

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 12 March 2019
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors D Burton (Chairman), Clark, Cox, Field, Garten, Mrs Grigg (Vice-Chairman), Munford, Parfitt-Reid and de Wiggondene-Sheppard

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Notification of Substitute Members	
3. Urgent Items	
4. Notification of Visiting Members	
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
6. Disclosures of Lobbying	
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information	
8. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2019	1 - 7
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
10. Questions and answer session for members of the public	
11. Committee Work Programme	8
12. Reports of Outside Bodies	9 - 11
13. Publication of Personal Information on the Planning Web Pages	12 - 17
14. Update on the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package	18 - 28
15. Maidstone Building for Life 12	29 - 56

Issued on Monday 4 March 2019

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk.

In order to speak at this meeting, please contact Democratic Services using the contact details above, by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. Friday 8th March 2019). If asking a question, you will need to provide the full text in writing. If making a statement, you will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on. Please note that slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk.

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to the Policy and Resources Committee, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by three Councillors, to the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance by: 19 February 2019.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2019

Present: Councillors D Burton (Chairman), Clark, Cox, Field, Garten, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Grigg, Parfitt-Reid and Perry

Also Present: Councillors McKay and Newton

152. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Munford and de Wiggondene-Sheppard.

153. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Gooch was present as a substitute for Councillor Munford.

Councillor Perry was present as a substitute for Councillor de Wiggondene-Sheppard.

154. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had agreed to take urgent updates to the following items:

- Item 14. Key Performance Indicator Update Quarter 3 18/19. The reason for urgency was that the update amended key information in the original report, as errors had been identified after publication.
- Item 17. Maidstone Local Plan Review: Call for Sites Information Pack including a New Garden Communities Prospectus. The reason for urgency was that the update provided additional clarity regarding the design and presentation of the Call for Sites Information Pack.

155. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that the following Councillors were present as Visiting Members:

- Councillor McKay, who indicated that he wished to speak on Item 15. Strategic Plan 2019-45 Action Plan and Item 16. Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies Approval.

- Councillor Newton, who reserved his right to speak on all items.

156. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

157. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

The following Councillors stated that they had been lobbied on Item 17. Maidstone Local Plan Review: Call for Sites Information Pack including a New Garden Communities Prospectus:

- Councillor D Burton
- Councillor Grigg
- Councillor Clark
- Councillor Cox
- Councillor Field
- Councillor Gooch
- Councillor Garten

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

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

159. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 JANUARY 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

160. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

161. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Ms Lizzie Hare asked the following question of the Chairman of the Committee:

In light of a recent, frankly shocking, report to Maidstone's Joint Transport Board (JTB) in January 2019 and comments at the October 2018 JTB to the effect that Fountain Junction may not achieve its mitigation or its aims and is seemingly not fit for purpose, what can be done by MBC as planning policy maker and authority to protect residents from further permissions looming on housing sites along the Hermitage Lane corridor,

thus putting more unmitigated congestion and pollution into this area where my family lives.

Mr James Willis asked the following question of the Chairman of the Committee:

We regularly hear, and in fact see, that one of, if not the biggest Maidstone issue is traffic, as demonstrated by a letter that appeared in national press recently.

Building on the work of this committee, looking at "park and ride" and the stated aim of Maidstone's approved current local plan to provide congestion and pollution busting sustainable transport measures, what plans does this committee have for the approximate £300k per annum budget that had been set aside for park and ride?

The Chairman responded to both questions and supplementary questions. The full response was recorded on the webcast and was made available on the Maidstone Borough Council website.

162. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Mr Mark Egerton, Strategic Planning Manager, advised the Committee that the Local Plan Resourcing item was scheduled for April 2019 rather than March 2019.

The Committee noted that the MITP Update had been delayed to March 2019. This allowed for an update on the business case submission to be shared.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

163. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED: That the Reports of Outside Bodies be noted.

