

AGENDA

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING



Overview and Scrutiny

Date: Tuesday 18 November 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

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1. **The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be webcast**
2. **Apologies**
3. **Notification of Substitute Members**
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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 21 October 2014** 1 - 7
8. **Minutes of the Meeting held 3 November 2014** 8 - 16
9. **Draft Report of the review of Transport in Maidstone - alternatives to using a car** 17 - 63

Draft report of the Working Group presenting the findings from the Walking and Cycling and Bus Services sections of the Committees review into Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car.

Continued Over/:

Issued on 10 November 2014

Alison Broom

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

10. Transport in Maidstone - alternatives to using a car - Part Three - Rail Services

64 - 75

The third part of the review by the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee in to Transport in Maidstone.

Interviews with witnesses working in or with an interest in Rail Services In the Maidstone Borough:

- Mike Gibson, Public Affairs Manager, Southeastern Rail;
- Mike Fitzgerald, Chair Kent Community Rail Partnership and Medway Valley Line Group;
- Keith Harrison, Chief Executive, Action with Rural Communities;
- Written responses from Stephen Gasche, Principal Transport Planner – Rail, Kent County Council.

11. Petition

12. Future Work Programme and SCRAIP Update report

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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 21 OCTOBER 2014

Present: Councillor Springett (Chairman), and
Councillors Chittenden, English, Mrs Gooch, Powell,
Ross, Round, de Wiggondene and Willis

Also Present: Councillors Burton and Naghi

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

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be webcast.

75. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Munford.

Councillor de Wiggondene had notified the Chairman he was running late.

76. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitute member was noted:

Councillor Gooch for Councillor Munford.

77. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillors Greer and Naghi were in attendance for items 7, 8 and 9.

Councillor Burton was in attendance as Cabinet Member for items 7, 8 and 9.

78. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by members or officers.

79. 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.

80. PRESENTATION OF THE ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER ITEMS 8 AND 9

The Chairman opened the meeting and explained it was a co-located simultaneous meeting with the Economic and Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ECD OSC). The meeting took this format because of the overlap of the terms of reference/agenda items. The Chairman went on to explain the structure of the meeting:

- The main part of the meeting were Chaired by Councillor Springett;
- Each committee followed their own agenda for items 1 to 6, Chaired by their own Chairman;
- Both committees heard the same presentations for item 7 and had a joint question and answer session;
- Each committee agreed their own recommendations for items 8 and 9;
- Separate sets of minutes were produced for each committee;
- When voting on recommendations each committee did so separately by standing and raising their hand.

The Chairman welcomed Sarah Anderton, Principal Planning Officer, Spatial Planning to the meeting to present her report, Local Plan: Approach to Employment Land.

Ms Anderton explained the Qualitative Employment Site Assessment had recently been completed as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan. The assessment built on the first stream of work regarding capacity for growth with respect to the quality of employment land (was it fit for the identified needs), not just quantity. The assessment focussed on office, industrial and warehousing space.

Ms Anderton emphasised the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), (which sets the overarching national planning policy) stated authorities should look at the needs of the borough in terms of space, type, location and quality and should look to meet the needs through the local plan.

Ms Anderton introduced Martyn Saunders, Associate from GVA who carried out the assessment. She went on to explain the methodology used.

It was noted on site surveys of all 46 existing employment sites (for example 20/20 business park, Eclipse Park) had been carried out. Of the 46 sites, 28 had been assessed as fit for purpose and recommended to be protected and kept in employment use for the term of the Local Plan (2011-2031).

The existing supply of employment land included new sites built or granted planning permission since 2011 (the base date of the Local Plan) as well as usable vacant premises. This figure was set against the identified need for employment land for the period of the Local Plan to establish the balance required (illustrated in the table on page 6 of the agenda).

Mr Saunders advised the committees that the assessment highlighted the borough had a qualitative lack of supply of employment land in terms of large mixed use sites that were well connected to the highway network.

Mr Saunders informed the committee the Local Plan that went out to consultation from March until May 2014 included a list of employment sites. These sites did not meet the qualitative gap identified in the latest assessment. This selection of sites also did not meet the quantitative need for additional office floorspace.

The challenge, for the Local Plan, going forward was to consider the need and respond to it.

Mr Saunders explained the qualitative assessment concludes that the demand would be best met by a single, large allocation of land close to the highway network that comprised small office units, warehousing space and bespoke industrial units. This had to be different to what was already on offer in order to attract new business. Junction 8 of the M20 motorway was considered, by officers, to be the only location suitable to meet the need.

The Chairman welcomed John Foster, Economic Development Manager and Katharine Harvey, Programme Director, Shared Intelligence to the meeting. Mr Foster presented the draft Economic Development Strategy and explained the last strategy had been developed in 2008, when the economy was stronger. The new strategy had been developed with consultants, Shared Intelligence, and sat alongside the Local Plan with an action plan that should help deliver the Local Plan and the Economic Development Strategy.

The main points of Mr Foster's presentation were:

- The views of business community and stakeholders had been taken into consideration;
- 1,900 jobs in Maidstone had been lost since 2009 largely in the public sector;
- Maidstone had a low share of industries such as high tech manufacturing, ICT and creative industries which were higher skilled and higher paid;
- Commuting patterns had changed with more residents working outside of the borough – this was expected to worsen over the next 15 years;
- Less than a third of residents had higher level qualifications;
- Earnings for Maidstone residents had been declining since 2010 and were below the GB and Kent average.

The five priorities for the strategy were:

- Retaining and attracting investment – high value, high wage businesses, create 14,400 new jobs;

- Stimulating entrepreneurship – support local residents, business start-up courses;
- Enhancing the town centre – a new vision for the town centre;
- Meeting the skills needs – work with training providers and colleges;
- Improving the infrastructure – bid for additional funding to ease congestion.

During lengthy discussion the committees raised the following points:

Draft Economic Development Strategy

- I. The Economic Development Strategy would address a lot of the issues regarding declining jobs and businesses in the borough. Maidstone would be able to compete for new businesses and was fundamentally a good location for businesses to grow. The constraint was not the geography of the borough but the economy. Delivery of 14,400 new jobs would rely partly on the expansion of the Maidstone Medical Campus.
- II. Concern was raised about the focus on motorway links and not rural businesses. It was agreed rural industries were equally important and the draft Local Plan included plans to expand successful rural trading estates such as Barrowdale Farm, Lodge Wood, Staplehurst and Marden. The rural economy was also picked up in the draft Economic Development Strategy by emphasising the need for broadband connection and bidding for grant funding for rural business development.
- III. Incentives to attract businesses to the borough – work had been carried out with Kent County Council (KCC) to bid for Growing Places funding for West Kent. The Escalate Fund was available to businesses in Maidstone and the west Kent area and some local businesses had already benefited from it.
- IV. An enterprise hub was being developed to provide small flexible business space with support.
- V. The method to reduce the number of residents commuting to other areas to work was to allocate more employment land to encourage more businesses into the borough.
- VI. The draft Economic Development Strategy did emphasise the importance of tourism to the economy. A Destination Management Plan would be developed to promote what was great about the borough and attract new investment, workers and visitors. This document would be ready by summer 2015.
- VII. Clusters of new businesses would include health care, life sciences with the development of the Maidstone Medical Campus and businesses that would benefit from the Green Economy. Small micro IT based

businesses, were already in existence but were not clustered in any particular part of the borough.

- VIII. The rural economy was acknowledged as making a large contribution to the economy of the borough. The priorities of the Economic Development Strategy; retaining, attracting investment; stimulating enterprise; meeting skills needs, applied as much to the rural economy as the urban economy.
- IX. It was noted, on page 38 of the draft Economic Development Strategy point 6.9, that the Bluebell Railway was not in Tenterden and Tenterden was not part of the Maidstone Borough.
- X. Investment in Maidstone Medical Campus was dependent on the completion of the on-site and off-site infrastructure, for example Bearsted Road improvements. A funding bid for Single Local Growth Fund money, with the South East Enterprise Partnership, to support this work had been submitted to central Government for consideration. Officers were confident this funding would be granted.
- XI. All investment decisions would always go through a due diligence process to identify the return on investment and ensure it was viable and delivered financial benefits to the council.
- XII. Some concern was raised regarding the wording and strength of the delivery mechanisms for the action plan for the draft Economic Development Strategy. It was agreed there was a need for a higher priority and profile for tourism, leisure and the visitor economy and renewable and green energy in the strategy and it was felt the action plan needed to be written in more positive language.

Local Plan: approach to employment land

- I. The Local Plan would have a policy safeguarding employment sites in the borough.
- II. The list of employment sites identified as sites to retain and protect for employment use, in Appendix B on page 95 of the agenda, should include Pattenden Lane, Marden.
- III. The draft Local Plan allowed for poor quality business premises to be put to other uses, for example housing or redevelopment into a combination of housing and business premises. Sites in the town centre where this could happen would mean some businesses relocating to alternative sites. Alternative sites were needed and the Local Plan was the mechanism to deliver them. Mote Road was one site identified in the Local Plan for this purpose.
- IV. There was no viable alternative to Junction 8 of the M20. The call for sites at the beginning of 2013, revealed the availability of sites at Junction 8 was the only site location with the best connections to the highway network.

- V. Past applications for development of land at Junction 8 had been developer led. It was agreed, to achieve the ambitions of the council, Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) needed to take control of how the land was developed by setting out a clear policy of physical constraints with parameters that provided a balance between protecting the area and providing development land.
- VI. There was a duty to co-operate with neighbouring local authorities. A number of meetings had taken place with Tonbridge and Malling, Ashford and Swale Borough Councils and Medway Council.
- VII. It was confirmed that 14,400 jobs created in the borough would not inflate the housing need figure and still fell short of the projected increase in the working age population of the borough.
- VIII. The NPPF guidelines allowed for boroughs, such as Maidstone, to develop in a way that was suitable for the area, provided Maidstone specific evidence was included in the Local Plan.
- IX. 19% of existing office floor space was vacant, the majority of which was of poor quality. Some of this poorer quality stock could be redeveloped as housing.
- X. It was confirmed that the town centre vision would minimise organic conversion of poor quality office blocks into housing in favour of redevelopment of these sites.
- XI. It was suggested there was a need for a fundamental vision for the borough with broad principles for its development and the highways to support it. When a change was proposed this would be reference with the principles to establish it if fitted with the overall vision.
- XII. Transport modelling was integral to the successful delivery of the Local Plan and the Economic Development Strategy delivering a town centre that is fit for purpose.
- XIII. The James Whatman site was not included as a protected employment site because it was identified in the draft Local Plan for housing development.

81. LONG MEETING

Prior to 10:30pm, during consideration of Local Plan; approach to employment land, the Committee considered whether to adjourn the meeting at 10:30pm or continue until 11:00pm if necessary.

RESOLVED: That the meeting continue until 11:00pm, if necessary.

82. LOCAL PLAN: APPROACH TO EMPLOYMENT LAND

RESOLVED:

That:

- 1) The Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to develop a planning policy to mitigate damage and to ensure appropriate constraints for any employment land allocation at Junction 8 of the M20. This policy should be considered by the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2015.
- 2) If the thresholds contained in the policy in recommendation 1 are met, the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee would, in principle, support development for employment land at Junction 8.
- 3) The Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to acknowledge the importance of retaining the employment sites outside of the town centre detailed in Appendix B of the report (list of existing industrial sites/estates for inclusion in Policy DM18).

83. DRAFT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

RESOLVED:

That subject to point XII regarding the Draft Economic Development Strategy, under minute 80, being considered by the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development, the Committee recommend the Draft Economic Development Strategy be approved by Cabinet for consultation.

Councillor Chittenden requested that his dissent be noted in relation to this recommendation.

84. DURATION OF MEETING

18:30 to 22:55

Agenda Item 8

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Planning, Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2014

Present: Councillor Springett (Chairman), and Councillors English, B Mortimer, Powell, Round, Vizzard and de Wiggondene

Also Present: Councillors Burton, Perry, Sargeant and J.A. Wilson

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

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be webcast.

86. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors:

- Chittenden;
- Willis, and;
- Munford.

87. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitute members were noted:

- Councillor Vizzard for Councillor Chittenden, and;
- Councillor B Mortimer for Councillor Willis.

88. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Perry, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services was in attendance to present item 8.

Councillor Burton, Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development was in attendance for item 9.

Councillor Sargeant was in attendance for items 8 and 9.

89. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members of Officers.

90. 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.

91. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2014

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

92. UPDATE ON SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION ACTION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN REFERENCE CEH.140715.20B REGARDING PARISH LIAISON

Councillor Perry, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services gave the Committee a verbal update of the progress of the refresh of the Parish Charter.

Councillor Perry informed the Committee that his key priorities were:

- Re-establishing relationships with parish councils by visiting as many as possible and attending Kent Association of Local Councils meetings, and;
- A Parish Charter framework update.

To date Councillor Perry had attended parish council meetings at:

- Sutton Valance;
- Lenham;
- Yalding;
- Marden;
- Staplehurst, and;
- Boughton Monchelsea.

Version five of the charter was making progress and had involved input from Maidstone Borough Councillors and parish councillors. Councillor Perry stressed the importance of the two tiers of authority working together.

The new charter would include key principles around:

- Consultation;
- Engagement;
- Information sharing – two way;
- Learning and Development – allowing parish councils access to Maidstone Borough Council’s resources;
- Service delivery and policy;
- Strong commitment to Localism.

Councillor Perry outlined plans for two aims of the charter:

1. Financial arrangements – a clear statement of commitments refreshed each year;
2. Planning – a clear statement of the relationship between Neighbourhood Plans and the Local Plan.

During discussions the following points were discussed:

A planning policy for the distribution of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds should be with input from parish councils. It was agreed the CIL could be shared among parishes. However, parish councils would need to have a Neighbourhood Plan with an infrastructure list that had been co-ordinated from an early stage for this to happen.

Planning Officers were asked to listen to the concerns of parish councils regarding planning policies and planning applications.

Councillors asked to see the full draft of the Parish Charter before it was adopted.

Councillors welcomed the plans for the Parish Charter and thanked Councillor Perry for his work to date.

RESOLVED: That,

1. The Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the verbal update given by the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services;
2. That the Cabinet Member of Community and Leisure Services be recommended to include in the new Parish Charter:
 - a. Consultation procedures for planning policy, and;
 - b. A mechanism for disbursing Community Infrastructure Levy funds.
3. That the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services be recommended to present the final draft of the Parish Charter to the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee at a meeting early in 2015.

93. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING UPDATE

The Chairman introduced the purpose of this item and explained the item was solely focussed on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plans received by Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to date. It was noted that land allocations in the Draft Local Plan would not be discussed.

The Chairman also explained that parish councillors in attendance would be permitted to make representation to the committee once the committees' discussions were completed, provided the point had not already been made.

Jillian Barr, Principal Planning Officer, Spatial Policy presented the report in the absence of Sue Whiteside, Team Leader, Spatial Policy Team.

Also present for this agenda item were Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development, Rachel Elliott, Planning Officer, Spatial Planning and Tony Fullwood, Planning Consultant, Spatial Planning.

