place. For example the village is the heart of the parish and a significant part of its identity. Different areas require different strategies.
- Develop a list of ‘must haves’ and ‘wants’ in relation to CIL
- Check MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL’s appraisal of the conservation area – is it up to date?
- Look at view points & views that should be retained, particularly up towards the village from the south
- Check the current list of sites against the above and which might be appropriate and which are not and why.
- Consider an overall strategy for managing the landscape between Maidstone urban area and rural parishes

DSE would be happy to assist with the above, if the time scale allows and the PC feels it is useful at this point.

Lenham Parish Council - 21.7.14 – Lenham Community Centre.

Workshop 1. *Facilitating a constructive dialogue with Maidstone Borough Council about common issues to do with the Local Plan & helping the Parish Council articulate the identity & character of the village*

Present:

Design South East – Annette Hards, Robert Offord, Irene Seijo

Lenham Parish Council – Margo McFarlane (Clerk) Nigel Godfrey, Nigel Willis, Martin Jackson, Richard Greenwood, Colin Gillett, Jerry Osborn, L Porter, S Knowles.

Summary: Records show that Lenham Village is an ancient settlement. Earliest records date back to 804AD and it is also recorded in the Domesday survey. The village is located in mid Kent beneath the scarp of the North Downs and is surrounded by mainly arable farmland. Lenham is built around the original medieval square where the shops and services ensure that this is a lively, working village.

Current Position: Lenham Parish Council produced an excellent Parish Plan in 2007 and this is being used as a basis for their emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The PC has produced a project report detailing the timetable for the NP, they managed to achieve a great deal during 2013 and had many good ideas for the development of the parish. Then housing numbers increased, potentially doubling the size of the village. The timetable has now slipped somewhat, due to changes in personnel, but the PC is now keen to reinvigorate the process and intend to produce a brief for consultants to help with this process.

The PC are keen to be proactive – they are not against development, but want to retain the village character and they feel it is important to manage expectations. They are very keen to take a ‘place based approach’, particularly as developers are already approaching them with plans for some of the sites. They would like to test their assumptions against a clear vision for the village.

The PC also intend to have a public meeting this coming weekend to expand engagement and involvement and to recruit new members to help with the NP. As a result it was felt that it was important to produce a Parish Council Position Statement to take to the Saturday meeting, which was discussed and drafted during the rest of the workshop:

Draft Position Statement:

“Lenham Parish Council recognise that some growth in this area is inevitable, we intend to proactively lead that process, so that we can retain the character of the village and that control of our future.

We need to ensure that any development is supported by adequate and timely improvements in infrastructure.

We believe that it is necessary to continue with our Neighbourhood Plan process, with the help of parishioners and supported by professionals.

Now that Maidstone Borough Council has indicated significant growth in Lenham we need to ensure that our voice is heard – please join our Neighbourhood Planning Forum to help us with this very important work”.

Design South East – July 2014

Annex 2- Design South East

Facilitators

Richard Eastman

Richard is director of Feria Urbanism, a design studio with specialisms in urban design, urban planning and neighbourhood strategies. Based in Bournemouth, the studio was established in 2007 and has since worked across the UK on many place-shaping projects, visioning studies and strategic frameworks for urban and rural areas. Richard is an urban designer with extensive experience in the preparation of design strategies and development frameworks. He has particular expertise in engaging with stakeholders and local communities to plan shape and influence emerging spatial strategies. He has delivered urban design frameworks for Liverpool, Bournemouth, Preston, Weymouth and Bexleyheath; provided Neighbourhood Planning advice for community groups; delivered an urban quarter study in Liverpool; and created a strategic vision for several Kent villages. Richard has been appointed to the East of England Design Review Panel, a recognition of his design skills and experience. He is a visiting tutor on the architecture course at the Arts University Bournemouth alongside his work at Feria Urbanism. He has also recently worked part-time in the City Design Team at Southampton City Council. Prior to establishing Feria Urbanism, Richard was an associate director at Terence O'Rourke Ltd in Bournemouth before becoming a director at NEW Masterplanning Ltd in Poole. He was born in Preston, Lancashire and trained at the University of Sheffield, the University of Manchester and Oxford Brookes University.

Annette Hards

Annette is a Chartered Architect and Urban Designer with over 25 years of experience as a practitioner, and a passion for more sustainable, people focussed approaches to development. She is an enthusiastic and skilful facilitator of community and stakeholder engagement in the design process, across a wide range of settings, including schools, community and cultural facilities, and public realm projects. Annette worked at the Kent Architecture Centre for eleven years, developing innovative and successful engagement of young people in 'place-making', and led on the development and facilitation of successful design-led initiatives, including Urban Design learning programmes, the Spaceshaper 9-14 initiative, publications, study trips and workshops for a range of audiences, including local authorities and housing associations. She is currently a part-time lecturer on the MSc course for Town Planners at the University of Brighton, and runs Sussex:PLACenet, a cross-professional, knowledge sharing network and events programme for 'place-based' practitioners, decision-makers and enthusiasts across Sussex. She is an Associate of Rethinking Cities.

Geoff Noble

Geoff Noble is a chartered town planner with wide experience in urban and rural planning, design and conservation. After stints with local authorities in Staffordshire and Hampshire Geoff joined English Heritage in 1985 as one of their first recruits. He spent ten years assigned to the north of England before moving to English Heritage's London team, becoming Deputy Director in 2000.

In 2005 Geoff joined the architecture and urban design practice Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners where he continues to work on a freelance basis. Since 2006 he has also worked with the Kent Architecture Centre (now Design South East), where he was appointed to run the South East Regional Design Panel and to provide training on design and heritage management. In 2010 he was elected as a trustee to the Environment Trust for Richmond upon Thames, a well established and active charity.

Robert Offord

Robert is a planner and urban designer and leads the DSE Design Support programme. Robert's core role is helping clients diagnose and overcome design and planning concerns by providing tailored support. He has particular expertise in setting up local design support initiatives and leading workshop facilitation as well as delivering design training. Robert is also responsible for managing the South East Panel, as well as, working on the centre's design and regeneration projects.

Clare B. Wright MRTPI MILM

Clare is an independent planning consultant, providing advice to landowners and communities on development proposals, applications and appeals. Her partnership work on encouraging good design in historic areas for English Heritage and CABE is recommended in National Planning Policy Guidance.