164. 3RD QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING 2018/19

Ms Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance, informed the Committee that the report highlighted areas of concern and the actions taken in response to budget variances. Ms Dunnet stated that, with regards to revenue, there was an adverse variance of £234,000. This was projected to worsen by the end of the financial year. Key areas of consideration included Planning Services and Parking Services. Capital spending had predominantly consisted of grounds maintenance charges for landscaping works to the Bridges Gyratory. There was a remaining budget for flood prevention measures to the Bridges Gyratory, which was to be carried forward into the 2019/20 financial year.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The revenue position at the end of the third quarter and the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted.
2. The capital position at the end of the third quarter is noted.

165. 2018/19 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS UPDATE QUARTER 3

Ms Anna Collier, Policy and Information Manager, informed the Committee that three of four indicators had exceeded targets for Quarter 3. These had also improved when compared to the same quarter in 2017/18. Affordable Homes Delivered was below the target for Quarter 3, however, this KPI had exceeded targets in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2. It had therefore exceeded the year to date target. Ms Collier stated that data regarding new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), following approval of the Local Enforcement Plan by this Committee on 6 November 2018, had been included in the covering report. These KPIs were being tested, and feedback on the presentation of these indicators was welcomed. Furthermore, following agreement of the vision, priorities and outcomes of the Strategic Plan, KPIs were to be reviewed and developed for 2019/20. Members were invited to provide feedback on KPIs with Officers in March 2019.

The Committee commented that the presentation of the KPI regarding Affordable Houses Delivered required consideration as part of the upcoming KPI review. It was stated that although the indicator was highlighted as off track for Quarter 3, it was ahead of target for the year and was therefore not a concern. The "red" rating for the indicator was therefore misleading. With regards to the new KPIs for Enforcement, the Committee suggested that consideration be given to Outstanding Cases. The target figure for Outstanding Cases needed to be defined, to ensure that the KPI clearly conveyed positive or negative trends.

RESOLVED: That the summary of performance for Quarter 3 of 2018/19 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be noted.

166. STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-45 ACTION PLAN

Mrs Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance, informed the Committee that the vision, priorities, cross-cutting objectives, outcomes and "how we do things" elements of the Strategic Plan 2019-45 were agreed at Council in December 2018. The report outlined key actions that were to be completed over the next five years. It was emphasised that not all of the outcomes in the Strategic Plan were to be acted on immediately, and that the key actions covered significant projects rather than business as usual work. The Policy and Resources Committee was to review suggestions from this committee on 13 February 2019, and the final plan was to be considered at Council on 27 February 2019.

The Committee commented that the engagement undertaken throughout the development of the Strategic Plan had captured the views of a broad

range of stakeholders. The Committee stated, however, that the “Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure” snapshot did not reflect the issues with broadband that were experienced in rural areas.

RESOLVED: That the Draft Strategic Plan 2019-2045 be approved, for the further consideration of the Policy and Resources Committee, subject to the following amendment to the “Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure” snapshot, bullet point 5:

“In 2018 the average home broadband speed was around 46.2Mbps, up from 36.2Mbps in 2017. We do recognise that in the rural areas there are substantial problems with domestic broadband.”

Voting: Unanimous

167. SPORTS FACILITIES AND PLAYING PITCH STRATEGIES APPROVAL

Mr Egerton informed the Committee that the Sports Facilities Strategy and Playing Pitch Strategy formed part of the evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. These strategies also informed development management decisions and provided the Council with an evidence base for future budgetary needs or grant funding applications. The strategies were developed in consultation with key stakeholders, in accordance with Sports England requirements. The data demonstrated the level of provision in the Borough based on the quantity, quality, accessibility and availability of the Borough’s indoor and outdoor sports facilities and playing pitches. Consultation on these strategies had taken place and amendments had been made accordingly. The responses to the consultation were publicly available.

The Committee commented that there were facilities and pitches in South Ward that had not been captured in the strategies.