The committee agreed there needed to be a step included in the Neighbourhood Plan decision making framework, that allowed the council to make a formal response to plans submitted at a formal stage. This would inform the examiner if the council, as the local planning authority, was in agreement or not with the plan as it had been submitted or if the council recommended changes.

During lengthy discussion the committee made the following points:

- All parish councils were aware of the progress of their Neighbourhood Plan as detailed in Appendix A of the report.
- Neighbourhood Plans did not need to have the same sites included in them as the Local Plan. However, parish councils would need to provide sufficient evidence to back up their plans.
- Emerging Neighbourhood Plans were taken into account when determining planning applications. The degree of weight given was dependent on how far advanced the plan was, the extent of objections to the plan and its consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- Parish councils wanting to benefit from the financial support in developing their Neighbourhood Plans should make their application in writing to the MBC Planning Team to ensure there was a proper audit trail.
- Extensive Borough wide evidence was available to all parish councils to use on the MBC web site, Neighbourhood Plan pages¹. Parish councils were advised to familiarise themselves with this evidence base for the Local Plan. When Neighbourhood Plans went before the Inspector parish councils would be expected to justify their position if the evidence based used conflicted with that underpinning the Local Plan.
- Documents such as the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Integrated Transport Strategy and the Local Plan were all evolving documents and parish councils were further advised to keep abreast of changes to these documents when developing their Neighbourhood Plans.

¹ <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/business/planning/local-plan/evidence>

- The Landscape Quality Survey was close to completion as was the Agriculture Lane Survey. Both would be freely available for parish councils to access. As further evidence became available this would be published on the web site.
- Any new pieces of evidence found in the Landscape Quality Survey would be reported to the committee at their meeting of 20 January 2015.
- MBC Planning officers were on hand to meet with parish councils to go through the evidence base in more detail if required.
- Efforts had been made by newly recruited planning officers to improve communication with parish councils. Rachel Elliott, Planning Officer was the first point of contact for Neighbourhood Plan queries, Jillian Barr, Principal Planning Officer next, followed by Tony Fullwood, Planning Consultant, Spatial Policy Team.
- 26 bespoke liaison meetings with parish councils had been planned. The parish councils with a Neighbourhood Plan in an advanced stage of the process were offered separate meetings.
- Parish councils could address the type of Affordable Housing to suit their local requirements in their Neighbourhood Plans, provided work had been done to support the evidence base.
- An Inspector would initially consult The Five Year Land Supply when making a planning decision. In the absence of this, it would depend on the stage of the emerging Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.
- In a situation where a Neighbourhood Plan was adopted, and the Local Plan was not adopted, the planning inspector would give considerable weight to the Neighbourhood Plan when making their decision.
- It was acknowledged that an inspector could favour either side but adopted plans were better than emerging plans when dealing with planning applications.
- The planning inspector would consider both plans if they were both adopted. The Local Plan evidence would continue to be developed and as such a parish could end up with more development than they had in their plan.
- The emerging Local Plan should take into account any adopted Neighbourhood Plans. Both documents should be informed by the other.
- NPPF stated that English district councils have to had an objectively assessed housing need. MBC's was not adopted but it was considered an inspector would take it into account when considering Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood Plans had to take the

objectively assessed housing need into account, but did not have to adopt it.

- Emerging Neighbourhood Plans would be considered at Planning Committee when looking at planning applications.
- If a Neighbourhood Plan was voted against at the Referendum stage this would be the end of the plan and the Local Plan policies would be used in planning decisions.

The Chairman invited the representative from Coxheath Parish Council to make their representation.

Coxheath Parish Councillor John Hughes addressed the committee regarding Coxheath's Neighbourhood Plan. The following points were made:

- Councillor Hughes stated that early and meaningful collaboration had not taken place between Coxheath Parish Council and MBC and as such had created a delay of around one year in the adoption of their Neighbourhood Plan, which was still to be adopted.
- Councillor Hughes felt the Local Plan process had made it more difficult for the Coxheath community to achieve its objectives for planning and community benefits.
- The committee were advised by Councillor Hughes that the Coxheath Neighbourhood Plan had gone out to consultation on 19 March 2014 and had received overwhelming support.
- Councillor Hughes stated Coxheath Parish Council had received verbal advice from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) that due to a lack of an evidence base their Neighbourhood Plan would need to be withdrawn and the process started again.
- Councillor Hughes explained to the committee that Local Plan evidence was not available to the parish at the time they were putting together their Neighbourhood Plan.
- Tony Fullwood explained the Parish Council needed to assess the risk of their Neighbourhood Plan failing when examined by the Planning Inspector. If the plan failed it would not be possible for it to go to the Referendum stage of the process. MBC's officers' role was to help the parish council go through the examination stage to a successful Referendum.
- Mr Fullwood went on to explain that there were issues raised regarding the evidence base supporting the plan. It was considered that some of the policies in the plan would not prove lawful at examination. MBC had offered to assist the Parish Council with

rewriting these. Mr Fullwood did not consider it was a question of withdrawing the plan.

- Councillor Burton, Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development explained that Neighbourhood Plans were new. Councillor Burton had been disappointed with the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan process when he became Cabinet Member in June 2014. Since then MBC had made huge progress with the Spatial Planning Team, now fully resourced, and offering a much better service than 12 months ago.
- Councillor Burton went on to explain that the Coxheath Neighbourhood Plan had issues regarding legal compliance and MBC had made a clear undertaking to correct matters. Discussions had taken place to consider some revisions to the plan and how it might fit with the emerging Local Plan. MBC were waiting to hear how Coxheath Parish Council wanted to proceed.
- Councillor Hughes told the committee the Coxheath Neighbourhood Plan had community support and was contributing to the five year housing supply. The Parish Council were not prepared to withdraw their plan and risk it not being considered as material evidence in planning applications.

The Chairman invited Janet Bilke from Harriersham Parish Council to make representation to the committee.

- Ms Bilke explained that Harriersham Parish Council had met recently with MBC and had had their Neighbourhood Plan tested by the DCLG.
- Ms Bilke went on to state that both MBC and DCLG had advised the Parish Council that a Strategic Environmental Assessment was not needed (SEA). However, MBC were now telling the Parish Council they would.
- Tony Fullwood explained it was precautionary to conduct a SEA to minimise potential problems at the examination stage.

Jim Andrew, Chair of the Loose Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group addressed the committee. He wanted to make two points:

- Loose was at the early stages of putting together their Neighbourhood Plan. Mr Andrew felt it would be useful for parish councils at similar stages to support each other and work together to share good practice. It was appreciated that each parish would have different challenges and needs but it was still felt sharing of experiences would be useful.
- Locality, advisers on Neighbourhood Planning, had provided Loose Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with a list of items MBC should provide to parish councils, which he was happy to share.

Sean Carter, of North Loose Residents Association and Chair of their Planning Group addressed the committee. He made the following points:

- Mr Carter’s group had spent many hours working on their Neighbourhood Plan. It was an onerous task where progress have been frustrated by MBC.
- Mr Carter went on to say advice received from Locality was that local authorities should be more proactive in the Neighbourhood Plan process.
- However, Mr Carter said MBC had a new planning team and his group wanted to be positive and move forward but was still concerned about timescales for adopting Neighbourhood Plans.
- Mr Carter stated that his group had not been invited to meet with MBC officers. He felt Residents’ Associations and Forums should be communicated with in the same way as parish councils.
- Councillor Burton responded by stating that Residents’ Associations and Forums were not being discriminated against and agreed MBC needed to engage with all communities.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet be recommended to agree the following paragraph for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan decision making framework:

3a	MBC consulted on submission version of the neighbourhood plan (Ref 16)	Internal consultation with ward members/adjoining ward members/Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member Report* to consider MBC comments on submission of draft plan.
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2. That Coxheath Parish Council be recommended to:
 - a. Make a request to the Department for Communities and Local Government to put the verbal advice the parish council had received from them regarding their Neighbourhood Plan in writing, and;
 - b. Share the advice given to them in writing by the Department for Communities and Local Government with Maidstone Borough Council’s Spatial Policy Team to assist with progressing the parish’s Neighbourhood Plan.
3. That the Head of Planning and Development be recommended to recognise Neighbourhood Forums and Residents’ Associations and other similar groups, who are developing a Neighbourhood Plan and include them in all communications on planning policy and consultation on planning applications in their areas of the borough.

94. DURATION OF MEETING

18:30 to 20:59

Maidstone Borough Council

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 18 November 2014

Draft Report of the review of Transport in Maidstone - alternatives to using a car

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:

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-
-
-
-

Guidance note - Making Quality Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations

Scrutiny recommendations should seek to make a real difference to local people and the services provided. Recommendations that note a change or request further information fail to resolve problems or make changes. The scrutiny team have identified the following criteria for quality recommendations, they:

- affect and make a difference to local people;
- result in a change in policy that improves services;
- identify savings and maintain/improve service quality; or
- objectively identify a solution.

One way of checking the usefulness of recommendations is to evaluate them against the 'six Ws' set out below:

Good recommendations should answer these questions:

Why does it need to be done?	This will help ensure the outcome is relevant and in the right context – if a meeting is being requested it will ensure the correct people are invited to attend
Who is being asked to do it?	Without this nothing will get done (no one will take ownership)
What needs to be done?	Needs to be clear and specific
HoW will it be done?	Again, needs to be clear and specific, what is the expected output- for example a report to be written or a meeting to be arranged
Where does it need to be done/go?	If it's a meeting – where is it needed If it's a report – where is it to go, who needs to see it
When does it need to be done?	Crucial to have a timescale – without a deadline it will never get done

Thinking about these points will help ensure the outcomes of scrutiny are effective and will aid monitoring.

Maidstone Borough Council

**Planning, Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny
Committee**

Tuesday 18 November 2014

**Draft Report of the review of Transport in Maidstone - alternatives
to using a car
(Walking and Cycling and Bus Services)**

Report of: Tessa Mallett, Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Since June 2014 the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been carrying out a review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car.
- 1.2 At the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting of 30 September 2014 the committee agreed to receive the draft report for stage one, Walking and Cycling and stage two, Bus Services at the meeting of 18 November 2014.
- 1.3 Stage three of this review – Rail Services, will take place at the same meeting.
- 1.4 The full draft report for all three stages of the review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car, will be presented to the committee at their meeting of 17 February 2014.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The committee are recommended to:
 - 2.1.1 Review the draft report attached as **Appendix A¹**;
 - 2.1.2 Agree and make recommendations for changes and additions to the contents of the report;
 - 2.1.3 Consider any further recommendations they would like included in the final report;
 - 2.1.4 Consider whether the review should consult with car users to establish what, if anything, would persuade them to use alternative modes of transport to get into Maidstone town centre rather than using their car, or make a recommendation from this review for this to be carried out as a separate piece of work;

¹ Please note to reduce the amount of paper used Appendix D (MBC Draft Cycling Strategy 2012) of the draft report is not included at this point as committee received this document at their meeting on 22 July 2014. It will be included with the final report.

2.1.5 Consider if further work needs to be carried out regarding the committees' duties under The Equality Act (2010).

2.1.6 Agree that the recommendation made at the meeting of 30 September 2014 regarding:

“a section of the final report on the review, Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car, be included setting out the powers and opportunities for parishes to assist in the provision of services and capital equipment such as bus shelters and real time information this section to also included information on grant funding opportunities”.

be carried out as a separate piece of work to ensure it is a useful resource for parish councils to refer to in the future.

2.1.7 Consider the request from the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development for the working group to carry out a review of the Park and Ride service in Maidstone as part of this review and include the findings in the final report into Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car.

3 Reasons for the recommendations

3.1 The attached draft report for the review of Transport in Maidstone – alternative to using a car covers the first two parts of the review; Walking and Cycling and Bus Services. The recommendations in this report are the initial recommendations the committee made at the meetings of 22 July 2014, 16 September 2014 and 30 September 2014.

3.2 After reading the draft report presenting all the evidence gathered to date the committee may consider there are further recommendations it would like to make.

3.3 The review has concentrated on interviewing witnesses interested in, or working in the area of walking and cycling and bus service provision. The main aim of the review is to investigate ways of reducing congestion in Maidstone town centre by reducing the number of cars coming into the town. One group of witnesses the committee has not interviewed to date are car users. The committee could consider gathering evidence from this group to establish what, if anything, would encourage car users to change their mode of transport when travelling into the town centre. Or the committee could decide to make a recommendation from this review for this to be carried out as a separate piece of work.

3.4 The Council has a General Equality Duty under The Equality Act (2010). Those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The committee may decide further consideration of this duty is needed.

- 3.5 At the committee meeting of 30 September 2014 the committee recommended:

“a section of the final report on the review, Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car, be included setting out the powers and opportunities for parishes to assist in the provision of services and capital equipment such as bus shelters and real time information this section to also included information on grant funding opportunities”.

This represents a significant piece of work to ensure it is a useful resource for parish councils. The committee’s work programme is very busy, and as such, it is recommended this piece of work is carried out separately to this review.

- 3.6 Following a report from the Director of Environment and Shared Services to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development, dated 6 November 2014, the committee have been asked to undertake a review of the Park and Ride service as part of the review into Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car. Now the draft report for this review to date is available, it may be considered there is a gap in the terms of reference by not including a review of the Park and Ride services. As the review on Bus Services is complete a review of the Park and Ride service could be carried out as a separate section of the whole review.

- 3.7 Due to the committees full work programme, it is recommended a review of the Park and Ride service be undertaken by the working group for the review of Transport in Maidstone outside of the formal programme of meetings. The working group to report back to the committee at the meeting of 17 February 2015, where the work programme states the draft report for the full review will be presented.

- 3.8 The scoping document for the review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car does state:

“Review of scope and objectives:

After consideration of the evidence gathered under each area, the working group will recommend either to:

- Support what is already being worked on;

- Continue with further evidence gathering with revised objectives;
- Other – depending on what comes to light from evidence gathering.”

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’s priorities.

4.2 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”.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications.

6. Relevant Documents

6.1 Appendix A – Draft Report – A Review of Transport in Maidstone – alternative to using the car (Walking and Cycling and Bus Services).

7. Background Documents

6.1 None

Maidstone Borough Council

**Planning, Transport and Development Overview and
Scrutiny Committee**

Draft Report

**A Review of Transport in Maidstone Borough
alternatives to using a car**

November 2014

Opening statement from Chair (of PTD committee or working group?)