Clare is one of the Founding Directors of Community Spirit Partnership CIC that work in partnership with parish councils, groups and Forums to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans and other community-led plans. She is an Independent Examiner for Neighbourhood Development Plans, panel member of Neighbourhood Planners.

Clare has over 25 years experience in planning, design and engagement within the public, private and non-profit sectors.

Kieran Perkins

Kieran is an experienced designer working across the fields of building, town- and landscape, as well as holding a professional qualification as an Architect.

In practice at 5th Studio he has worked on a wide spectrum of projects from built interventions in sensitive historic locations, through housing and public building schemes, to large-scale masterplanning and landscape-scale propositions. Kieran is particularly experienced at intelligently combining a sensitivity to, and enjoyment of, the physical, experiential and practical qualities of buildings and places, with high level strategic thinking.

Kieran has served in a number of design review and enabling roles, including the Cambridge Design & Conservation Panel, The Shape East Panel and now for D:SE. He has also been a tutor and supervisor at Cambridge and Nottingham Universities, and has undertaken a number of voluntary teaching, mentoring and outreach roles in a variety of contexts.

Steven Smith

Steven Smith BA (Hons) Dip Arch RIBA Director urban narrative

Steven Smith is an architect with over 30 years' professional experience of practising as an architect and urbanist working on a diverse, international portfolio of projects. His career has developed through his work on projects across Europe, Asia and Australia, and includes some of the most challenging, large-scale development projects in the world.

Steven founded urban narrative in 2010 after a successful career at DEGW, an international research-based design consultancy, and before that with Terry Farrell and Partners in the UK and Asia.

Maidstone Borough Council

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 16 September 2014

Community Infrastructure Levy - key issues arising from consultation (regulation 15)

While reading the following report you may want to think about:

- What you want to know from the report;
- What questions you would like answered.

Make a note of your questions in the box below.

As you read the report you may think of other questions.

Questions I would like to ask regarding this report:

-
-
-
-
-

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

TUESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2014

REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Report prepared by Darren Bridgett

**1. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - KEY ISSUES ARISING
FROM CONSULTATION (REGULATION 15)**

1.1 Issue for consideration

1.1.1 To consider the key issues arising from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) preliminary draft charging schedule (PDCS) (regulation 15¹) public consultation, which ran from 21 March to 7 May 2014. The report focuses on the key elements of the objections, namely the levy and how it was set. The full summary of issues raised in representations, including statistics, is attached as Appendix A to the report.

1.2 Recommendation of the Head of Planning and Development

1.2.1 That the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the key issues arising from representations submitted during the Maidstone CIL preliminary draft charging schedule (regulation 15) public consultation, attached as Appendix A to the report, and makes any recommendations that it considers appropriate.

1.3 Reasons for recommendation

1.3.1 Public consultation (regulation 15) on the Maidstone CIL preliminary draft charging schedule ran from 21 March to 7 May 2014. The council received 34 comments from individuals and organisations, concerning a wide range of issues. The comments received are currently being considered and will shape the future direction of the CIL in Maidstone. The breakdown of consultees is as follows:

¹ The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010.

Member of the public	8
Parish council	3
Development – house builders	8
Development – supermarkets	4
Infrastructure provider	6
Local authority	3
Other	2

1.3.2 All comments can be viewed in full through the council's comments handling portal, at: http://maidstone-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/cil_preliminary_draft_charging_schedule_consultation_2014.

1.3.3 The stages for CIL preparation are:

- Preliminary draft charging schedule (PDCS) public consultation (regulation 15)
- Draft charging schedule (DCS) publication (public consultation) (regulation 16)
- Submission
- Examination
- Adoption

1.3.4 The PDCS consultation was the first stage of consultation for the Borough Council to introduce a CIL charging schedule. The comments received, and importantly the issues raised by those comments, will form the basis of any amendments made to the PDCS before it is consulted on as the draft charging schedule (DCS) in summer 2015 (alongside the regulation 19² draft of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan (MBLP)).

1.3.5 This report describes the key issues raised in the PDCS consultation.

1.3.6 **General issues**

1.3.7 **Timing of the CIL** – A number of comments were made requesting that the CIL should be introduced immediately/ahead of the local plan. The basis for these comments is that development is already being permitted that requires infrastructure provision to make it acceptable in planning terms.

1.3.8 **Having a positive effect on development** – CIL regulations have changed from the requirement that the council **should aim to strike an appropriate balance** to the requirement that the council **should strike an appropriate balance** between the desirability of funding infrastructure from the levy and the potential effects of the levy on the economic viability of development across the area. The comments

² Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

disagree that the council has yet struck this balance in the levy that it is proposing, specifically, that the council proposed are too high and that these will jeopardise the delivery of development in the borough.

1.3.9 **Local plan viability testing**

1.3.10 **Values and assumptions** – Figures used in the evidence base are too buoyant/optimistic. In particular the comments consider that:

- Sales values are too high.
- Affordable revenues are inconsistent with evidence provided.
- Benchmark land values are too low.
- Construction costs and associated costs are out of date.
- Site servicing costs are too low/not evidenced.
- The allowance for the incorporation of Code level 4 is too low.
- Developers profit levels are too low (in comparison to the risk they are taking).

1.3.11 **Validity of approach** – The question is raised about whether the viability evidence is still valid in light of the change of approach from a Core Strategy and associated documents to a full local plan.

1.3.12 **Detailed infrastructure evidence** – Further work is required to understand the income that the CIL can achieve and how this relates to the infrastructure that will be required to make the proposed developments acceptable in planning terms. How much of the infrastructure can be funded by the CIL?

1.3.13 **Section 106 planning obligations**

1.3.14 **Using section 106 planning obligations or the CIL** – Due to the type of infrastructure that some sites will require, e.g. larger sites requiring education provision, it is suggested that in some cases section 106 planning obligations would be more appropriate to deliver infrastructure than the CIL. This is because it is considered that the transfer of land for such facilities is better dealt with through section 106 obligations, rather than through the collection of CIL receipts and the subsequent acquisition of land – that process itself representing a cost.

1.3.15 **Proposed levy**

1.3.16 **Varying the balance of viability** – In the case of Headcorn it is suggested that the CIL charge should be higher than proposed in the PDCS and that the affordable housing requirement should be lowered. This comment cross references policy DM24 of the MBLP and is proposed on the basis that the 40% requirement for affordable housing will provide more affordable accommodation than is required in the village. It is suggested that the increased CIL income could be

used to cross subsidise affordable accommodation in the Maidstone urban area where it is suggested the accommodation is needed more.