In response to a question from the Committee, Mr Egerton stated that the evidence was collated in 2016, and this was to be reconsidered once the review of the Local Plan had progressed further. This would present an opportunity to include additional information.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The Sports Facilities Strategy be approved as part of the Council’s evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, subject to the addition of Pegasus Gym and Heavenly Fitness.
2. The Playing Pitch Strategy be approved as part of the Council’s evidence base for the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, subject to the addition of the Mangravet Recreation Field.

Voting: Unanimous

168. MAIDSTONE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: CALL FOR SITES INFORMATION PACK INCLUDING A NEW GARDEN COMMUNITIES PROSPECTUS

Mr Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development, stated that the Call for Sites was a standard operational component of the Local Plan. One of the four tests of soundness for the Local Plan at public examination was that it needed to be justified. This meant that it needed to be an appropriate strategy that took into account all reasonable alternatives. The Call for Sites therefore tested the availability and deliverability of sites.

Mrs Sarah Lee, Principal Planning Officer, explained that the information pack was designed to guide and frame submissions for the Call for Sites. The document was technical in nature as it was aimed at developers and land owners. The Garden Communities Prospectus had been included as it was anticipated that these would be more complex to deliver and therefore required more detailed submissions. While the role of a Garden Communities approach in areas of high housing need was included in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the principles were promoted by Central Government, it was crucial that all options were considered equally.

Councillors McKay and Newton spoke on this item as Visiting Members.

The Committee commented that:

- A review of the hierarchy of settlements was required, although it was acknowledged that this needed to be timed appropriately.
- The wording on page 336 was to be amended to:

"As part of the Local Plan Review, we will review the hierarchy of settlements by looking at available services and facilities. In the adopted Local Plan, the current hierarchy is as follows;"

- Superfluous pictures, in sections where text was appropriate to convey information, should be removed.
- The second paragraph in "5 – Local Plan Review Spatial Strategy" on page 338 was to be edited to restrict the commentary about the dispersed approach.
- The press release accompanying the Call for Sites needed to be carefully worded to ensure that stakeholders clearly understood that the Call for Sites was the beginning of a process and that all options were open at this stage.
- If significant changes to the Call for Sites Information Pack were required, then an extraordinary Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee meeting was to be convened.

In response to questions from the Committee, Officers stated that:

- A submission form was to be completed by landowners. Appendix 2 demonstrated the criteria that would be used by Officers to assess the submissions.
- The urgent update was a visual representation of the components that the growth could take, such as densification of the town centre, urban extensions of large settlements, urban renewal, village extensions, new settlements and small countryside sites. It was possible to adjust or omit the diagrams and visuals, as appropriate.
- The environmental constraints section was included in the document to assist landowners and developers, as it provided information regarding material planning factors that needed to be addressed as part of a submission.
- The Council was able to take a proactive stance with the Call for Sites, as sites under Council ownership were eligible as part of the Call for Sites.

RESOLVED: That:

1. Whilst having due regard to Members comments, the Head of Planning and Development be granted delegated authority to refine the Call for Sites Information Pack and proceed with the Call for Sites as proposed.
2. The criteria in the Site Assessment Form, attached as Appendix 2, be agreed for the evaluation of potential sites in the Strategic Land Availability Assessment.

Voting: Unanimous

169. DURATION OF MEETING

6.33 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

2018/19 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Strategic Plan - New KPIs	SPS&T	Apr-19	Angela Woodhouse	Anna Collier
Local Plan Resourcing	SPS&T	Apr-19	Rob Jarman	TBC
Town Centre Opportunity Areas: Planning Briefs	SPS&T	Apr-19	Rob Jarman	Sarah Lee/ Tav Arnold
Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) Update	SPS&T	Jun-19	Rob Jarman	Tav Arnold/ Helen Smith
Maidstone Borough Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) Update	SPS&T	Jun-19	Rob Jarman	Tav Arnold/ Helen Smith
Duty to Cooperate and Statements of Common Ground	SPS&T	Jun-19	Rob Jarman	TBC
CIL Non-Strategic Governance	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	TBC
∞ Planning Performance Agreements Review	SPS&T	TBC	Rob Jarman	TBC