Executive Summary

DRAFT

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DRAFT

1 Background

- 1.1 In March 2014 Maidstone Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny team, with the help of the Communications team, implemented a communications plan to help gather suggestions for topics for the Overview and Scrutiny Committees' Future Work Programme and reviews for the Municipal year 2014-15.
- 1.2 More than 50 suggestions were received from staff, members of the public, community representatives, key stakeholders/partners including parish councils and local press. 18 of the suggestions received related to the terms of reference for the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee (PTD OSC).
- 1.3 On 9 June 2014 the Overview and Scrutiny Team held a workshop with PTD OSC where the committee considered all the suggestions and agreed a review topic to take forward for 2014-15.
- 1.4 Many of the suggestions raised concerns about transport in the Borough, including:
 - Increased congestion in Maidstone town centre;
 - Bus services;
 - Parking;
 - Public transport;
 - Promoting walking and cycling, and;
 - Introducing a mechanism where local people could report transport infrastructure issues to both Kent County Council (KCC) and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC).
- 1.5 The committee agreed to look at ways of reducing congestion in Maidstone town and would touch on all the concerns above. To do this the committee decided they needed to review different modes of transport that could be alternatives to using a car. The main groups decided upon were:
 - Cycling and walking;
 - Bus, and;
 - Rail.
- 1.6 The committee recognised if these modes of transport were to be alternatives to the car they had to be convenient, reliable and attractive enough to encourage people to leave their cars at home. This in turn would reduce the need for parking in the town.
- 1.7 A working group was set up and met on 17 June 2014 to scope the review and presented a scoping document at the PTD OSC meeting of 24 June 2014 outlining the Terms of Reference for the review.
- 1.8 This review prompted interest from local media with it being reported on BBC South East on 7 October 2014 and BBC Radio Kent. BBC Radio Kent also interviewed Councillor David Burton, Cabinet member for Planning, Transport and Development

on 27 July 2014 and Councillor Val Springett, Chair of PTD OSC on 7 October 2014 about the review. Kent Messenger also reported, on 1 August 2014, the recommendations of the committee meeting on 22 July 2014.

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2 Terms of Reference

2.1 The committee agreed by conducting this review it would aim to meet the following objectives:

To carry out a review of Transport in Maidstone Borough – alternatives to using a car to ease congestion in the town.

2.2 Cycling and walking

- Identify cycling and walking groups in the Borough;
- Establish what work is already being done regarding the promotion of walking and cycling;
- Identify and make recommendations on how MBC can work to increase the use of cycling and walking in the Borough.

2.3 Bus services

- Identify existing bus service providers operating in the Rural Service Centres¹;
- Identify bus user groups in the Borough to avoid duplication of effort;
- Improve communication with the Quality Bus Partnership to enable Councillors to influence debate where they can;
- Identify the barriers to making the bus a viable alternative to using the car to travel into Maidstone town;
- Identify and make recommendations for improvements to bus service provision to and from the Rural Service Centres (RSC).

2.4 Rail services

- Identify rail user groups in the Borough to avoid duplication of effort;
- Gain an insight into KCC and rail providers' strategic plans for rail services in the Borough;
- Establish MBC member links with KCC and rail service providers;
- Identify and make recommendations for improvements to rail service provision in the Maidstone Borough.

¹ Rural service centres (RSC) – outside of the town centre and urban area, rural service centres are considered the most sustainable settlements in Maidstone's settlement hierarchy. The planned development and maintenance of sustainable communities underpins the council's approach to rural areas where the primary aim is to direct development towards rural settlements that can best act as service centres for their local population and surrounding rural communities. Rural service centres play a key part in the economic and social fabric of the Borough and contribute towards its character and built form. They act as a focal point for trade and services by providing a concentration of public transport networks, employment opportunities and community facilities that minimise car journeys - (Maidstone Borough Council, 2014)

3 Introduction

- 3.1 Congestion on our roads is a growing concern across the UK. According to the Department for Transport (DoT,) Road Congestion and Reliability Statistics², the average speeds on local 'A' roads in England during the weekday morning peak between April and June 2014 were 24.4mph. Compared to figures for the year end March 2014 this was a decrease of 0.9%. Across all nine regions in England London experienced the greatest reduction in speeds of 3.3%, followed by the South East with a 2.3% reduction.
- 3.2 Our reliance on car travel, even if it results in sitting in traffic with longer or unpredictable journey times, appears to be showing no let up.
- 3.3 Another report from the DoT, Public attitudes towards transport survey³, states, travelling by car as a driver was by far the most commonly and regularly used mode of transport with 44% of respondents reporting travelling by car as a driver every day or nearly every day. The research also stated, that on average, respondents reported making five journeys of less than two miles (3.22kilometres) by car in a typical week. Furthermore, a considerable proportion of respondents reported they could use alternative forms of travel. In 2012, 41% of people agreed they could just as easily walk many of the journeys of less than two miles they now travel by car; 39% said they could just as easily cycle (if they had a bike) and nearly a third said they could just as easily catch the bus. The challenge is encouraging people to make the change.
- 3.4 As can be seen by the map in **Appendix A** (Maidstone Walking and Cycling Isochrones)the vast majority of the Maidstone urban area is within the 5 kilometre threshold for trips by bike and a significant proportion of the Maidstone urban area is within the 2 kilometre threshold for trips on-foot. This serves to indicate the huge latent potential for increasing the proportion of trips by walking and cycling.
- 3.5 According to the Parliamentary publication, Out of the Jam: reducing congestion on our roads, the definition of congestion is "unreliable journeys in terms of the length of time that journey will take, taking 20 minutes one day, 40 minutes the next and so on; it can mean that journeys are just too slow; or it can mean that in times of exceptional disruption, road works or special events and things like that, journeys are very different from the way they normally are."⁴

² Department for Transport Road Congestion and Reliability Statistics, Congestion on local 'A' roads, England: Apr to Jun 2014 report
(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/343339/congestion-local-a-stats-release-jun-14.pdf)

³ Department for Transport British Social Attitudes Survey 2012: public attitudes towards transport (July 2013)

⁴ www.publications.parliament.uk - Transport Committee – Ninth Report, Out of the Jam: reducing congestion on our roads published 6 September 2011.

4 Congestion in Maidstone

- 4.1 According to the BBCs Domesday Reloaded website⁵ congestion in Maidstone is not new (see fig 1).

Waiting for information from KCC on congestion hot spots in Maidstone

4.2 Impact on Air Quality and Health⁶

- 4.2.1 Local air pollutants are those that have a direct impact on public health, especially that of the young and old. The main air pollutants of concern in Maidstone are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulates (PM). These have been linked to lung diseases (asthma, bronchitis, and emphysema), heart conditions and cancer. Based on national estimates, approximately 5.6% of premature deaths in Maidstone are due to air pollution.
- 4.2.2 Where health based air quality objectives are not being met Air Quality Management Areas must be declared. Maidstone declared an Urban AQMA due to exceeding the annual average nitrogen dioxide objective (objective level = 40ug/m³). This is a long term objective aimed at protecting the most vulnerable members of the population from the chronic (debilitating) effects of air pollution.
- 4.2.3 The Council undertook monitoring at 57 sites in 2013 (using diffusion tubes attached to street furniture) to monitor airborne NO₂ concentrations. The annual mean objective was exceeded at twelve sites, all within the Maidstone AQMA.
- 4.2.4 The very high results recoded at four of those sites (Upper Stone Street, and the A274/A229 junction), indicate a potential exceedence of the 1-hour mean NO₂ objective (200ug/m³ hourly mean not to be exceeded more than 18 times in a year).
- 4.2.5 The short term hourly objective is aimed at protecting the most vulnerable members of the population from the acute (immediate) effects of air pollution, which may involve irritation of the eyes, nose and throat and an increase in the symptoms of existing respiratory conditions such as asthma, bronchitis or emphysema. Breaches of the hourly objective are more infrequently observed in urban environments than breaches of the annual average objective, indicating that day to day peak levels of nitrogen dioxide pollutant concentrations are increasing.
- 4.2.6 A recent report from World Health Organisation (WHO) 'Review of evidence on health aspects of air pollutants'⁷ has produced new evidence of long-term effects of

Extract from BBCs Domesday Reloaded web site referring to a report in 1986:

"Maidstone's recent rapid residential growth has greatly increased pressure on the town centre's road system and only Medway crossing. Single incidents cause lengthy tailbacks, especially - where the A20 and A249 converge east of the town centre-i.e. top of Square Hill and bottom of Sittingbourne Road, Loose Road. At the morning peak a third of this traffic is making for west of the bridge and a third for destinations north of Maidstone."

Fig.1

⁵ www.bbc.co.uk/history/domesday/dblock/GB-576000-153000/page/3

⁶ Mid Kent Share Services – Environmental Health

nitrogen dioxide for people suffering from existing respiratory and heart problems and indicates that these effects can occur below the current air quality objective levels.

4.3 Central Government Growth Fund

4.3.1 On 7 July 2014 Kent County Council⁸ published a press release reporting that the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership⁹ had won £104 million from the Government's 'Growth Deal'. The benefits to Maidstone from this cash injection were reported to be:

- A Gyratory Bypass - £4.56 million to go towards a relief scheme to help overcome congestion and delays in the town centre;
- Maidstone Integrated Transport - £8.89 million;
- Sustainable access to Maidstone employment areas (River Medway cycle path, East Farleigh to Aylesford) £2 million.

Recommendation

- A. *That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to lobby Kent County Council on the reconfiguration of the Maidstone Gyratory system to ensure safe cycle passages. The design of the gyratory system should incorporate surface cycle passages (not subways) for cyclist heading in and out of the town from west Maidstone using the A20 and A26.*

4.4 Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy

4.4.1 On 27 January 2014 Maidstone Borough Council's Cabinet approved the vision and objectives for the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) and work programmed for developing the ITS to a full draft document to go out to public consultation in the Summer of 2014.

4.4.2 Because of peak period congestion and poor air quality across the urban area of Maidstone the ITS would focus primarily on demand management measures for one of the core principles of the National Planning Policy Framework, to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling. The principle being this would enable people to make informed choices about how and when they travel to and from the town centre and other destinations in the Borough.

⁷ http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/193108/REVIHAAP-Final-technical-report-final-version.pdf

⁸ <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/news/news-and-press-releases/jobs-news/jobs-and-transport-boost-from-104m-growth-deal-funding>.

⁹ Kent and Medway Economic Partnership is the local arm of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SE LEP) which brings together key leaders from business, local government, and further and higher education to boost economic growth across Kent, Medway, East Sussex, Essex, Thurrock and Southend.

4.4.3 A report to Cabinet¹⁰ on 27 January 2014, paragraph 1.3.16 stated the essential elements of the new ITS would include:

- A more targeted park and ride service, with new and/or improved sites in the vicinity of M20 Junction 7 and at Linton Crossroads on the A299 corridor to the south of the town, aimed at long-stay commuters into the town centre;
- Bus priority measures in tandem with the enhanced park and ride service;
- Highway capacity improvements at the bridges gyratory and at other key junctions in and around the strategic development areas of north west Maidstone, south east Maidstone and M20 Junction 7, to improve journey time reliability and air quality;
- Increased bus service frequencies (to at least every 7 minutes) on radial routes serving Maidstone town centre;
- Walking and cycling infrastructure, focusing on improved wayfinding, safer crossing points at the town centre gyratory, and improvements to the River Medway towpath;
- A car sharing initiative in partnership with local employers, and;
- A refreshed town centre parking strategy, which will look to increase long-stay car parking charges and reduce car parking supply to promote the use of park and ride, and a reduction in short-stay car parking to prioritise shoppers and visitors.

4.5 Maidstone Draft Local Plan 2014-2031

4.5.1 The Maidstone Borough Council Draft Local Plan¹¹ (paragraph 3.9) transport vision states that Maidstone will have a transport network that will have sufficient people and goods-moving capacity to support the growth projected by the local plan to 2031.

¹⁰ <http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g2059/Public%20reports%20pack%2027th-Jan-2014%2018.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

¹¹ <http://dynamic.maidstone.gov.uk/pdf/Local%20Plan%20Regulation%2018.pdf>

5 Methodology

5.1 The committee sought evidence from a variety of sources. For example select Committee-style interviews with a number of witnesses for each section of the review were undertaken.

5.3 Cycling and Walking

5.3.1 On 22 July 2014¹² interviews were conducted with witnesses who had an interest in or whose work involved the promotion of walking and cycling.

5.3.2 The witnesses invited to attend were:

- Bartholomew Wren – Economic Development Officer Regeneration and Transport, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council;
- Colin Finch – Senior Public Rights of Way Officer, Kent County Council;
- Tay Arnold – Cycling Transport Planner, Kent Highways, Kent County Council;
- Sarah Shearsmith, Community development Team Leader, Maidstone Borough Council;
- Tim Hapgood, Transport Consultant, Spatial Policy Team, Maidstone Borough Council;
- James Gower – local cycling enthusiast who sent a suggestion via Twitter for the committee to review congestion in the town;

5.3.3 The specific questions asked of these witnesses to help prepare for the meeting can be found as **Appendix B**.

5.3.4 Other witnesses included:

- Councillor Paul Harper;
- Mr Elliott Dean, resident and cycling enthusiast.

5.4 Bus Services

5.4.1 On 16 September 2014 interviews were conducted with:

- Dan Bruce, Local Transport Planner (Mid Kent), KCC;
- Shane Hymers, Public Transport Policy and Strategy Manager, KCC;
- Norman Kemp, Nu-Venture Coaches Ltd;

5.4.2 On 30 September 2014 interviews were conducted with:

- Matthew Arnold, Commercial Manager, Arriva;
- Mike Fitzgerald, Chairman of East of Maidstone Bus Group;
- Parish Councillor Peter Spearink, Staplehurst PC;
- Norman Kemp, Nu-Venture Coaches Ltd was also in attendance;

¹² <http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/meetings/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=555&MIId=2184&Ver=4>

- Councillor Peter Spearink, Staplehurst Parish Council.

5.4.3 Specific questions asked of these witnesses can be found in **Appendix C**.

5.4.4 The committee also consulted with all 35 Parish Councils and 55 MBC Councillors, asking them for details of the following:

- Any bus service issues you may have in your constituency;
- Any bus user groups you are aware of in your constituency.

5.4.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Officer attended a meeting between the Director of Regeneration and Communities (MBC), Officers from MBCs Community Development Team and a representative from Arriva. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways of making bus services more accessible to those residents on low incomes.

5.5 Rail Services

5.5.1 Interviews with:

- Mike Gibson, Public Affairs Manager, South Eastern Rail
- Mike Fitzgerald, Chair Kent Community Rail Partnership and Medway Valley Line Group
- Keith Harrison, Chief Executive, Action with Rural Communities
- Written response from Stephen Gasche, Principal Transport Planner – Rail, Kent County Council

5.5.2 Specific questions ask of these witnesses were:

- What are your perceptions of the where the weaknesses are in rail services in the Maidstone borough?
- What could Network Rail do to relieve some of the congestion pressure in Maidstone?
- What do you do to integrate your services with other public transport services?
- How can scheduled changes be better communicated to users?

5.6 Desk research was carried out by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer to seek further evidence for the review.