1.3.17 Unfairly penalises retail developments – Retail is the only non-residential development type that has a levy proposed. This unfairly penalises retail development in comparison to all other non-residential developments. Within the retail development type it is suggested that to split the levy as proposed in the PDCS is not provided for in the CIL Regulations and that in proposing such a split, the levy may fall foul of State Aid regulations. The proposed £260 per m² levy on larger out of town retail is also considered to be significantly out of step with charges either proposed or implemented in surrounding areas.

1.3.18 Proposed changes – Some elements, not included in the PDCS, are proposed for addition:

- Instalments policy on CIL payments.
- Exceptional circumstances relief.
- Flat rate levy across the borough on all uses, based on the totality of infrastructure requirements.
- Allowance for infrastructure provision as payment in kind.

1.3.19 Duty to pass CIL to local councils

1.3.20 Cap on payments – Where a neighbourhood plan has not been adopted, the cap on payments to local councils equivalent to £100 per every existing household in the area is not supported.

1.3.21 Infrastructure/list of relevant infrastructure

1.3.22 Costing of infrastructure – Concern that larger items of infrastructure have been identified as significant elements of the infrastructure need yet these are still uncoded. This leads to a question over deliverability.

1.3.23 Meeting all infrastructure needs – The list of relevant infrastructure is not considered to meet all infrastructure requirements in the borough.

1.3.24 Further inclusions on the list – Respondents have stated/requested that other infrastructure should be included on the list. This includes:

- Police funding.
- Flood defences and mitigation measures.
- Youth and community learning.
- Infrastructure requirements at Hermitage Lane.

1.3.25 Further detail in respect of list/IDP/development sites – Kent County Council (KCC) have requested that further detail is included in relation to the infrastructure delivery plan (IDP) and the full list of

development sites proposed in the MBLP. This comment cross references with the MBLP and the IDP. It suggests that the IDP should identify which sites will have infrastructure funded by CIL payments and which sites will have infrastructure funded by section 106 planning obligations – this should be reflected in the list of relevant infrastructure. KCC have stated that they expect infrastructure to be funded wholly by development contributions.

1.3.26 **Timescale and next steps**

1.3.27 All of the comments that were submitted to the consultation are now being carefully considered. These comments will shape the future direction of the CIL in Maidstone, specifically the preparation of the draft charging schedule (DCS).

1.3.28 The draft charging schedule publication, which is the next stage of the CIL preparation, will take place alongside the regulation 19 consultation of the MBLP. This stage of consultation is due for summer 2015.

1.4 Alternative action and why not recommended

1.4.1 This is an information report, there is no alternative action.

1.5 Impact on corporate objectives

1.5.1 **For Maidstone to have a growing economy.** The introduction of the CIL is a key element of funding infrastructure provision in Maidstone Borough. As stated in responses to the PDCS consultation, there is a fear that the imposition of CIL could restrict the viability of certain development sectors. It is the duty of the council to strike an appropriate balance between the desirability of funding infrastructure from the levy and the potential effects of the levy on the economic viability of development across the area.

1.5.2 **For Maidstone to be a decent place to live.** A significant amount of development is proposed for Maidstone under the auspices of the local plan. In many cases this development will need to be made acceptable in planning terms i.e. the sustainable development principles of society, economy and environment. For this to be achieved, infrastructure will need to be provided to mitigate any issues that would arise from development.

1.6 Risk management

1.6.1 This is an information report, no decisions are being made and therefore no risks can be associated with those decisions.

1.7 Other implications

1.7.1

1.	Financial	X
2.	Staffing	X
3.	Legal	
4.	Equality impact needs assessment	
5.	Environmental/sustainable development	X
6.	Community safety	
7.	Human Rights Act	
8.	Procurement	X
9.	Asset management	X

1.7.2 **Financial.** The receipts from the CIL will be substantial and will need to be administered through the council’s finance department, tracking income, decisions on spending and outgoings. In the broader context, there are financial implications relating to the long term delivery of the local plan and the developments proposed within.

1.7.3 **Staffing.** Before the CIL is adopted, a staff resource will need to be identified to undertake its administration. In councils that have already adopted a CIL, this has in some cases been a new post, working on a full time basis.

1.7.4 **Environmental/sustainable development.** The CIL deals with the funding and provision of infrastructure that makes development acceptable in planning terms i.e. society, economy and environment.

1.7.5 **Procurement.** The long term implication of adopting the CIL is that the council may itself become an infrastructure provider. In this case, the council would need to consider its approach to procurement and if its current arrangements would still be effective.

1.7.6 **Asset management.** The long term implication of adopting the CIL is that the council will have procured more assets in addition to those it currently possesses. The management of these assets will be a consideration that needs to be effectively addressed.

1.8 Relevant documents

1.8.1 Maidstone Community Infrastructure Levy – Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule Consultation 2014.

1.8.2 Appendices

1.8.3 Appendix A – Key issues arising from the Maidstone Community Infrastructure Levy Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (regulation 15) consultation.

1.8.4 Background documents

1.8.5 None.

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

APPENDIX A

Key issues arising from the Maidstone Community Infrastructure Levy Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (regulation 15) consultation

SUMMARY STATISTICS

GENERAL

SUPPORT	1
OBJECT	2
OBSERVATION	5
OTHER	1
TOTAL	9

LOCAL PLAN VIABILITY TESTING

SUPPORT	0
OBJECT	9
OBSERVATION	4
TOTAL	13

SECTION 106 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

SUPPORT	0
OBJECT	1
OBSERVATION	2
TOTAL	3

PROPOSED LEVY

	GENERAL	RESIDENTIAL	RETAIL	TOTAL
SUPPORT	2	2	2	6
OBJECT	2	8	8	18
OBSERVATION	3	0	0	3
TOTAL	7	10	10	27

DUTY TO PASS CIL TO LOCAL COUNCILS

SUPPORT	0
OBJECT	3
OBSERVATION	0
TOTAL	3

INFRASTRUCTURE/LIST OF RELEVANT INFRASTRUCTURE

SUPPORT	0
OBJECT	10
OBSERVATION	6
TOTAL	16

COMMENTS

General

Some unconditional support.