6 Walking and Cycling

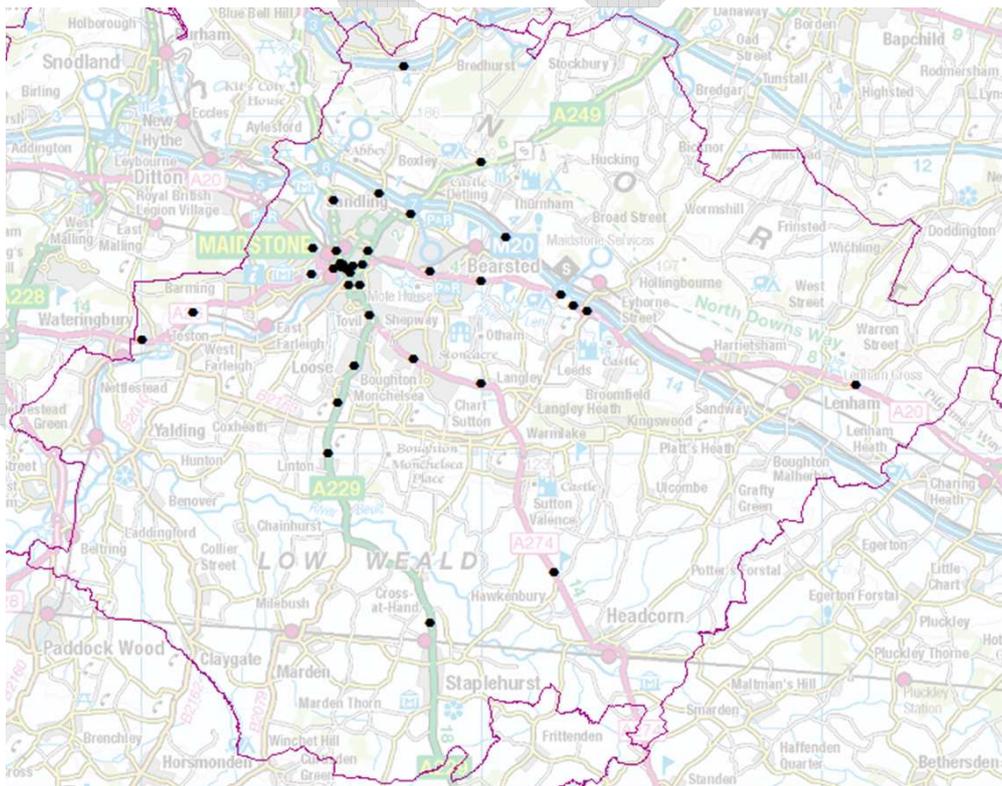
6.1 According to research carried out by the University of East Anglia and the Centre for Diet and Activity Research (CEDAR)¹³ walking or cycling to work is better for people's mental health than driving to work.

The Department for Transport British Social Attitudes Survey³ defines a cyclist as someone who has access to a bicycle and has ridden a bicycle in the last 12 months.

6.2 The Department for Transport (DfT) carry out annual traffic counts on a selection of A roads throughout the UK. This data is split into vehicle type. It should be noted that as this data is for A roads only it may not reflect the levels of cycling as it does not include the country roads which are popular with cyclists¹⁴.

In 2012, 43% of respondents to this survey had access to a bicycle: 40% owned a bicycle and 3% had regular use of a bicycle owned by someone else. Sixty-one per cent of respondents said that they had not ridden a bicycle in the previous 12 months.

Map 1 Location of DfT count points in Maidstone



¹³ Report published 15 September 2014 – www.cedar.iph.cam.ac.uk/blog/walking-cycling-public-transport-wellbeing/

¹⁴ Maidstone Borough Pedestrian and Pedal Cycle Data, Road Safety Team, KCC

Table 1 Pedal cycle flow 2000 to 2013 at DfT count points in Maidstone as a proportion of all traffic

Year	Pedal Cycle Flow	All traffic	%Pedal Cycle
2000	1634	641738	0.3%
2001	1535	650495	0.2%
2002	1424	652861	0.2%
2003	1569	649251	0.2%
2004	1407	657381	0.2%
2005	1183	641219	0.2%
2006	1589	646603	0.2%
2007	1192	638341	0.2%
2008	1380	607332	0.2%
2009	1539	603059	0.3%
2010	1499	617823	0.2%
2011	1659	611695	0.3%
2012	1419	588721	0.2%
2013	1657	584032	0.3%

- 6.3 The proportion of pedal cyclists to all traffic is normally between 0.2 and 0.3% on the A roads in Maidstone.
- 6.4 The 2011 Census journey to work data¹⁵ indicated that journeys to work in Maidstone by bike have increased since 2001. However the change has been very small and the proportion of journeys to work by bike still only account for 1% of total trips.
- 6.5 The Institute of Highways and Transportation suggests that journeys of up to two kilometres were achievable on foot and journeys of up to five kilometres were achievable by bike. In particular the research suggested that journeys within these thresholds had the most realistic chance of replacing car journeys by trips on foot and by bike. The vast majority of the Maidstone urban area is within five kilometres of the town.¹⁶
- 6.6 Data on journeys to work on foot from the 2011 Census is not yet formally available. However early indications suggest they account for approximately 10% of journeys to work in Maidstone.
- 6.7 For comparison the committee sought evidence from a similar authority to establish how they approached the promotion of walking and cycling and how successful they

¹⁵ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-295663>

¹⁶ Report of Head of Planning and Development to PTD OSC 22 July 2014 -

<http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/meetings/documents/s37180/agenda%20item%2011%20Question%20Sheet%20-%20for%20front%20of%20Committee%20reports.pdf> page 21 paragraph 3.5

had been. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council was chosen because of its comparative size and location.

6.6 Cycling in Tunbridge Wells

- 6.6.1 It was reported that cycling in Tunbridge Wells had increased in recent years, but still only accounted for 2% of road users. Tunbridge Wells was developing a strong cycling culture with a specialist café providing a shop and meeting point for cyclists.
- 6.6.2 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's (TWBC) draft transport strategy had gone out to consultation in 2013 and provided a high level introduction to cycling. A stand-alone cycling strategy was planned to re-engage with the established local cycling forum and was due to go out to consultation late 2014.
- 6.6.3 Mr Greg Clark MP had supported a public meeting in November 2013 on cycling in Tunbridge Wells. A series of recommendations from the meeting had been suggested to feed into the new cycling strategy. The suggestions included proposed new cycling routes; increased cycle parking; installation of advance stop lines, 20mph speed limits; overcoming deficiencies in existing cycle routes; cycle education and awareness for young people and adults.
- 6.6.4 In January 2014 the Tunbridge Wells Cycling Forum was launched with its own terms of reference but no decision making powers. The meetings of the Forum were chaired by TWBC's portfolio holder for Planning and Transport and were reported to be well attended. Officers provided administrative and technical input but no support. Sub groups of the Forum focussed on areas such as education, events and infrastructure.
- 6.6.5 Cycling events supported and promoted by TWBC included safety campaigns with the AA; Bikeability training¹⁷ part funded by the Department for Transport; Tunbridge Wells Great Bike Ride, and; Cycle Friday (launched 6 June 2014)¹⁸.
- 6.6.6 Final thoughts from Tunbridge Wells included; to be successful resources needed to be made available, and partnership working was important and should include agencies such as Sustrans, KCC, developers, landowners and local businesses; Department for Transport and the Highways Agency.

6.7 Existing work to promote walking and cycling in the Maidstone Borough

- 6.7.1 KCC reported that Maidstone has 11.3% of the 4,200 miles of Public Rights of Way (PROW) in Kent providing a good historical asset of walking and cycling routes.

¹⁷ Bikeability.dft.gov.uk

¹⁸ <http://www.cyclefriday.co.uk/>

- 6.7.2 The Mote Park regeneration project provided traffic free routes which were being very well used by pedestrians and cyclist.
- 6.7.3 Inter parish 'behind the hedge (Public Rights of Way) schemes' had been developed – for example East Farleigh, Forge Lane route linking the village to the school and a similar scheme at Hunton linking the village to the church and village hall – providing safe pedestrian routes.
- 6.7.4 The Millennium River Project along the River Medway corridor provided a safe route for pedestrians and cyclist.
- 6.7.5 Work is being carried out to improve footpaths to Len Valley, Medway Valley and the Loose Valley Conservation area. It was considered the following footpath networks could be developed to form an orbital cycle and footpath route around Maidstone linking to Maidstone town centre via radial routes:
- Len Valley to the north of Maidstone;
 - Medway Valley to the west of Maidstone;
 - Tovil Nature Park;
 - The Loose Valley Conservation area;
 - Boughton Monchesea; and,
 - Langley to the east of Maidstone;

Recommendation

B. That the Head of Planning and Development be asked to report back to Committee before the end of the municipal year 2014-2015 on:

- *The identity of potential routes 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;*
 - *The costs of firstly providing cycle parking at the end of these routes;*
 - *The cost of the longer term aim of developing the cycle route to the sites of the cycle parking.*
- 6.7.6 KCC reported that although MBCs planning policy ENV26 was considered a very effective policy stating no development would be allowed where there were Public Rights of Way unless developers agreed to maintain or divert the routes. This had discouraged developers from developing in these areas. This in turn resulted in what has become known as 'back garden allies' where PROW were overgrown, unsafe and unused.
- 6.7.7 Bikeability cycle training was being offered to children and adults in the Borough using funding subsidised from the Department for Transport and Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF).

- 6.7.8 Work was being carried out with Kent Highways through a working group comprising of Kent Public Health and Kent Sport to promote the health benefits of cycling pitched at getting people on bikes who were not already using one.
- 6.7.9 Maidstone Health Walks¹⁹ scheme had lead three walks; Maidstone Town Centre Walk; Mote Park Health Walk; Cherry Orchard Health Walk. Data as of 7 July 2014 showed 662 walk hours had taken place since January 2014 with 57 registered walkers.
- 6.7.10 British Cycling and Sky TV²⁰, part funded by Kent Public Health, encourage people of all levels to get involved in cycling through running events, guided rides, support and tips through the Sky Rider Local scheme. Four events took place in the Maidstone Borough between 20 July and 9 November 2014.
- 6.7.11 KM (Kent Messenger) Charity Team²¹ work to encourage parents and children to walk to school. 'Walking Buses' operate along set routes, picking up children at pre-arranged points on the way to school. Parents take turns to escort the group of children to school, with everyone wearing a high visibility tabard for safety.
- 6.7.12 At the time of reporting (22 July 2014) 200 primary schools were using the KM Walk to School resources to promote green travel every week. During the last academic year (2012-2013) 218,000 school run car journeys were removed by local schools. For the academic year (2013-14 to July 2014) 22,517 school run car journeys were reported to have been removed from the roads in Maidstone.
- 6.7.13 Cycleplus²² is a government approved scheme allowing employees to hire purchase a bike and safety equipment from their employers for commuting to work and for use outside of work. Bikes can be provided at up to 32% less than the usual cost and repayments can be spread across 12 to 18 months. Maidstone Borough Council offers this scheme to all its employees.

6.8 Walking and Cycling groups

- 6.8.1 Much of the work in the promotion of walking and cycling is focussed on the health and social benefits they provide as a leisure activities. There was very little evidence of explicitly encouraging either walking or cycling as a means making other journeys such as getting to work. However, 39% of frequent riders had said that Sky Ride Local had influenced them to use their bike to commute to work.

Walking and cycling groups found by carrying out a search of the internet included:

¹⁹ www.walkinforhealth.org.uk

²⁰ www.goskyride.com

²¹ <http://www.kmcharityteam.co.uk/schools/schoolswalk/>

²² <http://www.cyclescheme.co.uk/employers/employer-faqs>

- Maidstone Ramblers²³ – runs regular walks and social events around Kent.
- Maidstone Invicta U3A²⁴ - has a membership of 250 of older people no longer in full time work and has, amongst others, a short walk group (less than 5 miles).
- Mid Kent Outdoor Pursuits and Social Group²⁵ – has a membership of around 50 and organises activities, including walking around the Maidstone and Medway countryside.
- West Kent Walking and Outdoor Group²⁶ - is a walking group for those aged 30 to 50 and provide a mixed programme of walks most weekends.
- San Fairy Ann Cycling Club²⁷ - The largest cycling club in Kent with over 500 members from across the county. San Fairy Ann organise all types of cycling activities catering for riders of all abilities.

6.9 The draft Maidstone Cycling Strategy

- 6.9.1 The Draft Maidstone Cycling Strategy was produced in June 2012 by MBC officers and local interest groups and cyclist. The strategy was produced by understanding the current issues and the existing network, carrying out route audits and identifying opportunities for infrastructure improvements and developing an action plan. A copy of this document is attached as **Appendix D**.
- 6.9.2 Some parts of the draft Maidstone Cycling Strategy have been implemented, in particular the provision of cycle parking in the town centre and at train stations and improved route provision along a number of key corridors.
- 6.9.3 Walking and cycling forms an integral part of the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) and is covered by a number of objectives set out in the framework ITS agreed by MBC Cabinet on 27 January 2014. The strategy includes improving infrastructure and wayfinding, through securing Travel Plans for new developments as well as schools and existing businesses, introducing behaviour change projects to help influence how people travel.
- 6.9.4 The draft Maidstone Cycling Strategy is still to go out to public consultation before being adopted.

²³ Maidstoneramblers.org.uk

²⁴ u3asites.org.uk

²⁵ www.midkentgroup.co.uk

²⁶ www.wkwo.org.uk

²⁷ www.sanfairyancc.co.uk

Recommendation

- C. *That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to urgently refresh and update the draft Maidstone Borough Council Draft Cycling Strategy, dated June 2012, for further scrutiny by the Committee before the end of the 2014-2015 municipal year and before taking it for public consultation.*
- D. *That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development use the principal proposals from the refreshed Cycling Strategy to inform the emerging Integrated Transport Strategy.*
- E. *That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport 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;*
 - *Identify a lead member to act as a cycling champion within the authority.*

6.10 Safety

6.10.1 The Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) Surveillance report dated 27 March 2014²⁸ is a compendium of data covering a number of public health areas. One of the key areas of concern for the CMO was:

“Walking and cycling – Safety for pedestrians and cyclists must be improved if we are to encourage people to walk and cycle more and reap the associated health benefits. The risk of serious injury for each kilometre travelled on a bike is 21 times higher than by car. The CMO says that the relative risks of walking and cycling are unacceptably high and must be reduced and that an integrated approach to improving safety for all road users must be taken.”

6.10.2 However, in a Cycling Safety Special Report by NHS Choices²⁹ researchers concluded that the benefits of cycling far outweigh the potential risks.

Researchers estimated that,

“on average, the benefits associated with regular cycling equated to up to 14 months extra life expectancy. The risks equated to a decreased life expectancy of up to 40 days; however, this was the upper limit and the figure may be closer to the 20-day mark. This represents an impressive benefit to risk ratio, despite only looking at the physical benefits of exercise. However, there are also documented psychological benefits of exercise, such as an

²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chief-medical-officer-publishes-annual-report-on-state-of-the-publics-health>

²⁹ <http://www.nhs.uk/news/2014/02february/pages/cycling-safety-a-special-report.aspx>

improvement in mood, increased self-confidence and reduced risk of depression.”

6.10.3 Safety in Maidstone

6.10.3.1 In Maidstone Borough, pedal cycle casualties are increasing from 21 in 2009 to 41 in 2013. Killed or seriously injured (KSI) pedal cycle casualties are low and numbers vary with a peak in 2012 of 10.³⁰

6.10.3.2 Pedestrian casualties injured in the Borough, after a peak in 2011 have recorded decreases in 2012 and 2013.

Table 2 Pedestrian and pedal cycle casualties in Maidstone District by year and severity

Year	Severity	Pedestrians	Pedal Cyclists	Total
2009	KSI	8	2	10
	Slight	60	19	79
	Total	68	21	89
2010	KSI	7	5	12
	Slight	54	22	76
	Total	61	27	88
2011	KSI	16	2	18
	Slight	64	26	90
	Total	80	28	108
2012	KSI	16	10	26
	Slight	52	28	80
	Total	68	38	106
2013	KSI	10	5	15
	Slight	52	36	88
	Total	62	41	103

6.10.3.3 Whilst the A229 recorded the highest number of pedestrian and pedal cycle collisions in the last 5 years, the route with the highest rate of collisions was the B2012 (Well Street in Maidstone town centre).