Charging schedule needs to include exceptional circumstances relief.

Charging schedule needs an instalments policy.

Introduction of CIL should be immediate.

Levy should be charged on the basis that development will create need for infrastructure.

£0 CIL charge makes no sense.

Concern that agreement with infrastructure providers to spend CIL receipts needs to be legally binding.

Concern that infrastructure requirements identified in MBLP are insufficient.

CIL should have a positive effect on development.

Should take into account published guidance in NPPG.

SUPPORT	1
OBJECT	2
OBSERVATION	5
OTHER	1

Local plan viability testing

Further work required, evidence needs to be updated – costs and assumptions:

- Build costs
- Regulatory costs (CSH 4 allowance too low)
- Land values
- Sales values
- Site servicing costs too low and not evidenced
- Profits too low

Council needs to strike an appropriate balance between desirability of funding from CIL and how this potentially affects viability of development across the local authority area.

CIL evidence prepared with overly buoyant assumptions.

Does not sufficiently allow for remedial costs and other potential unknown costs.

CIL payments arising from proposed £260 pm² charge would be substantially higher than for other examples from bigger developments.

The provision of water infrastructure is not dealt with through CIL/s106, these costs needs to be adequately reflected.

Query if viability evidence is still valid in light of new sites in local plan approach – was previously Core Strategy and based on limited sites.

Further work required in relation to the income from CIL and the likely infrastructure that it can fund – should not be an unrealistic wish list.

Council should consult with developers.

SUPPORT	0
OBJECT	9
OBSERVATION	4

Section 106 planning obligations

Pooling restrictions information needs to be updated to reflect 2015 deadline.
 Disagree with restrictions on pooling, sounds like a developers' charter.
 Where new sites are required for new provision of services e.g. education, it is more appropriate for these to be delivered by s106 obligations, because acquiring sites is too onerous for KCC.

SUPPORT	0
OBJECT	1
OBSERVATION	2

Proposed levy

Some support for hierarchy of proposed levy.
 Disagree with retail rates in PDCS being varied from those proposed in executive summary of local plan viability testing.
 Make levy higher and affordable housing proportion lower in rural areas, too many affordable houses will result from the current policy position – more than are needed in Headcorn.
 Concern not to advantage town centre competitors.
 Town centre uses are rightly recognised as not being able to support a charge.
 Object to levy on rural businesses (ref. retail) as this will significantly affect viability of such propositions and will negatively affect job prospects in rural areas.
 Will cause a distortion by effectively penalising retail development at the expense of other uses which have a nil rate set against them.
 Disagree that splitting levy with a use class (retail) is allowable – this unfairly benefits one part of the retail spectrum – considers that this falls foul of State Aid regulations.
 This should also apply to conversions – not just new floorspace.
 Proposed changes:

- Instalments policy.
- Exceptional circumstances relief.
- Flat rate levy based on infrastructure requirements with equal payments made across all uses.
- Allow for infrastructure provision as payment in kind.

£260 charge unfairly benefits larger stores but for smaller stores and alternative formats like Aldi, this is at the margins of viability.
 CIL on all PDL should be at a nil rate to encourage development of PDL and allow for abnormal costs.
 Rates in urban area of £84 pm² and rural area of £126 pm² are not viable.
 Retail levy is too high and out of step with levy proposed in surrounding areas.

The council should set a £0 levy in the town centre to encourage development/regeneration.

A viability cushion of 30% should be applied from evidence to proposed levy.

CIL should be charged on all non-residential development, not just retail.

Question if the potential income from CIL/cost of infrastructure identified in the list of relevant infrastructure has influenced the setting of the CIL rates and if this is valid.

Proposes that CIL charge should not directly reflect viability evidence.

Figures appear arbitrary.

	GENERAL	RESIDENTIAL	RETAIL	TOTAL
SUPPORT	2	2	2	6
OBJECT	2	8	8	18
OBSERVATION	3	0	0	3

Duty to pass CIL to local councils

Does not support £100 cap on CIL payment to local councils where a neighbourhood plan has not been adopted.

SUPPORT	0
OBJECT	3
OBSERVATION	0

Infrastructure/list of relevant infrastructure

Regulation 123 list will not meet the infrastructure needs of the borough.

Does not believe that CIL will be able to deliver all required infrastructure.

CIL should rectify existing infrastructure problems before accepting new developments with new infrastructure needs.

No funding identified for police. Goes against NPPF - does not provide for secure communities. Quotes letter from DCLG - police are legitimate recipients of CIL funding.

Include flood defences/mitigation measures in list, with £TBC listed for cost, these projects will be required and will require funding from external partners and bodies.

Some schemes have been built, some are not reliant on CIL, some are currently subject to ongoing negotiation.

List should include improvements required on Hermitage Lane.

Larger items of infrastructure remain uncoded, yet these are significant elements of the infrastructure need. Query if infrastructure, and hence MBLP strategy, is deliverable/proven to be deliverable. Note that further infrastructure work is identified as being necessary.

Further work required with regard to transport and the strategic route network.

Indoor and outdoor sports facility requirements should be adequately provided for.

Pump priming should be provided on new developments to support new bus services.

KCC expects that all of its infrastructure will be wholly funded by CIL. The list needs to include services such as Youth and Community Learning. KCC requests that a list of sites is produced which identifies the split between CIL being the more appropriate method of infrastructure delivery, or s106 being more appropriate – KCC believes that larger sites are more appropriate for delivering infrastructure through s106 obligations. KCC believes that an update IDP should illustrate this information.

SUPPORT	0
OBJECT	10
OBSERVATION	6

Agenda Item 12

Maidstone Borough Council

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 16 September 2014

Future Work Programme and SCRAIP Update

While reading the following report you may want to think about:

- What you want to know from the report;
- What questions you would like answered.

Make a note of your questions in the box below.

As you read the report you may think of other questions.

Questions I would like to ask regarding this report:

-
-
-
-
-

Maidstone Borough Council

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 19 September 2014

Future Work Programme and SCRAIP Update

Report of: Tessa Mallett, Overview and Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Committee are asked to consider the future work programme, attached at **Appendix A**, to ensure it is appropriate and covers all issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee considers the future work programme, attached at **Appendix A**, and the update provided in section 7 (below).
- 2.2 That the Committee considers the List of Forthcoming Decisions, relevant to the Committee at **Appendix B**, and discuss whether any of these items require further investigation or monitoring.
- 2.3 That the Committee considers the SCRAIP update from the meeting of 22 July 2014 at **Appendix C**.
- 2.4 That the Committee considers its continuous professional development needs and recommends possible training or development sessions it would like to undertake.

3 Future Work Programme

- 3.1 At the future work programme workshop on 9 June 2014 members agreed the topics they wanted programmed in for the 2014-15 Municipal Year. The topic suggestions were made by members of the public, Parish Councils, officers and local press.
- 3.2 Throughout the course of the municipal year the Committee is asked to put forward, and review, work programme suggestions.
- 3.3 The Committee's work programme is currently very full. Members are asked to consider the work programme to ensure it remains appropriate, realistic and covers issues Members currently wish to consider within the Committee's remit.

- 3.4 The Committee is reminded that the Constitution states under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules number 9: Agenda items that 'Any Member shall be entitled to give notice to the proper officer that he wishes an item relevant to the functions of the Committee or Sub-Committee to be included on the agenda for the next available meeting of the Committee or Sub-Committee. On receipt of such a request the proper officer will ensure that it is included on the next available agenda, the Member must attend the meeting and speak on the item put forward.'

4 List of Forthcoming Decisions

- 4.1 The List of Forthcoming Decisions (**Appendix B**) is a live document containing all key and non-key decisions.
- 4.2 Due to the nature of the List of Forthcoming Decisions, and to ensure the information provided to the Committee is up to date, a verbal update will be given at the meeting by the Chairman. The Committee can view the live document online at:
<http://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=443&RD=0>

6. Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP) Responses

- 6.1 The issue of making, and monitoring, recommendations is an important part of the scrutiny process. SCRAIPs set out recommendations following scrutiny meetings/reviews and information is sought on the plan as to whether recommendations are accepted, the action to be taken and by who.
- 6.2 The SCRAIP update to report can be found attached to this report as **Appendix C**.

7 Future Work Programme Update

- 7.1 Following discussions between the Chairman and officers the agendas for the meetings of 16 and 30 September will be as follows:

16 September:

- Cabinet Member Priorities – written report for noting/comment
- Design South East report on Local Plan consultation events
- Community Infrastructure Level – preliminary draft charging schedule (at the meeting 19/8 committee asked to move this to 30/ - officers have advised this sits better along with the item above and as a follow on from the 19/8 agenda)
- Verbal update on Infrastructure Delivery Plan

30 September:

- Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car – Bus Services review

- Green and Blue Infrastructure/Open Space Strategy (the open space audit is still ongoing – update report) (moved from 16/9)

7.2 Update on Transport in Maidstone – alternative to using a car review

- 7.2.1 The Working Group are due to meet on 5 September to review the feedback received from parish councils and councillors on bus service issues they want considered as part of the review.
- 7.2.2 A meeting with Kent County Council (KCC) public transport officers and the Working Group is arranged for 16 September 2014 to consider and respond to the issues raised. A report will be presented at the Planning, Transport and Development (PTD) OSC meeting of 30 September.
- 7.2.3 The meeting of 30 September will be used, in part, to interview witnesses from bus service providers.
- 7.2.4 An update on the progress of the Cycling and Walking section of this review will be given at the PTD OSC of 16 September.

8. Impact on Corporate Objectives

- 8.1 The Strategic Plan sets the Council's key objectives for the medium term and has a range of objectives which support the delivery of the Council's priorities.
- 8.2 The Committee will consider reports that deliver against the following priorities:
- 'For Maidstone to have a growing economy' and 'For Maidstone to be a decent place to live'.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 To assist O&S committees in their inquiries, a small budget is available for the purchase of necessary equipment and to cover the costs of training, site visits, meetings in locations other than the Town Hall, witness expenses, specialist advice, books and any other cost that might be legitimately incurred by the committees in the course of their activities.

10. Relevant Documents

- 10.1 Appendix A – Future Work Programme
Appendix B – List of Forthcoming Decisions
Appendix C – SCRAIP update report

11. Background Documents

- 11.1 None

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2014-15

2014

Meeting Date	Report Deadline	Agenda Items	Details and desired outcome	Report Author and Witnesses
9 June		Election of Chair and Vice Chair Forward Work Planning Draft results of Local Plan public consultation		
24 June		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on the state of play with the ITS 		Peter Rosevear and Tim Read from KCC possibly attending
22 July		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport review – Cycling witnesses to be invited 		
29 July		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop with ECD OSC @5:15pm to feed in ideas for the Economic Development Strategy in relation to the Local Plan 		
19 August	6 August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validation and summary of representations from the consultation on local plan Review of strategic housing market assessment 		Rob Jarman Sarah Anderton
16 September	3 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet Member priorities for 2014-15 Design South East report on the Local Plan consultation events (before the multi-stakeholder workshop) Community Infrastructure Levy – preliminary draft charging schedule Verbal update on Infrastructure Delivery Plan SCRAIP response to 22/7 – 31b to f 		Cllr D Burton Sue Whiteside Darren Bridgett Darren Bridgett
30 September	17 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car – BUS SERVICES Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy – including the Open Space Standards action plan 		Rob Jarman/Sue Whiteside
September		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-stakeholder meeting 	Date/time to be arranged	Rob Jarman
21 October	8 October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implications arising from a review of the Economic Development Strategy, Qualitative Study on Employment Sites and key employment issues arising from local plan representations Joint meeting with ECD OSC 		Sarah Anderton

84

Meeting Date	Report deadline	Agenda Items	Details and desired outcome	Report Author and Witnesses
18 November	5 November	Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car – RAIL SERVICES		
16 December	3 December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maidstone Borough Local Plan representations - Development Management Policies • Results of Qualitative Landscape Study • Results of Qualitative Agricultural Land Classification 		Rob Jarman
2015				
20 January	7 January 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local plan site allocations (new and deleted) for further public consultation (regulation 18) including Gypsy and Traveller site allocation • Revisit inclusion of Invicta Barracks in Local Plan • Verbal update on Infrastructure Delivery Plan 		Rob Jarman Darren Bridgett
17 February	4 February			
17 March	4 March			
21 April	8 April	Infrastructure Delivery Plan for Local Plan ¹		Rob Jarman

<p>Keep open for discussion possibly adding to FWP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on the paperless pilot with parishes for planning support (see minutes of 15/4/14) • Office space – ensuring prime office space doesn't get converted to residential developments • Mobile phone services – eradicate dead zones in the town. Motorways and main trunk roads • Improving the Borough's sewerage provision and infrastructure (relations with Southern Water) • Planning permissions – recommending Planning Committee review the impact of contentious developments • Revisit the discussion on the removal of the Invicta Barracks from the Local Plan

¹ Probably not needed if verbal updates given at Aug and Jan meetings



LIST OF FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

98

Democratic Services Team
E: democraticservices@maidstone.gov.uk

Publication Date: 3 September 2014

List of Forthcoming Decisions

INTRODUCTION

This document sets out the decisions to be taken by the Executive and various Committees of Maidstone Borough Council on a rolling basis. This document will be published as updated with new decisions required to be made.