³⁰ Maidstone Borough Pedestrian and Pedal Cycle Data, Road Safety Team, KCC

Table 3 Collisions involving pedestrians or pedal cyclists in Maidstone by route, 2009 to 2013

	Approx route length in km	Pedestrians				Pedal Cycles			
		KSI collisions involving pedestrians	All collisions involving pedestrians	KSI collisions involving pedestrians/km	All collisions involving pedestrians/km	KSI collisions involving pedal cycles	All collisions involving pedal cycles	KSI collisions involving pedal cycles/km	All collisions involving pedal cycles/km
A20	25.2	3	28	0.12	1.11	5	20	0.20	0.79
A2045	1.6	0	0	0.00	0.00	1	1	0.63	0.63
A229	31.4	6	53	0.19	1.69	6	28	0.19	0.89
A249	25	2	13	0.08	0.52	1	3	0.04	0.12
A26	6.5	2	26	0.31	4.00	1	13	0.15	2.00
A274	16.3	4	16	0.25	0.98	0	7	0.00	0.43
B2010	9.6	2	6	0.21	0.63	1	2	0.10	0.21
B2012	1.4	2	6	1.43	4.29	1	3	0.71	2.14
B2079	8.1	0	2	0.00	0.25	0	0	0.00	0.00
B2162	9.4	0	1	0.00	0.11	2	4	0.21	0.43
B2163	15.7	3	11	0.19	0.70	0	4	0.00	0.25
B2246	1.4	0	1	0.00	0.71	0	1	0.00	0.71

6.10.3.4 The casualty profile for pedal cyclists in Maidstone shows peaks in the 10 to 14 and 45 to 49 age brackets with 19 each. KSI casualties recorded a peak in the 25 to 29 year old age bracket.

6.10.3.5 34% of KSI pedal cycle collisions occurred on weekends (5 on Sunday, 3 on Saturday). All but two of the KSI collisions involved another road user. Of the 19 10 to 14 year old pedal cycle casualties, 90% of the collisions occur on weekdays with a peak at 0800-0859 (3) and between 1500 and 1659 (8).

6.10.4 20mph Limits and Zones

6.10.4.1 Although not a major part of this review, 20mph limits and zones were part of the committee's discussions.

6.10.4.2 For clarity 20mph speed restrictions are *limits* and rely solely on signage, and 20mph *zones* have traffic calming measures in place (build outs, speed humps, etc.) to reduce speed. Highways Authorities such as Kent Highways have powers to introduce 20mph speed limits that apply only at certain times of day.

6.10.4.3 From October 2013 for up to a period of 18 months, KCC carried out a trial of 20mph schemes near six local schools in the Borough to gather evidence to establish whether such schemes could provide cost effective road safety benefits.

6.10.4.4 At the meeting of the Environment, Highways and Waste Cabinet Committee on 3 October 2013³¹ Decision No: 13/00063 paragraph 12.7, it was decided:

“Taking in to account all the evidence gained from current local and national experiences there is insufficient evidence to recommend KCC adopts a blanket policy for the implementation of 20mph schemes. It is proposed that KCC continues with its policy of implementing 20mph schemes where there is clear justification in terms of achieving casualty reduction as part of the on-going programme of Casualty Reduction Schemes. However, in addition it is now proposed to identify where 20mph schemes can be implemented that would encourage more walking and cycling notwithstanding the casualty record. This will assist with delivering targets set out in Kent’s Joint Health and Well Being Strategy”.

6.10.5 The committee heard a lack of street lighting after midnight created safety issues for some pedestrians and cyclist. It was also stated segregation of pedestrians and cyclists from cars was very expensive and required a large element of public land to accommodate it.

6.10.6 It was suggested dropped and tactile curbs supported walking, as did pedestrian priority at junctions and traffic lights.

6.10.7 Witnesses reported the main roads in Maidstone were unpleasant for non-motorised users, there was little cycling infrastructure and crossings were designed to prevent inconvenience to cars rather than being convenient for cyclists or pedestrians. Witnesses also reported that the infrastructure in existence was often of poor quality and was mostly a pedestrian infrastructure with cyclists allowed. It was felt cycling was not considered a proper mode of transport and when it was is was as an afterthought or “squeezed in at the sides” and cycling specific schemes were rarely considered.

“Don’t be anti-car – be pro cycling”

James Gower, Cycling enthusiast, Maidstone

³¹<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s43305/B1%20Updated%20Policy%20for%2020mph%20limits%20and%20zones%20on%20KCC%20roads%2003102013%20Environment%20Highways%20and%20Wast.pdf>

7 Bus Services

7.1 Approximately 80% of the Local bus network in Kent runs on a commercial basis and is operated in Maidstone predominately by Arriva. KCC builds on this network by providing £6.8 million in discretionary subsidy towards over 200 local bus services which are not commercially viable for local bus operators but are considered to be socially necessary as they provide the only access to key services. Additional services, such as the Maidstone Borough Council funded Park and Ride facilities, are also provided on top of this core network.

Bit about the number of service provided – waiting for information

7.2 Quality Bus Partnership

7.2.1 The Quality Bus Partnership (QBP)³² is a voluntary partnership between MBC, KCC and the primary commercial bus company, Arriva. NuVenture is represented by KCC

“Much of the negative feedback on bus services focuses on two rural routes. This represents just four out of the 62 bus services Arriva and NuVenture operate in Maidstone. It should be noted that issues affecting these four rural buses are not representative of the good work that has gone on under the auspices of the Quality Bus Partnership which has delivered significant investment and improvements throughout the Borough.”

Arriva Buses

at the QBP as their services are mainly funded by KCC. The Partnership

“is committed to encouraging the use of public transport in and around Maidstone to help residents get around more easily, to reduce the effects of traffic congestion, to help Maidstone's economy and reduce emissions.”

7.2.2 The Partnership discusses operational issues of the principal commercial public transport companies operating in and around Maidstone.

7.2.3 Some of the achievements of the QBP outlined on their web page include:

- Spending £3.3 million on 11 new hybrid buses for Route 71, serving the A20 and A26 - this was funded by the Green Bus fund, KCC and Arriva;
- Adding six new buses on Route 82, serving Park Wood;
- Spending £100,000 to fully-refurbish seven mid-life buses;
- Building 12 new bus shelters;
- Spending £50,000 to refresh Maidstone's Chequers Bus Station;
- Improved the quality of bus stops;
- Increased the number of clearways at bus stops, reducing obstructions to buses and delays to services;

³² <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/parking-and-streets/quality-bus-partnership>

- Starting a forum for discussing route changes, bus issues, performance and customer feedback;
- Helped set up trials for contactless payments;
- Helped increase the number of satisfied passengers using the buses in Maidstone;
- Helped improve the punctuality of the bus services in Maidstone and
- Introducing the A20 Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme - the scheme sets the minimum standards for buses and bus stops along the A20, and;
- All of Arriva's Maidstone fleet now have low-floors and are 100% wheelchair accessible.

7.2.4 At a meeting with representatives of the QBP on 16 September 2014 it was agreed a proposal would go to the Partnership to recommend a Councillor from MBC be invited to join the QBP.

Recommendation

F. That at the next Quality Bus Partnership meeting Dan Bruce, Transport Planner, Kent County Council, request that a member of Maidstone Borough Council's Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee (PTD OSC) be invited to join the Partnership.

7.3 Service issues in the Rural Service Centres and Parishes

7.3.1 In preparation for the review of bus services in the Maidstone Borough the working group consulted with all Borough Councillors and parish councils asking for the following information:

- Any bus service issues you may have in your constituency, and;
- Any bus user groups you are aware of in your constituency.

7.3.1 The responses received were used as the basis for the questions put to the witnesses, who kindly agreed to attend meetings with the working group and the committee for this review.

7.3.2 The responses demonstrated the parishes who did respond were either not aware of any bus user groups in their parish or omitted to respond to the question.

7.3.3 Responses were received from 12 parish councils. The issues raised focussed mainly around:

- Reliability – buses arriving early, late or not at all;
- Availability/Frequency – some parishes had a bus service but it was too infrequent;
- Cost of fares;
- Bus stops and shelters.

7.4 Reliability

7.4.1 Road closures

- 7.4.1.1 The reliability issues raised focussed mainly on certain buses arriving late or not arriving at all due to road works or road closures.
- 7.4.1.2 It was reported that KCC Highways system of notification to bus service providers of road closures had worked well. However service providers reported it had recently become “erratic”. Service providers stressed the importance of receiving this information in a timely manner, to minimise disruption, was paramount to them being able to deliver their services.
- 7.4.1.3 The Traffic Commissioner requires bus service providers given eight weeks-notice of road closures but it was accepted that this was not always possible with emergency road closures. The Traffic Commission, the regulator for bus service providers, has a rigid legal framework service providers have to work within.
- 7.4.1.4 Service providers are required to give 56 days notice of changes to bus routes and the Commissioner applies this requirement rigidly. If bus services followed diversions put in place because of road closures they could be found to be breaking the law. However, there is some flexibility in this. Whilst there is a need for operators to register changes to their timetables and routes (with short notice support from the Local Authority where appropriate) the Traffic Commissioner does have a facility whereby operators can register short notice variations required due to road works at no cost and without the need for 56 days notice. Operators can also specify within their permanent registrations that the registered route “may be subject to change in the event of an emergency or if roads specified are not available”.
- 7.4.1.5 Responsibility for putting up notices to notify service users of cancelled or suspended services lies with KCC for their part funded routes. Arriva are responsible for putting up notices for all their routes.
- 7.4.1.6 It was reported that KCC Public Transport department had recently moved to the same site as Kent Highways department and was now under the same banner of Kent Highways. It was planned to organise regular meetings between Public Transport Planners and Highways to liaise and discuss approaches to road closures taking into account the needs of the service users affected by them.
- 7.4.1.7 It was noted that an appreciation that some road works have to take place at short notice due to the emergency nature and as such bus service cannot always be fully considered.

7.4.2 Parked cars blocking roads

7.4.2.1 This was an issue already being considered through groups such as the Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) and the Punctuality and Improvement Partnership (PIP). Issues can be raised by the predominant commercial operator (Arriva) as these forums are attended by the appropriate authorities to deal with these issues.

7.4.2.2 Where parked cars become regular occurrences on roads served by buses, service providers report it to MBC as the delegated parking authority so the appropriate measures can be considered, for example, enforcement. NuVenture reported they always found MBC very responsive in dealing with such reports.

7.4.3 Buses arriving and leaving earlier than scheduled

7.4.3.1 There are legal obligations on bus companies to ensure buses run to time and use of electronic ticketing equipment makes it much easier to detect issues. Early running of buses is always avoidable and generally dealt with through disciplinary action.

“Provision of a regular and reliable bus service is paramount for the passenger – and for their part, the operators will always seek to provide the most reliable service”

Norman Kemp, NuVenture Coaches Ltd, 16 September 2014

7.4.3.2 Groups such as the QBP and PiP see various partners work together to help buses run more reliably where possible. Discussions at meetings include looking at issues such as congestion, bus priority measures and funding streams to increase service provision. KCC have a performance monitoring/compliance process in place for contracted services to ensure they are running as per the Kent Bus contract terms and conditions and agreed service specification.

7.4.4 Real time service updates

7.4.4.1 Real time service updates could be provided at bus stops or in nearby shops. Technology to provide this service was already available on every bus, transmitting details of where they were.

7.4.4.2 Where funding is available this service could be provided by parish councils or funded through Section 106 Agreements. The cost would need to be weighed against the number of users. The maintenance and repair of the equipment would also need to be taken into consideration.

7.4.4.4 Commercial services are monitored by the responsible statutory body, the Traffic Commissioner.

Recommendation

G. *That the Public Transport , Kent County Council at his meeting with KCC Highways raise the following requests and report back to committee on the response before the end of the 2014-2015 municipal year:*

- *A definitive list of forthcoming road closures be sent to bus service providers in a timely manner to facilitate compliance with the Traffic Commissioners regulations;*
- *A set of processes and procedures are established and put in place for communicating road closures to avoid problems when changes to Highways personnel are made;*
- *A definition of what constitutes an emergency road closure is published and shared with bus service providers.*

7.5 Availability

7.5.1 Issues raised by parish councils included:

- Services finishing too early and not catering for workers returning home and the twilight economy;
- Services not linking rural villages to train stations or Maidstone town;
- No Sunday bus service;
- No cross Borough service, eg, Headcorn to Lenham or Staplehurst;
- One bus per hour out of the parish was not enough;
- Not enough return services from Maidstone;
- Some bus routes not serving local shop and other facilities.

7.5.2 It was reported that the KCC's Local Bus budget was fully allocated. KCC had managed to maintain a high number of subsidised services despite the current financial climate. If a new service required funding KCC was not currently in a position to fund it.

7.5.3 Funding streams were becoming increasingly important in providing bus services such as Section 106 Agreements, Kickstart and the Community Transport sector.

7.5.4 Quality Contracts

7.5.4.1 A House of Commons Transport Select Committee report on Passenger Transport in Isolated Communities³³ raised the potential for local authorities to use Quality Contracts to introduce franchising systems similar to those operating in London –

³³ HC288 published 22 July 2014)

where the local transport authority specifies what service is required and the private sectors compete for the right to provide it.

7.5.4.2 For KCC contracted services there is usually a tender round per district (involving the majority of services within that district) every four years. The tendering of a district as one allows operators to submit proposals, where appropriate, to provide a more total network solution. KCC Public Transport was going through a restructure and will look to challenge traditional tendering methods. Quality Contracts are an area that may be explored further. The re-structure will see the combining of Local Bus and Mainstream (school transport) functions at KCC.

7.5.5 Service enhancements

7.5.5.1 The 20% reduction in Bus Service Operator Grants was still having an effect on supported bus services. This reduced the ability of local authorities to respond to transport needs in isolated communities and impacted on employment and the local economy.

7.5.5.2 NuVenture reported if there was enough demand for a particular service they would be interested in providing it. Parish councils and residents who had ideas for bus service enhancements were encouraged to speak to the bus operators. If the idea was considered viable and linked with an existing service it is possible it could be provided.

7.5.5.3 NuVenture also reported they would be happy to provide a 'twilight' service if funding was available. Medway Council are currently running a pilot twilight service that could be used as a model.

7.5.5.4 Any local authority (District or Parish) could use their funds to provide a service. If the service is proven to be socially important, authorities can put the service out to competitive tender.

Recommendation

- H. *That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to re-establish the Maidstone Borough Transport User Group with membership to include representatives from all public transport service providers, KCC transport planners, MBC officers/members, parish councils, service users and other interested parties to ensure on-going issues with transport and ideas for enhancements to services are communicated and dealt with.*
- I. *That a Maidstone Borough Council Officer investigate and report back to the Committee before the end of the municipal year 2014-2015 on the progress and lessons learnt from the Medway twilight bus service once the trial is completed.*

7.6 Cost

- 7.6.1 Concern regarding the cost of bus services was raised by several parish councils particularly for their unemployed and low income residents.
- 7.6.2 MBC's Maidstone Financial Capability Partnership (MFCP) has been looking at ways to assist residents with making their money go further and provide support during, what may be for some, financially difficult times using partner organisations expertise across the Borough.
- 7.6.3 The project has been looking at household expenditure including transport costs. A meeting between members of MFCP and Arriva officers was held on 29 September 2014 to discuss the role of bus services in social inclusion.
- 7.6.4 During the meeting it was discussed that Arriva may be able to allow organisations to bulk buy tickets, and give to struggling families who are in crisis. Each organisation would apply for the deal, and decide which family to help with a discounted ticket. Organisations who would benefit from this are Children's Centres, Kent Support and Assistance Service (KCC), and Troubled Families Programme (MBC Maidstone Families Matter). A bulk buy scheme could also benefit residents attending work experience, interviews and apprenticeship schemes through Job Centre Plus, MBC and KCC.
- 7.6.5 Demographic information on residents of the Maidstone Borough would enable Arriva to revise their fare structure for the more deprived areas of the Borough.

7.6.6 Total Transport

- 7.6.6.1 The House of Commons Transport Select Committee report on Passenger Transport in Isolated Communities already mentioned discusses the concept of Total Transport.

“Total Transport involves integrating transport services that are currently commissioned by different central and local government agencies and provided by different operators. Such integrated services might deliver improved passenger transport in isolated communities by allocating existing resources more efficiently. That might entail, for example, combining conventional bus services with hospital transport.”

- 7.6.6.2 The concept of Total Transport for Maidstone Borough was considered by service providers as a way forward. However, they reported the issue would be how to calculate how much of the fares each provider would get and what methods would be used to buy services. Joint thinking and working was key to success and was something providers were keen to investigate.

7.7 Bus Stops and Shelters

- 7.7.1 Several parishes reported issues with the provision of bus shelters and bus stops. The issues included safety; positioning, shelter from the weather; seating and maintenance.
- 7.7.2 The basic advertising bus shelters are managed by MBC through a contractor. The new contract was in the process of being procured and if the existing contractor was unsuccessful in renewing the contract they would be likely to take away the existing shelters.
- 7.7.3 Parish councils can provide their own shelters and can apply for up to £2000 Rural Bus Shelter Grant from KCC, which would require match funding. There is a Kent Design Guide to help parishes with the design and siting of their shelter and signing and on-going maintenance to ensure it is built in keeping with the surrounding area.
- 7.7.4 KCC and bus service providers agreed it would be useful for parishes to get involved with Kent Highways regarding the siting of shelters. It was also recommended the bus service providers are consulted on the design to ensure drivers are able to see there are passengers waiting to be picked up. Tovil Green's new bus shelter was described as a good example of an effective bus shelter.

Recommendation

- J. That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to include the potential use of Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy monies to support the provision of bus services, and/or provide capital equipment for bus services in the Borough in the Local Plan.*
- K. That Kent County Council Transport Planning Officers be recommended to make strong arguments where they can to give Section 106 agreements impetus to provide bus services in and around the Borough of Maidstone.*

7.8 Bus User Groups in the Maidstone Borough

7.8.1 East of Maidstone Bus Group (EMBG)

- 7.8.1.1 Membership of this group includes eight parish councils in the East of Maidstone; Kent County Council; NuVenture and Arriva.
- 7.8.1.2 The group meets two to three times each year to consider and address issues raised by parishes or bus operators to help improve and safeguard services across the area, draw attention to issues raised, publicise services and help drive up passenger numbers.
- 7.8.1.3 The main concerns raised by this group were:

- **Journey times** – and their impact on people deciding to travel by bus (or not). It was suggested that new routes should be considered side by side with the Local Plan;
- **Community Bus Services** – it was suggested it would be unrealistic for local authorities to expect voluntary/community projects to compensate for decreased bus services;
- **Section 106 Agreements** – should be used to support new/revised routes supporting the Rural Service Centres;
- **MBC Transport Committee** – this group was disbanded some years ago. It had high level representatives from bus service operators; Network Rail; Southeastern Rail; service users; MBC officers; KCC officers. The group discussed transport service issues across the Maidstone Borough as well as safety issues, planning consents and contributions from developers. EMBG considered this group to have been a valuable asset to driving forward improvements to public transport and should be re-established.

7.8.2 Local Transport Accessibility Group (LTAG)

7.8.2.1 This group represents Staplehurst, Frittenden, Sissinghurst, Cranbrook, Hawkhurst, Sandhurst and Bodiam, parishes who are connected in some way to Hawkhurst by bus.

7.8.2.2 The group meets every two months and is attended by parish councillors, residents' associations, bus service providers, Arriva, Kent County Council and service users. The group provides a forum for service users and providers to have face to face discussions regarding bus service provision.

7.8.2.3 The main concerns raised by this group were:

7.8.2.4 **Performance and reliability of the No 5 bus route** – the group reported the unreliability of this service had resulted in many parents not risking their children going to/from school using this service due to reliability and capacity issues. Parents chose to take their children to school by car instead.

7.8.2.5 It was requested that better, more timely, information from KCC in relation to the issuing of bus passes for young people and those in school, college or training, would help bus operators plan more effectively, especially at the start of the academic year when passes were issued and re-issued.

7.8.3 The number 5 service has distinct flows of children to Cornwallis Academy and Maidstone schools in one direction and to Angley School in the other. The service came under the spotlight during the 2013-14 academic year regarding both capacity and operational issues. As a result Arriva delivered a number of operational changes to

help with reliability, such as the introduction of a regular set of drivers and more frequent maintenance inspections of vehicles. It is believed these changes have had a positive effect on the service.

- 7.8.4 Regarding capacity, KCC's involvement with the commercial network is to purchase season tickets for children in education who are entitled to free home to school transport. Due to this, and the existence of the Young Persons Travel Pass, KCC do work with commercial operators to assist with genuine issues of overcrowding where they are identified and take an interest in the network in general .

"KCC funds three additional capacity vehicles on the number 5 service as a result and are confident that the corridor is now robust enough to cater for all intending passengers. Our understanding is that correspondence this year has centred around operational issues which are actively being addressed by Arriva as the commercial operator. Ultimately, these need to continue to be raised with Arriva or failing that with the Traffic Commission which is the statutory body responsible for the regulation of commercial bus service operations. KCC is confident the capacity on the corridor but continues to liaise with Arriva on this and other issues."

KCC Local Transport Planning (Mid Kent)

- 7.8.5 **Arriva App for mobile phones** – in relation to providing real time information and the location of buses was considered a useful advance and would make life easier for those who owned a Smart phone. However, many rural bus service users did not own a Smart phone.

Recommendation

- A. That *(who)* be encouraged *(by whom)* to form groups similar to the East of Maidstone Bus User Group.

8 Rail Services

9 Recommendations

- A. *That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to lobby Kent County Council on the reconfiguration of the Maidstone Gyrotory system to ensure safe cycle passages. The design of the gyrotory system should incorporate surface cycle passages (not subways) for cyclist heading in and out of the town from west Maidstone using the A20 and A26.*
- B. *That the Head of Planning and Development be asked to report back to Committee before the end of the municipal year 2014-2014 on:*
- *The identity of potential routes 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;*
 - *The costs of firstly providing cycle parking at the end of these routes;*
 - *The cost of the longer term aim of developing the cycle route to the cycle parking.*
- C. *That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to urgently refresh and update the draft Maidstone Borough Council Draft Cycling Strategy, dated June 2012, for further scrutiny by the Committee before the end of the 2014-2015 municipal year and before taking it for public consultation.*
- D. *That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development use the principal proposals from the refreshed Cycling Strategy to inform the emerging Integrated Transport Strategy.*
- E. *That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport 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;*
 - *Identify a lead member to act as a cycling champion within the authority.*
- F. *That at the next Quality Bus Partnership meeting Dan Bruce, Transport Planner, Kent County Council, request that a member of Maidstone Borough Council's Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee (PTD OSC) be invited to join the Partnership.*
- G. *That the Public Transport Team, Kent County Council at his meeting with KCC Highways raise the following requests and report back to committee on the response before the end of the 2014-2015 municipal year:*
- *A definitive list of forthcoming road closures be sent to bus service providers in a timely manner to facilitate compliance with the Traffic Commissioners regulations;*

- *A set of processes and procedures are established and put in place for communicating road closures to avoid problems when changes to Highways personnel are made;*
 - *A definition of what constitutes an emergency road closure is published and shared with bus service providers.*
- H. *That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to re-establish the Maidstone Borough Transport User Group with membership to include representatives from all public transport service providers, KCC transport planners, MBC officers/members, parish councils, service users and other interested parties to ensure on-going issues with transport and ideas for enhancements to services are communicated and dealt with.*
- I. *That a Maidstone Borough Council Officer be asked to investigate and report back to the Committee before the end of the municipal year 2014-2015 on the progress and lessons learnt from the Medway twilight bus service once the trial is completed.*
- J. *That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to include the potential use of Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy monies to support the provision of bus services, and/or provide capital equipment for bus services in the Borough in the Local Plan.*
- K. *That Kent County Council Transport Planning Officers be recommended to make strong arguments where they can to give Section 106 agreements impetus to provide bus services in and around the Borough of Maidstone.*
- M. *That (who) be encouraged (by whom) to form groups similar to the East of Maidstone Bus User Group.*

10 Thanks

The Committee would like to express their thanks to:

- Bartholomew Wren – Economic Development Officer Regeneration and Transport, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council;
- Colin Finch – Senior Public Rights of Way Officer, Kent County Council;
- Tay Arnold – Cycling Transport Planner, Kent Highways, Kent County Council;
- Sarah Shearsmith, Community development Team Leader, Maidstone Borough Council;
- Tim Hapgood, Transport Consultant, Spatial Policy Team, Maidstone Borough Council;
- Giuliano Gianforte, Environment Officer (Air Quality)
- James Gower;
- Stephen Horton, Road Safety Team, KCC
- Dan Bruce, Local Transport Planner (Mid Kent), KCC;
- Shane Hymers, Public Transport Policy and Strategy Manager, KCC;
- Norman Kemp, Nu-Venture Coaches Ltd;
- Matthew Arnold, Commercial Manager, Arriva;
- Mike Fitzgerald, Chairman of East of Maidstone Bus Group and Chair Kent Community Rail Partnership and Medway Valley Line Group;
- Parish Councillor Peter Spearink, Staplehurst PC;
- Mike Gibson, Partnership Manager, South Eastern Rail
- Keith Harrison, Chief Executive, Action with Rural Communities
- Stephen Gasche, Principal Transport Planner – Rail, Kent County Council
- Parish Councils:
 - Marden
 - Boxley
 - Leeds
 - Sutton Valence
 - Bearsted
 - Boughton Monchelsea
 - East Farleigh
 - Staplehurst
 - Headcorn
 - Kingswood and Broomfield

11 Evidence Log

- Department for Transport Road Congestion and Reliability Statistics, Congestion on local 'A' roads, England: Apr to Jun 2014 report (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/343339/congestion-local-a-stats-release-jun-14.pdf)
- Department for Transport British Social Attitudes Survey 2012: public attitudes towards transport (July 2013)
- www.publications.parliament.uk - Transport Committee – Ninth Report, Out of the Jam: reducing congestion on our roads published 6 September 2011.
- www.bbc.co.uk/history/domesday/dblock/GB-576000-153000/page/3
- Mid Kent Share Services – Environmental Health
- http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/193108/REVIHAAP-Final-technical-report-final-version.pdf
- <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/news/news-and-press-releases/jobs-news/jobs-and-transport-boost-from-104m-growth-deal-funding>.
- Kent and Medway Economic Partnership is the local arm of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SE LEP) which brings together key leaders from business, local government, and further and higher education to boost economic growth across Kent, Medway, East Sussex, Essex, Thurrock and Southend.
- <http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/meetings/documents/g2059/Public%20reports%20pack%2027th-Jan-2014%2018.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>
- <http://dynamic.maidstone.gov.uk/pdf/Local%20Plan%20Regulation%2018.pdf>
- Report published 15 September 2014 – www.cedar.iph.cam.ac.uk/blog/walking-cycling-public-transport-wellbeing/
- <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-295663>
- Report of Head of Planning and Development to PTD OSC 22 July 2014 - <http://services.maidstone.gov.uk/meetings/documents/s37180/agenda%20item%2011%20Question%20Sheet%20-%20for%20front%20of%20Committee%20reports.pdf> page 21 paragraph 3.5
- [Bikeability.dft.gov.uk](http://bikeability.dft.gov.uk)
- <http://www.cyclefriday.co.uk/>
- www.walkinforhealth.org.uk
- www.goskyride.com
- <http://www.kmcharityteam.co.uk/schools/schoolswalk/>
- <http://www.cyclescheme.co.uk/employers/employer-faqs>
- Maidstoneramblers.org.uk
- u3asites.org.uk
- www.midkentgroup.co.uk
- www.wkkg.org.uk
- www.sanfairyancc.co.uk
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/chief-medical-officer-publishes-annual-report-on-state-of-the-publics-health>