KEY DECISIONS

A key decision is an executive decision which is likely to:

- Result in the Maidstone Borough Council incurring expenditure or making savings which is equal to the value of £250,000 or more; or
- Have significant effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in Maidstone.

At Maidstone Borough Council, decisions which we regard as "Key Decisions" because they are likely to have a "significant" effect either in financial terms or on the community include:

- (1) Decisions about expenditure or savings which equal or are more than £250,000.
- (2) Budget reports.
- (3) Policy framework reports.
- (4) Adoption of new policies plans, strategies or changes to established policies, plans or strategies.
- (5) Approval of portfolio plans.
- (6) Decisions that involve significant service developments, significant service reductions, or significant changes in the way that services are delivered, whether Borough-wide or in a particular locality.
- (7) Changes in fees and charges.
- (8) Proposals relating to changes in staff structure affecting more than one section.

Each entry identifies, for that "key decision" –

- the decision maker
- the date on which the decision is due to be taken
- the subject matter of the decision and a brief summary
- the reason it is a key decision
- to whom representations (about the decision) can be made

List of Forthcoming Decisions

- whether the decision will be taken in public or private
- what reports/papers are, or will be, available for public inspection

EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Cabinet collectively makes its decisions at a meeting and individual portfolio holders make decisions independently. In addition, Officers can make key decisions and an entry for each of these will be included in this list.

DECISIONS WHICH THE CABINET INTENDS TO MAKE IN PRIVATE

The Cabinet hereby gives notice that it intends to meet in private after its public meeting to consider reports and/or appendices which contain exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The private meeting of the Cabinet is open only to Members of the Cabinet, other Councillors and Council officers.

Reports and/or appendices to decisions which the Cabinet will take at its private meeting are indicated in the list below, with the reasons for the decision being made in private. Any person is able to make representations to the Cabinet if he/she believes the decision should instead be made in the public Cabinet meeting. If you want to make such representations, please email committeeservices@maidstone.gov.uk. You will then be sent a response in reply to your representations. Both your representations and the Executive's response will be published on the Council's website at least 5 working days before the Cabinet meeting.

ACCESS TO CABINET REPORTS

Reports to be considered at the Cabinet's public meeting will be available on the Council's website (www.maidstone.gov.uk) a minimum of 5 working days before the meeting.

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS?

The Council actively encourages people to express their views on decisions it plans to make. This can be done by writing directly to the appropriate Officer or Cabinet Member (details of whom are shown in the list below).

Alternatively, the Cabinet are contactable via our website (www.maidstone.gov.uk) where you can submit a question to the Leader of the Council. There is also the opportunity to invite the Leader of the Council to speak at a function you may be organising.

List of Forthcoming Decisions

List of Forthcoming Decisions

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary:	Key Decision and reason (if applicable):	Contact Officer:	Public or Private (if Private the reason why)	Documents to be submitted (other relevant documents may be submitted)
General Purposes Group Due Date: Tuesday 9 Sep 2014	Nominations to Outside Bodies To consider nominations received for Outside Bodies		Caroline Matthews carolinematthews@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Nominations to Outside Bodies
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 10 Sep 2014 06	Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update report seeking agreement to the key findings of the SHMA update	KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies	Sarah Anderton, Principal Planning Officer (Spatial Policy) sarahanderton@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Strategic Housing Market Assessment Update
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 10 Sep 2014	Corporate Planning Timetable report to set out the timetable for the development of the Strategic Plan and MTFS for 2015 onwards		Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy and Communications angelawoodhouse@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Corporate Planning Timetable

Forthcoming Decisions
October 2014 - January 2015

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary	Key Decision and reason (if applicable)	Contact Officer:	Public or Private <i>if Private the reason why</i>	Documents to be submitted <i>(other relevant documents may be submitted)</i>
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 10 Sep 2014	Key Performance Indicator Monitoring Quarter 1 Key Performance Indicator Monitoring Quarter 1		Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy and Communications angelawoodhouse@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Key Performance Indicator Monitoring Quarter 1
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 10 Sep 2014	Budget Strategy 2015 16 Onwards To give initial consideration to a Budget Strategy for 2015 16 and beyond.	KEY Reason: Budget Reports	Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Budget Strategy 2015 16 Onwards
Leader of the Council Due Date: Friday 12 Sep 2014	Irrecoverable Business Rates To consider the outstanding business rates debts that have been identified for write off.	KEY Reason: Expenditure > £250,000	Stephen McGinnes stephenmcginnes@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Irrecoverable Business Rates Appendix A - Irrecoverable Business Rates

Forthcoming Decisions
October 2014 - January 2015

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary	Key Decision and reason (if applicable)	Contact Officer:	Public or Private <i>if Private the reason why</i>	Documents to be submitted <i>(other relevant documents may be submitted)</i>
Audit Committee Due Date: Monday 15 Sep 2014	External Auditor's Audit Findings Report 2013/14 External Auditor's Audit Findings Report 2013/14		Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk	public	External Auditor's Audit Findings Report 2013/14
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services Due Date: Friday 26 Sep 2014 92	Lease of Giddyhorn Lane Tennis Courts Lease renewal to Maidstone Lawn Tennis Club of the tennis courts at Giddyhorn Lane Playing Fields		Lucy Stroud lucystroud@maidstone.gov.uk	Private because of commercially sensitive information.	Lease of Giddyhorn Lane Tennis Courts

Forthcoming Decisions
October 2014 - January 2015

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary	Key Decision and reason (if applicable)	Contact Officer:	Public or Private <i>if Private the reason why</i>	Documents to be submitted <i>(other relevant documents may be submitted)</i>
<p>Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services</p> <p>Due Date: Before Saturday 27 Sep 2014</p> <p>96</p>	<p>Maidstone Play Strategy - A Strategy for Outdoor Equipped Play Areas 2014-2024</p> <p>To consider the adoption of the Maidstone Play Strategy – A Strategy for Outdoor Equipped Play Areas 2014-2024 and the actions within the document</p>	<p>KEY Reason: Expenditure > £250,000</p>	<p>Jason Taylor, Parks and Leisure Manager jasontaylor@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>public</p>	<p>Maidstone Play Strategy - A Strategy for Outdoor Equipped Play Areas 2014-2024</p>
<p>Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee</p> <p>Due Date: Friday 3 Oct 2014</p>	<p>Accounts 2013/14</p> <p>Cobtree Manor Trust Accounts 2013/14</p>		<p>Jason Taylor, Parks and Leisure Manager jasontaylor@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>public</p>	<p>Accounts 2013/14</p>
<p>Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee</p> <p>Due Date: Friday 3 Oct 2014</p>	<p>Cobtree Visitor Centre</p> <p>A report into the final design and contractor appointment for the construction of the visitor centre at Cobtree Manor Park</p>	<p>KEY Reason: Expenditure > £250,000</p>	<p>Joanna Joyce joannajoyce@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>public with an exempt appendix</p>	<p>Cobtree Visitor Centre Cobtree Visitor Centre</p>

Forthcoming Decisions
October 2014 - January 2015

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary	Key Decision and reason (if applicable)	Contact Officer:	Public or Private <i>if Private the reason why</i>	Documents to be submitted <i>(other relevant documents may be submitted)</i>
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee Due Date: Friday 3 Oct 2014	Cobtree Estate Progress Report An update on work across the Cobtree Estate		Joanna Joyce joannajoyce@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Cobtree Estate Progress Report_Background Document Cobtree Estate Progress Report
Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee Due Date: Friday 3 Oct 2014	Cobtree Manor Park Visitor Centre An Appendix setting out the tenders for the running of the visitor centre.		Joanna Joyce joannajoyce@maidstone.gov.uk	Private as it contains commercially sensitive information.	Cobtree Manor Park Visitor Centre
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 8 Oct 2014	Discretionary Housing Payment Future policy for the award of discretionary housing payments.		Stephen McGinnes stephenmcginnes@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Discretionary Housing Payment Appendix A - DHP Policy Appendix B - Equality Impact Assessment

Forthcoming Decisions
October 2014 - January 2015

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary	Key Decision and reason (if applicable)	Contact Officer:	Public or Private <i>if Private the reason why</i>	Documents to be submitted <i>(other relevant documents may be submitted)</i>
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 8 Oct 2014 <div style="text-align: right; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">95</div>	Customer Service Improvement Strategy 2013-16: Progress and 2014/15 refresh To consider the progress made on implementing the Customer Service Improvement Strategy in 2013/14 and the refresh of the Strategy for 2014/15.	KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies	Georgia Hawkes, Head of Business Improvement georgiahawkes@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Customer Service Improvement Strategy 2013-16 Channel Shift Strategy 2011 Customer Service Improvement Strategy 2013-16: Progress and 2014/15 refresh
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 8 Oct 2014	Maidstone Enterprise Hub Consideration of financing options	KEY Reason: Expenditure > £250,000	Karen Franek karenfranek@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Maidstone Enterprise Hub
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 12 Nov 2014	Budget Monitoring 2nd Quarter 2014/15 Revenue and Capital budget monitoring update		Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Budget Monitoring 2nd Quarter 2014/15

Forthcoming Decisions
October 2014 - January 2015

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary	Key Decision and reason (if applicable)	Contact Officer:	Public or Private <i>if Private the reason why</i>	Documents to be submitted <i>(other relevant documents may be submitted)</i>
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 12 Nov 2014	Council Tax 2015 16 Collection Fund Adjustments To agree the levels of Collection Fund adjustment	KEY Reason: Budget Reports	Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Council Tax 2015 16 Collection Fund Adjustments
Cabinet Due Date: Wednesday 12 Nov 2014 06	Council Tax Tax Base 2015 16 To advise Members of the information currently available on the Tax Base for 2015 16 for Council Tax purposes.		Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Council Tax Tax Base 2015 16

Forthcoming Decisions
October 2014 - January 2015

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary	Key Decision and reason (if applicable)	Contact Officer:	Public or Private <i>if Private the reason why</i>	Documents to be submitted <i>(other relevant documents may be submitted)</i>
Audit Committee Due Date: Monday 24 Nov 2014 97	Treasury Management Strategy Mid Year Performance 2014 15 This report sets out the activities of the Treasury Management Function for 2014 15 financial year in accordance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management issued in November 2009.		Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Treasury Management Strategy Mid Year Performance 2014 15
Audit Committee Due Date: Monday 24 Nov 2014	Treasury Management Strategy 2015 16 To consider future Treasury Management Strategy for 2015 16		Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk	public	Treasury Management Strategy 2015 16

Forthcoming Decisions
October 2014 - January 2015

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary	Key Decision and reason (if applicable)	Contact Officer:	Public or Private <i>if Private the reason why</i>	Documents to be submitted <i>(other relevant documents may be submitted)</i>
<p>Cabinet Member for Corporate Services</p> <p>Due Date: Friday 28 Nov 2014</p>	<p>Bankruptcy Policy for Council Tax and Business Rates Debt</p> <p>The approach to be adopted by the council in collecting unpaid council tax and business rates through the use of bankruptcy proceedings.</p>	<p>KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies</p>	<p>Stephen McGinnes stephenmcginnes@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>public</p>	<p>Bankruptcy Policy for Council Tax and Business Rates Debt</p>
<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: Wednesday 17 Dec 2014</p>	<p>Budget Strategy 2015 16 Onwards</p> <p>To agree a draft Council Tax and Budget Strategy for 2015 16 Onwards</p>	<p>KEY Reason: Budget Reports</p>	<p>Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>public</p>	<p>Budget Strategy 2015 16 Onwards</p>