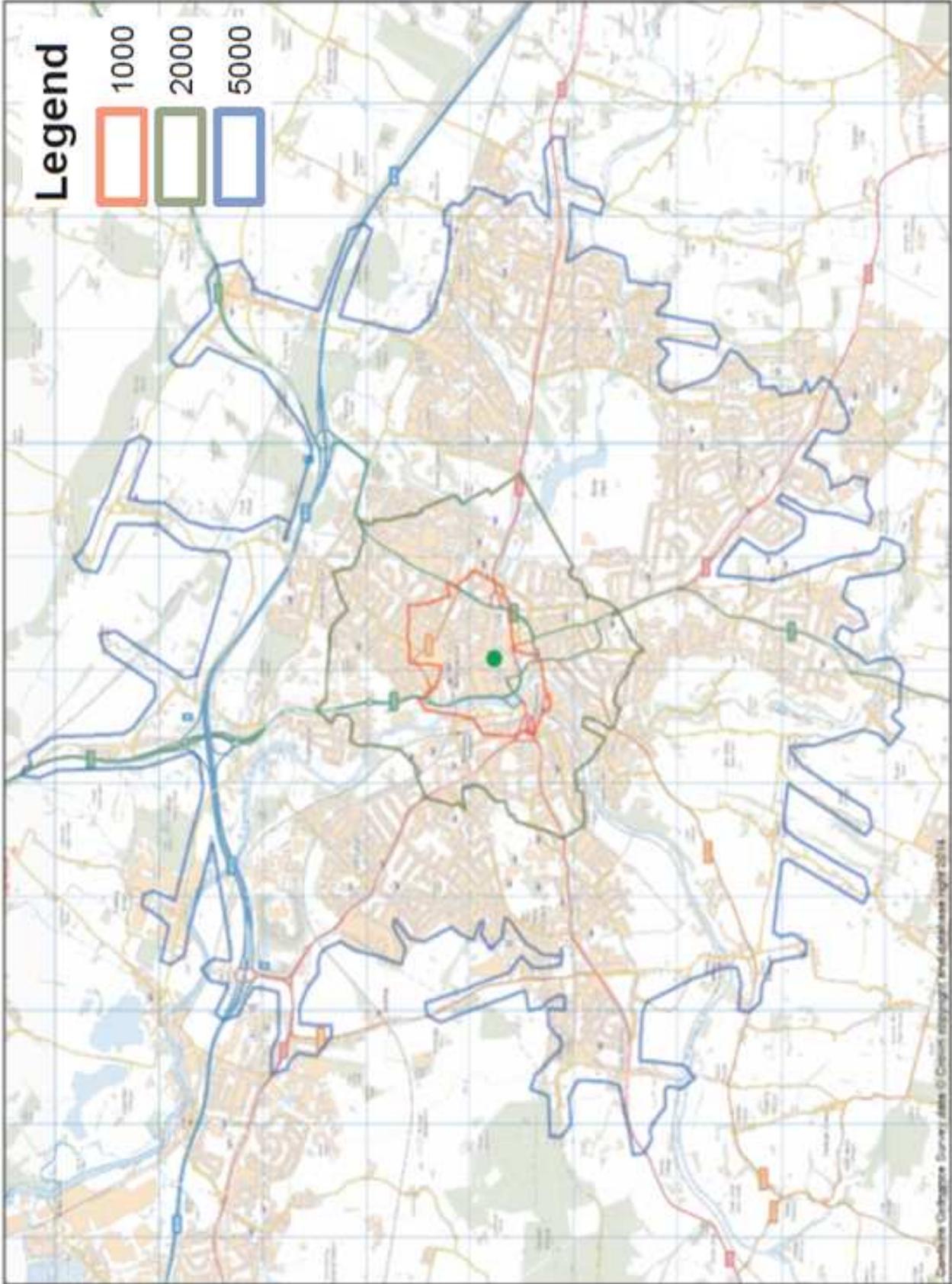
- <http://www.nhs.uk/news/2014/02february/pages/cycling-safety-a-special-report.aspx>
- <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s43305/B1%20Updated%20Policy%20for%2020mph%20limits%20and%20zones%20on%20KCC%20roads%203102013%20Environment%20Highways%20and%20Wast.pdf>
- <http://www.maidstone.gov.uk/residents/parking-and-streets/quality-bus-partnership>
- HC288 published 22 July 2014)

Written Evidence

Meetings

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Appendix A - Maidstone Walking and Cycling Isochrones



Appendix B - Review of Transport in Maidstone Borough - alternatives to using a car

Cycling and Walking external witness interviews

Questions asked of witnesses to help them prepare

James Gower, cycling enthusiast

Tay Arnold, Cycling Planner, Kent Highways, Transport and Waste and Colin Finch, Senior Public Rights of Way Officer, Kent County Council:

- What is already being done to encourage cycling and walking in Maidstone and the Borough?
- What is working?
- What is not working?
- What are other areas doing?
- What is your 'dream vision' for cycling and walking in the borough?
- What can Councillors do to help?

Bartholomew Wren, Economic Development Officer, Regeneration and Transport, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council:

- What are Tunbridge Wells doing to encourage cycling and walking?
- What is working?
- What is not working?
- What is your 'dream vision' for cycling in Tunbridge Wells?

Sarah Shearsmith, Community Development Team Leader, Maidstone Borough Council:

- What is happening to promote walking in the borough?
- What is working?
- What are the issues/barriers to success?
- What is your 'dream vision'?
- What can Councillors do to help?

Tim Hapgood, Transport Consultant, Spatial Policy, Maidstone Borough Council (MBC):

- Where is MBC now with cycling and walking in the Integrated Transport Strategy?

Appendix C - Review of Transport in Maidstone Borough - alternatives to using a car

Bus Services external witness interviews

Questions asked of witnesses to help them prepare

- How viable is it to enhance the bus services (listed on the right) including to compliment the 'twilight' economy?
- If Arriva are unable to provide the suggested enhancements – is there funding KCC could provide?
- The House of Commons Transport Select Committee report on Passenger transport in isolated communities (HC288 published 22 July 2014) discusses the concept of 'total transport' which involves pooling transport resources to deliver a range of services, eg, combining hospital transport with local bus services – Is it possible to create a form of total transport for Maidstone Borough?
- Could an 'oyster card' type system be introduced to provide flexibility to move from service to service?
- What would need to be done to ensure bus routes are in place and running before new developments are completed?
 - What can MBC do to help with this?
- Has any consideration been given to providing a radial bus service running around Maidstone?
- How possible would it be to provide a 'flag down' service for rural services where bus stops are situated on roads without footpaths?
 - Could a service such as this be trialled?

When will real time service update boards be provided at rural bus stops?

- What can be done to minimise disruption ie car parked blocking roads and lack of timely information going to service providers
- How can the criteria for the different bus services be clarified?
- Why are people who live within 500 meters of a bus stop not able to use the Kent Carrier Service?
- How viable would it be to introduce interchangeability of tickets between the different service?
- What is being done to combat buses arriving and leaving earlier than scheduled?

- The House of Commons Transport Select Committee report on Passenger transport in isolated communities (HC288 published 22 July 2014) raise again the potential for local authorities to use Quality Contract to introduce franchising systems similar to those operating in London – where the local transport authority specifies what service is required and the private sector competes for the right to provide it – how viable would Quality Contracts be for the Maidstone borough?
- Has KCC investigated how the test case, Nexus in Tyne and Wear, has performed with Quality Contract? If not, is this something they could find out?

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Agenda Item 10

Maidstone Borough Council

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 18 November 2014

Transport in Maidstone - alternatives to using a car - Part Three - Rail Services

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:

-
-
-
-
-

Guidance note - Making Quality Overview and Scrutiny Recommendations

Scrutiny recommendations should seek to make a real difference to local people and the services provided. Recommendations that note a change or request further information fail to resolve problems or make changes. The scrutiny team have identified the following criteria for quality recommendations, they:

- affect and make a difference to local people;
- result in a change in policy that improves services;
- identify savings and maintain/improve service quality; or
- objectively identify a solution.

One way of checking the usefulness of recommendations is to evaluate them against the 'six Ws' set out below:

Good recommendations should answer these questions:

Why does it need to be done?	This will help ensure the outcome is relevant and in the right context – if a meeting is being requested it will ensure the correct people are invited to attend
Who is being asked to do it?	Without this nothing will get done (no one will take ownership)
What needs to be done?	Needs to be clear and specific
HoW will it be done?	Again, needs to be clear and specific, what is the expected output- for example a report to be written or a meeting to be arranged
Where does it need to be done/go?	If it's a meeting – where is it needed If it's a report – where is it to go, who needs to see it
When does it need to be done?	Crucial to have a timescale – without a deadline it will never get done

Thinking about these points will help ensure the outcomes of scrutiny are effective and will aid monitoring.

Maidstone Borough Council

Planning, Transport and environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 18 November 2014

Review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car Stage Three – Rail Services

Report of: Tessa Mallett, Overview & Scrutiny Officer

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its first meeting of the 2014-15 Municipal Year the Committee agreed to carry out a review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car, with the main purpose of looking at ways of easing congestion in Maidstone town centre.
- 1.2 A Working Group was appointed to develop and scope the review topic. The scoping document is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 1.3 Stage one of this review – Walking and Cycling was carried out at the meeting on 22 July 2014.
- 1.4 Stage two of this review – Bus Services was carried out on 16 and 30 September 2014.
- 1.5 The draft reports for stages one and two (Bus Services) of the review are being presented to the committee at this meeting.
- 1.6 This item is Stage three of the review – Rail Services.
- 1.7 The full draft report for all three stages of the review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car, will be presented to the committee at their meeting of 17 February 2014.
- 1.8 In preparation for the review of Rail services the working group consulted with all Parish Councils asking for the following information:
 - What issues does your parish have with train services within the borough that result in people using their car rather than the train?
- 1.9 Responses were received from six Parish Councils and are attached at **Appendix B**. A Response from Loose Parish Council is attached as **Appendix C**.
- 1.10 Witnesses invited to attend this meeting are:
 - Mike Gibson, Public Affairs Manager, SouthEastern Rail;

- Mike Fitzgerald, Chair Kent Community Rail Partnership and Medway Valley Line Group;
- Keith Harrison, Chief Executive, Action with Rural Communities;
- Stephen Gasche, Principal Transport Planner – Rail, Kent County Council (KCC).

1.11 Questions sent to these witnesses to help with their preparation for the meeting included:

- What are your perceptions of the where the weaknesses are in rail services in the Maidstone borough?
- What could rail service providers/planners do to relieve some of the congestion pressure in Maidstone?
- What do you do to integrate your services with other public transport services?
- How can scheduled changes be better communicated to users?

1.12 Mr Gasche is unable to attend the meeting but has sent his responses to the questions which are attached as **Appendix D**. Mr Gasche responded to the following questions:

- What can KCC do to help integrate all the public transport services?
- What can KCC do to encourage more innovative transport services?

2. Recommendation

2.1 The committee are advised to review the evidence gathered by the working group to date (Appendix B, C and D) in preparation for interviewing the witnesses at this meeting.

2.2 The committee may wish to focus its questioning on:

- The feedback received from the parish councils;
- The questions sent to the witnesses as per 1.11 and 1.12 above;
- The Scoping document for the review attached as **Appendix A**.

2.3 Committee are recommended to focus their questioning on how rail services can be provided to help ease congestion in Maidstone.

3. Impact on Corporate Objectives

3.1 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.

3.2 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'.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications.

5. Relevant Documents

5.1 Appendix A – Review scoping document
Appendix B – Feedback received from borough and parish
councillors
Appendix C – Feedback received from Loose Parish Council
Appendix D – Written response from Stephen Gasche, Principal
Transport Planner – Rail, Kent County Council.

6. Background Documents

6.1 None

Scoping Template

<p>Name of Review:</p> <p>Transport in Maidstone Borough – alternatives to using a car</p>
<p>What are the objectives and desired outcomes of the review</p> <p>The review will initially be in three stages aimed at identifying how congestion in Maidstone town centre can be eased.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <p>Stage 1 - Cycling and Walking (proposed date 22 July meeting):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify cycling/walking groups in the Borough • Establish what work has/is already been/being done regarding the promotion of walking and cycling to avoid duplication of effort • Identify and make recommendations on how MBC can work to increase the use of cycling and walking in the Borough <p>Stage 2 - Bus (16 and 30 September 2014):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communication with the Quality Bus Partnership to enable Councillors to influence debate where they can • Identify bus user groups in the Borough to avoid duplication of effort • Identify existing bus service providers operating in the RSCs • Make recommendations how improvements can be made to bus service provision to the Rural Service Centres (RSC) <p>Stage 3 - Rail (11 November 2014):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify rail user groups in the Borough to avoid duplication of effort • Gain an insight into KCC and rail providers strategic plans for rail in the Borough • Establish MBC member links with KCC and rail service providers <p>Review of scope and objectives:</p> <p>After consideration of the evidence gathered under each area, the working group will recommend either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support what is already being worked on; • Continue with further evidence gathering with revised objectives; • Other – depending on what comes to light from evidence gathering. <p>Final Report and Recommendations:</p> <p>Final report to include all three areas and recommendations.</p>
<p>What equality issues will need to be considered as part of the review – giving consideration to the 9 protected characteristics:</p> <p>Ensuring access to all</p>
<p>Which witnesses are required?</p> <p>Cycling and Walking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colin Finch, Snr Public Rights of Way Officer, KCC • James Gower – @maidstoneonbike suggestion via Twitter (FWP) • Bartholomew Wren, Tunbridge Wells BC • Tay Arnold Cycling Transport Planner, KCC • Elliott Dean, Cycling enthusiast • Cllr Paul Harper (MBC) • Michael Murphy, Principal Planning Officer, MBC

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tim Hapgood, Transport Planner, MBC <p>Rail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nina Peak, SouthEastern • Stephen Gasche <p>Bus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dan Bruce, KCC Highways • Shane Hymers - KCC • Norman Kemp, Nu-Venture • Matthew Arnold, Arriva • Mike Fitzgerald, East of Maidstone Bus Group
<p>Other ways to seek evidence? E.g. site visits, involving members of the public, consultation.</p> <p>To be agreed.</p>
<p>What information/training is needed?</p> <p>To be agreed.</p>
<p>Suggested time for review and report completion date</p> <p>To be agreed.</p> <p>The proposal is to split the review into three initially:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cycling and Walking – 22 July 2014 2. Bus – 16 and 30 September 2014 3. Rail – 11 November 2014
<p>How does the review link to council priorities?</p> <p>For Maidstone to have a growing economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A transport network that supports the local economy <p>For Maidstone to be a decent place to live</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continues to be a clear and attractive environment for people who live in and visit the Borough • Residents are not disadvantaged because of where they live or who they are, vulnerable people are assisted and the level of deprivation is reduced <p>Corporate and Customer Excellence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services are customer focused and residents are satisfied with them • Effective, cost efficient services are delivered across the Borough
<p>How does this item deliver CfPS effective scrutiny principles?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers • Enables the voice and concerns of the public • Is carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny role • Drives improvement in public services
<p>Any co-optees or expert witnesses?</p>

Rail Services – Parish Council responses to the following question:

What issues does your parish have with train services within the borough that result in people using their car rather than the train?

Parish	Comment/s
Sutton Valence	More travellers would use the train instead of their cars if the train fares were more affordable.
	The majority of parishioners from Sutton Valence use Headcorn Station where there is an issue with both the availability of parking and the cost.
	To use the number 12 bus to get to Headcorn is not viable because of the infrequent service and the cost.
East Sutton	The main train station used by parishioners of East Sutton is Headcorn. The car parking at Headcorn is inadequate with nowhere near enough spaces. The cost to park is also a deterrent.
	The high cost of train travel means that the fares are a prohibiting factor to many potential users.
	The increase in anti-social behaviour on the trains was also a major concern, with insufficient staff on the trains to deal with it.
Yalding	<p>The issue is that the train station is a long way from the village therefore you have to drive to it. The car park is quite small and there have been incidents of damage to cars. The station is not on a main line so the service will only take you to Paddock Wood or Maidstone. People feel that once in the car they might as well continue the journey by car. If they are going to Maidstone Town centre it is much quicker by car.</p> <p>If the bus service from the village went via the train station at the correct link up time this may encourage people to use the train. The bus already goes to Laddingford so this would add very little to the journey time. Councillors have asked KCC to look at this in the past but have always had a negative response.</p>
Teston	Teston's nearest railway station is over a mile from the centre of our village by road/path and we are sure this is an important factor particularly for our elderly residents

Parish	Comment/s
Staplehurst	<p>Staplehurst station is well used, both for commuting to London and more local journeys.</p> <p>As far as travelling to central London is concerned, it's difficult to imagine any changes to the service which would effectively reduce car travel.</p> <p>There is a significant amount of rail travel, particularly by students and schoolchildren, from Staplehurst to Paddock Wood, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells. The lack of good, direct east-west roads means that rail journey times to Paddock Wood and Tonbridge are competitive with car use.</p> <p>For journeys to Tunbridge Wells, or destinations on the fringe of south London or the outskirts of Ashford, although the trunk rail journey is likely to be competitive in speed, poor onward connections to the eventual destination may make it more attractive to use the car. Better coordination between different modes of public transport might improve this situation - both physical connections and through ticketing.</p> <p>Travel by train from Staplehurst to destinations in East Kent (Canterbury, Thanet, Folkestone, Dover) is likely to be less attractive following the next revision to the Southeastern timetable, when trains will no longer divide at Ashford.</p> <p>It is possible to travel from Staplehurst to Maidstone by rail by changing at Paddock Wood, but this is unlikely to offer an attractive alternative to the private car or (at most times of day) the bus.</p> <p>For passengers making longer journeys starting from Staplehurst, connections to Gatwick Airport are not as good as they could be.</p> <p>Similarly, if more Eurostar trains called at Ashford, this would become more attractive in comparison with Ebbsfleet, which in practical terms is only accessible by car.</p>

LPC response to request for comment on Maidstone Rail services – a starting point.