Forthcoming Decisions
October 2014 - January 2015

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary	Key Decision and reason (if applicable)	Contact Officer:	Public or Private <i>if Private the reason why</i>	Documents to be submitted <i>(other relevant documents may be submitted)</i>
<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: Wednesday 17 Dec 2014</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 24pt;">66</p>	<p>Budget Strategy 2015 16 Fees & Charges</p> <p>To consider the appropriate level of fees and charges for 2015 16 for services where the Council raises income by charging the user of a service and where the setting of the fee to be charged is discretionary. The Council has adopted a policy on the setting of fees and charges to ensure that a rational approach is used that takes account of all factors and creates a result that supports the priorities set out in the strategic plan.</p>	<p>KEY Reason: Fees & Charges</p>	<p>Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>public</p>	<p>Budget Strategy 2015 16 Fees & Charges</p>

Forthcoming Decisions
October 2014 - January 2015

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary	Key Decision and reason (if applicable)	Contact Officer:	Public or Private <i>if Private the reason why</i>	Documents to be submitted <i>(other relevant documents may be submitted)</i>
<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: Wednesday 11 Feb 2015</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">100</p>	<p>Budget Strategy 2015 16 Onwards</p> <p>Agree proposed General Fund revenue and capital estimates for 2015 16 and revised figures for 2014 15 in accordance with the Budget Strategy and Medium Term Financial and Capital Strategies and Projections, and the consequent level of Council Tax for submission to Council.</p>	<p>KEY Reason: Expenditure > £250,000</p>	<p>Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>public</p>	<p>Budget Strategy 2015 16 Onwards</p>
<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: Wednesday 11 Feb 2015</p>	<p>Budget Monitoring 3rd Quarter 2014/15</p> <p>Revenue and capital budget monitoring update</p>		<p>Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>public</p>	<p>Budget Monitoring 3rd Quarter 2014/15</p>

Forthcoming Decisions
October 2014 - January 2015

Decision Maker and Date of When Decision is Due to be Made:	Title of Report and Brief Summary	Key Decision and reason (if applicable)	Contact Officer:	Public or Private <i>if Private the reason why</i>	Documents to be submitted <i>(other relevant documents may be submitted)</i>
<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: Wednesday 11 Feb 2015</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">101</p>	<p>Treasury Management Strategy 2015 16</p> <p>Review Treasury Management for 2014 15 and consider future Treasury Management Strategy for 2015 16. This will include Prudential Borrowing limits and a proposed Approved Investment Strategy. These matters will be submitted to Council.</p>	<p>KEY Reason: Expenditure > £250,000</p>	<p>Paul Riley, Head of Finance & Customer Services paulriley@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>public</p>	<p>Treasury Management Strategy 2015 16</p>
<p>Council</p> <p>Due Date: Wednesday 25 Feb 2015</p>	<p>Strategic Plan 2015/2020</p> <p>This document sets out what the council wants to achieve and how it will be achieved.</p>	<p>KEY Reason: Policy Framework Document</p>	<p>Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy and Communications angelawoodhouse@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>public</p>	<p>Strategic Plan 2015/2020</p>

Planning, Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

SCRAIP Update for 22 July 2014



Code	Recommendation	Cabinet Member	Response	Lead Officer
PTD.14 0722.3 1a	That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to lobby Kent County Council on the reconfiguration of the gyratory system in Maidstone to ensure safe cycle passages. The design of the gyratory system to incorporate surface cycle passages (not subways) for cyclist heading in and out of the town from west Maidstone using the A20 and A26.		MBC will work with KCC to ensure the bridge gyratory scheme incorporates suitable cycling infrastructure and provides safe access in and out of the town centre.	Transport and Development Cabinet Member for Planning; Sarah Anderton; Rob Jarman; clare test; Sue Whiteside
102 PTD.14 0722.3 1b	That the Head of Planning and Development be recommended to urgently refresh and update the draft Maidstone Borough Council Draft Cycle Strategy, dated June 2012, for further scrutiny by the Committee with a view to consulting upon and formally adopting the refreshed Strategy. The Committee would aim to have the principal proposals relating to cycling used to inform the emerging Integrated Transport Strategy		MBC will work with KCC to refresh and update the draft Maidstone Cycling Strategy as part of the development of the Integrated Transport Strategy to help ensure a comprehensive and holistic approach to transport matters.	Sarah Anderton; Rob Jarman; clare test; Sue Whiteside
PTD.14 0722.3	That the Head of Planning and Development be asked to report back to		MBC will work with KCC to refresh and update the draft Maidstone Cycling Strategy as part of the development of the Integrated	Sarah Anderton; Rob Jarman; Sue Whiteside

Code	Recommendation	Cabinet Member	Response	Lead Officer
1c	the Committee on the costs and possible sites for the provision of cycle ways from rural locations (Villages and Hamlets) with poor bus services, to bus stops on major routes with a more frequent bus service. In addition provide cycle parking at the end of these routes. The short term aim should be to firstly identify the routes and provide the cycle parking with the longer term aim of developing the cycle route to the cycle parking.		Transport Strategy. As part of this process, consideration can be given to the inclusion of rural routes and cycle parking provision in the cycling strategy as appropriate.	
PTD.14 0722.3 CG1	That the Head of Planning and Development be recommended to request from Kent County Council a copy of the results of their trials of 20 mile per hour speed limits around schools in the borough and a copy of their policy for 20mph zones around schools in the borough.		Noted. This information has been supplied to the Committee by Cllr Chittenden.	Sarah Anderton; Rob Jarman; Sue Whiteside
PTD.14 0722.3 1e	That the Head of Planning and Development be recommended to reintroduce the Maidstone Cycling Forum and ensure it is supported by an officer with responsibility for cycling in their job description. Additionally a lead member should be identified to act as a cycling champion within the authority.		A new dedicated transport planning resource for MBC is currently being appointed. The transport planning job remit will include the need to consider cycling as integral part of the development of the Integrated Transport Strategy and can extend to include re-establishment of the Cycling Forum.	Sarah Anderton; Rob Jarman; Sue Whiteside
PTD.14 0722.3 1f	That the Head of Planning and Development be asked to report back to the Committee the reason why Maidstone		It was determined that this service could be delivered and charged for by the MKIP Legal Services rather than being out-sourced to KCC.	Sarah Anderton; Rob Jarman; Sue Whiteside

Code	Recommendation	Cabinet Member	Response	Lead Officer
	Borough Council has not signed up to the Kent County Council service standards for Public Rights of Way.			