As many know, the problems of Maidstone's rail links are historical – the town never wanted to have much to do with railways in their early days. Once it was realised the rail idea might catch on, the town ended up on what were effectively two branch lines of the major Kent rail routes. Playing catch-up, Maidstone at least now has a limited high-speed link to London from Maidstone West (which is apparently over-subscribed, as are most commuter trains) but only the East station in the town has reasonable (if expensive) provision for parking. There are admittedly plans for development of the East site, but these have been off/on for a few years and as the development ideas centre on retail premises, conflict between rail-user/retail parking is in prospect.

The recent MBC Draft Local Plan noted that many commuters travel to rail stations in the Weald, in preference to those in the town. Many of these commuters will live to the south of Maidstone, including Loose Parish. Their reasons for opting for the Weald stations apparently include the traffic problems associated with travelling across town, the easier options for parking and the ability to arrive at and depart from a more central London destination than St Pancras.

The Draft Local plan envisioned housing development in both Staplehurst and Marden. Aside from concern over road infrastructure issues expressed in other consultation documents, one assumes that the added population will generate increased (improved?) rail services in the Weald which may draw more commuters from South Maidstone to the Weald line. The Draft Local plan was very Maidstone-centric and despite playing lip service to an Integrated Transport Strategy, the Council seems to have no strategy for improved public transport links to the Weald stations. The existing Arriva No. 5 route is the main link, and it runs a timetable which is essentially of little use to commuters, or indeed many potential rail travellers.

The off-peak and recreational traveller may possibly pay less for their rail travel, but they face the same infrastructure problems as commuters: Lack of suitable parking adjacent to rail stations and a town where the main bus station is on the opposite side of the town to its main station. When we say 'main station', several route planner requests on the National Rail Service start with 'first walk to Maidstone Barracks' so travellers can access the Weald line to the south or North Kent coast route. For instance, a trip to Gatwick from Maidstone East usually involves going via London Victoria for about £31, whilst going via Maidstone Barracks/West via the Weald costs less (about £18) but involves three train changes (and neither journey gets you there before 7.00am – not good for early check-ins). Going to the continent, unless one travels up to St Pancras or Ebbsfleet (which involves the limited High Speed train or other Maidstone West service to Strood and onward), the first train from Maidstone East to Ashford International (6.32) gets in eight minutes after the first train to Brussels has left and the first train to Paris is at 9.55.

Finally, there is also limited guidance for those arriving in Maidstone by rail, and unfamiliar with the town, as to its public transport infrastructure, such as it is. Although aspects of the transport structure are in the hands of bus and rail companies, and MBC may argue other elements are subject to KCC approval/subsidy, this should be no excuse for their lack of co-ordination and publicity of transport facilities. The policy (or lack of it) ill-serves a county town.

Stephen Gasche, Principal Transport Planner - Rail

Kent County Council

Respondes to the following questions:

- *What can KCC do to help integrate all the public transport services?*

It is not possible to integrate all public transport services in the way the question suggests, as the bus network in England & Wales (outside Greater London) is deregulated. This means in practice that about 80% of Kent's bus network is commercially operated by the main bus operators such as Arriva and Stagecoach, leaving about 20% to be provided by KCC in the form of operating subsidy for socially necessary services. There are some instances, however, where bus and rail coordination (a more accurate word to describe this than integration) works in practice. The most obvious example in West Kent is the operation of route 123 between West Malling station and Kings Hill, which has a timetable based entirely on rail connections at the station in order to provide a link between Kings Hill and rail services at West Malling.

One practical step which KCC has taken during the past year is to persuade Southeastern that the 0747 Ashford to Maidstone East service is absolutely critical for school pupils travelling to schools in Maidstone. There used to be frequent occasions when this service was cut, or operated non-stop between Ashford and Maidstone, leaving school children stranded. Now Southeastern / Network Rail's joint control centre knows that this train must operate, even if it means making changes to other services as a result. On the whole this service has been much more reliable, ensuring that pupils get to their schools in Maidstone on time.

- *What can KCC do to encourage more innovative transport services?*

KCC has taken a substantive initiative in respect of rail services in Kent. In April 2011 the County Council produced a 'Rail Action Plan for Kent' which set out the key recommendations for the new rail franchise, which was then expected to commence in April 2014. Many of these new initiatives have been incorporated in the new timetable which the Southeastern 'Direct Award' franchise will introduce in January 2015. These include a round-the-coast High Speed service linking many of the East Kent coastal towns with each other and with St Pancras for the first time; some journey time improvements on the North Kent route; a much better spread of intervals between trains on

the route from Maidstone East to Ashford; and through services in off-peak periods between Maidstone East and Canterbury West.

KCC also succeeded in persuading the Department for Transport to make a significant change which would ease some of the problems affecting commuters in West Kent. Working in partnership with East Sussex CC, other local authorities and local businesses in both counties, KCC and ESCC persuaded the DfT to change its original proposal to bring Thameslink services to Tunbridge Wells as a replacement for Cannon Street services there. Instead, the DfT agreed with KCC that the most important destination for Thameslink services in Kent would be Maidstone East rather than Tunbridge Wells. As a result, from May 2018 Maidstone East will be served by a direct half-hourly service, calling at West Malling for Kings Hill, Borough Green & Wrotham, Otford, Swanley, Bickley, Bromley South, Elephant & Castle, Blackfriars, City Thameslink, Farringdon, St Pancras (and north to Kentish Town, West Hampstead and Luton).

This new Thameslink service will be operated by brand new Class 700 trains, and will provide a direct link between the county town of Kent and four key City stations. Furthermore, from 2019 interchange at Farringdon to the new Crossrail services will offer a new route to Heathrow and the West End with just one change of train. The service will operate throughout the peak periods (i.e. to London in AM peak and from London in PM peak), and during a part of the off-peak periods. This will represent a substantial improvement for Maidstone commuters to and from the City as well as offering a new rail route to London which will have the added benefit of starting at Maidstone and therefore providing an empty train with plenty of seats at the start of its journey.

It is also hoped that this new City service will substantially remove the extensive rail-heading which occurs today between locations along the Maidstone East line and those on the Tonbridge / Sevenoaks line by commuters needing access to a direct City rail service. This in turn should ease the congestion on that route.

Agenda Item 12

Maidstone Borough Council

Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday 18 November 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 at **Appendix C**, and discusses whether any further comment or monitoring is required.
- 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 is attached as **Appendix C**.

7 Future Work Programme Update

- 7.1 At the time of writing this report there have been no changes to the committee's future work programme since the meeting of 16 September 2014.

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

11. Background Documents

- 11.1 None

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

2014

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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 <i>Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy – including the Open Space Standards action plan</i> 		Matthew Arnold, Arriva Mike Fitzgerald, EMBG Norman Kemp, NuVenutre 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

Meeting Date	Report deadline	Agenda Items	Details and desired outcome	Report Author and Witnesses
18 November	5 November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car – RAIL SERVICES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draft Walking and Cycling Report ○ Draft Bus Services Report 		
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	Draft report on review of Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using a car All three parts (walking and cycling, buses and rail)		
17 March	4 March			
21 April	8 April	Infrastructure Delivery Plan for Local Plan ¹		Rob Jarman

Keep open for discussion possibly adding to FWP

- 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



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LIST OF FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

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

Publication Date: 7 November 2014

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” –

Forthcoming Decisions
November 2014 - March 2015

- 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
-
- 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.

Forthcoming Decisions
November 2014 - March 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 (if Private the reason why)	Documents to be submitted (other relevant documents may be submitted)
<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: Wednesday 12 Nov 2014</p> <p style="text-align: right;">85</p>	<p>Draft Economic Development Strategy 2014</p> <p>To consider to publish the draft Economic Development Strategy for consultation purposes.</p>		<p>Dawn Hudd dawnhudd@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>Draft Economic Development Strategy 2014</p>
<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: Wednesday 12 Nov 2014</p>	<p>Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee SCRAIP regarding - Amendment to decision making arrangements for Neighbourhood Plans</p> <p>Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee SCRAIP regarding - Amendment to decision making arrangements for Neighbourhood Plans.</p>		<p>Tessa Mallett tessamallett@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee SCRAIP regarding - Amendment to decision making arrangements for Neighbourhood Plans</p>

Forthcoming Decisions
November 2014 - March 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 (if Private the reason why)	Documents to be submitted (other relevant documents may be submitted)
<p>Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development</p> <p>Due Date: Friday 14 Nov 2014</p>	<p>PARK AND RIDE SITE SITTINGBOURNE ROAD</p> <p>To consider the options available in relation to the Park and Ride site located at Sittingbourne Road following negotiations with the land owner Gallagher Properties Limited.</p>		<p>Jeff Kitson jeffkitson@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>Private - commercially sensitive</p>	<p>PARK AND RIDE SITE SITTINGBOURNE ROAD Enc. 1 for PARK AND RIDE SITE SITTINGBOURNE ROAD</p>
<p>Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development</p> <p>Due Date: Friday 28 Nov 2014</p>	<p>VARIATION TO TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS</p> <p>To consider the objections received in relation to the formal consultation following the advertising of;</p> <p>The Kent County Council (Borough of Maidstone) Waiting Restrictions Order (variation No 25) Order 2014.</p>		<p>Jeff Kitson jeffkitson@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>VARIATION TO TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS</p>

Forthcoming Decisions
November 2014 - March 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 (if Private the reason why)	Documents to be submitted (other relevant documents may be submitted)
<p>Cabinet</p> <p>Due Date: Wednesday 14 Jan 2015</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">87</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Local Plan - Development Management Policies</p> <p>Proposed amendments to the development management policies in the local plan following regulation 18 public consultation in Spring 2014.</p>	<p>KEY Reason: Policies, Plans, Strategies</p>	<p>Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development Robjarman@maidstone.gov.uk</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>Maidstone Borough Local Plan - Development Management Policies</p>

SCRAIP Report for PTD OSC 18 November 2014

Up to 5 November 2014



Meeting, Date & Minute	Recommendation	Executive Decision Maker	Action Expected Outcome	Response	Lead Officer
PTD.140916.56.1	Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services be recommended to involve the Kent Association of Local Councils and Area Committee Officers in the preparatory work for the review of the Parish Charter, before consulting fully with all parish councils, to ensure a process of two way communication in the development of Neighbourhood Plans and the Local Plan is included.	Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services		Meetings have taken place with representatives from the Parish Councils, KALC and members of MBC's senior management team. A draft new Charter is under review and should be adopted by March 2015.	Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services; John Littlemore
PTD.140916.57.1	The Head of Planning and Development be recommended to ensure representatives from parish councils and Area Committee Officers are involved in the design of the process for administering the distribution of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), before consulting fully with all parish councils, before the Local Plan is adopted, so parish councils are assured Maidstone Borough Council fulfils its' duty to pass the appropriate level of CIL receipts to local councils.	Cabinet Member for Planning Transport and Development		The Cabinet Member will ensure the progression of the CIL process continues to pass through Overview and Scrutiny and suggests that Overview and Scrutiny invite parish and KALC members to participate in their meetings whilst reviewing this subject.	Rob Jarman; Sue Whiteside

Meeting, Date & Minute	Recommendation	Executive Decision Maker	Action Expected Outcome	Response	Lead Officer
PTD.140916.59.2	The Head of Housing and Community Services be asked to email to members of the committee an overview of the different categories and classifications of affordable housing and eligibility criteria for each.	Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing		Information provided to PTD OSC and training event on affordable organised for 20 October 2014.	John Littlemore
68 PTD.140930.69.1	The evidence submitted to Committee, on 30 September 2014, be used by the Review of Transport in Maidstone Working Group to develop draft recommendations for consideration by Committee on 18 November 2014 as part of the draft report for stages one (Walking and Cycling) and two (Buses) of the review.			Noted	Tessa Mallett
PTD.140930.69.2	The Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be asked to provide the Review Working Group with further information about the re-tendering exercise for the provision and maintenance of bus shelters, and the selling of advertising at bus shelters, to enable consideration of how information about buses, including real time information and contact numbers for buses, could be displayed at bus shelters across the borough.	Cabinet Member for Planning Transport and Development		The Cabinet Member has asked for a copy of the tender document and proposed to share this with Overview and Scrutiny. there is an early suggestion that KCC no longer support interactive information signage due to reliability and communication issues. This is being investigated and findings will be shared. Overview and Scrutiny may wish to contact Toby Butler at KCC. The Cabinet Member also suggest that commercial organisations also be involved.	David Tibbit

Maidstone Borough Council - Local Plan Workshop 17th September

Statement from Southern Water

Southern Water is the statutory sewerage undertaker and provides wastewater services in Maidstone Borough.

Southern Water has a statutory duty to serve new development, and is committed to providing the right wastewater infrastructure in the right place at the right time. Capacity above that which is currently available can be provided in parallel with development, providing there is good forward planning.

Adopted Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans will inform Southern Water's investment planning. Adoption provides the planning certainty required to support investment proposals to Ofwat, the water industry's economic regulator. The next price review is this year. Ofwat's price determination will fund the company's investment programme in the period to 2020. There will be another price review in 2019, covering the investment period 2020 to 2025, and so on.

Strategic infrastructure such as extensions to wastewater treatment works can be planned and funded through the price review process, and co-ordinated with new development. However, local infrastructure, such as local sewers, should be funded by the development if this is specifically required to service individual development sites. To this end, the principle is that new development needs to connect to the sewerage system at the nearest points of adequate capacity. This may require off-site infrastructure if the nearest point is not located within the immediate vicinity of the site. Southern Water would take future income from customers into account, so that the developer would only need to fund a proportion of the total cost.

We look to the planning authority and Neighbourhood Plans to ensure through planning policies and planning conditions that development is co-ordinated with provision of infrastructure and not permitted to proceed unless it connects to the sewerage system at the nearest points of adequate capacity, as specified by Southern Water. This will ensure that levels of service are maintained to both new and existing customers, and that the risk of flooding is not increased to unacceptable levels.

Southern Water has carried out sewerage capacity assessments of all the sites identified in Maidstone Borough Council's draft Local Plan. We have provided comments to the planning authority to inform Local Plan policies. We have responded to a number of Neighbourhood Plans including Broomfield & Kingswood, Coxheath, Harrietsham, Loose, Marden, North Loose and Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plans. We hope that the information we have provided is of assistance to progress the plans so that planning certainty is achieved to support investment proposals to Ofwat.