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

12 March 2019

External Board/Outside Body

External Board/Outside Body	Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee
Councillor(s) represented on the Outside Body/External Board	Patrik Garten
Report Author	Patrik Garten & Nick Johannsen (AONB Unit)
Date of External Board/Outside Body Meeting Attended	Next JAC meeting will be 13/06/19. This report provides an update relating to Maidstone relevant (in bold) projects, currently in progress

Purpose of the External Board/Outside Body:

Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)

The Kent Downs relies on many stakeholders who have a role in managing the landscape, supporting local business and communities and enabling quiet recreation. The Joint Advisory Committee plays a pivotal role in helping realise the strategic vision for the Kent Downs AONB and oversee the Management Plan.

Its purpose is to provide advice to its members with statutory responsibilities for the effective management of the Kent Downs AONB. An Executive of representatives from the JAC, with some outside advisors, advises the work of the Kent Downs AONB Unit.

The Kent Downs AONB Unit is employed by Kent County Council and works on behalf of the JAC to carry out the preparation and review of the Management Plan, to advocate its policies and work in partnership to deliver a range of actions described in the Action Plan.

Funding partners & Members

Defra, Ashford Borough Council, Canterbury City Council, Dover District Council, Gravesham Borough Council, London Borough of Bromley, Medway Council, Maidstone Borough Council, Sevenoaks District Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Swale Borough Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Country Land and Business Association, Environment Agency, Kent Association of Local Councils, Action with Communities in Rural Kent, National Farmers Union, English Heritage

Update:

Summary since our last report (Jan 2019)

- The Kent Downs AONB Unit has been requested to provide support for Maidstone's ambition to secure a part of the Greensand Ridge as AONB, this has been agreed with the Unit's Chairman and a letter of support will be sent to the Council shortly.
- The Kent Downs AONB Unit has submitted an objection to the planning application at Binbury Park; in the Unit's view the applicants fail to justify application against both National and Local policy.

The application site lies within the Kent Downs AONB, a nationally protected landscape afforded the same protection as our National Parks. The site is rural in nature comprising predominantly open countryside made up of arable fields and woodland that lies outside of any recognised settlement. The scale of the development together with its inappropriate location, and the poor relationship to existing settlement pattern would result in a significant detrimental change to landscape character as well as harming visual amenity, removing the current sense of openness and failing to conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. The AONB Unit is of the view that the impact to the AONB could not be satisfactorily mitigated by landscaping or other methods.

In their view the proposal conflicts with the revised NPPF, in particular paragraph 172 which provides that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs and that major development should not be permitted except in exceptional circumstances and where public interest can be demonstrated; it is the view of the Kent Downs AONB Unit that the stringent tests set out at paragraph 172 of the NPPF have not been met. The NPPF also clearly states that the scale and extent of development within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty should be limited.

- The AONB Unit continues to develop a funding bid to Interreg to work with Visit Kent to secure 4m Euro investment in rural tourism in Kent and in particular the Kent Downs AONB and North Downs Way
- The Unit has submitted proposals to Defra to develop new Environmental Land Management Schemes which will benefit the landscapes and communities of Kent and the Kent Downs.
- The Unit continues to promote Ash to Ash the significant new sculpture located in White Horse Wood (MBC area) and which is attracting new visitors.
- The Unit continues to provide advice and support to Maidstone Officers and Members on planning matters that affect the Kent Downs.

- The Unit continues to provide advice and support to Maidstone Officers and Members on planning matters that affect the Kent Downs.

If Members would like to know more about the Kent Downs AONB Unit or the work of the Joint Advisory Committee they are very welcome to get in touch directly with Nick Johannsen, the Director. Nick.johannsen@kentdowns.org.uk
01303 815 170

Agenda Item 13

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

12 March 2019

Publication of Personal Information on the Planning Web Pages

Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development and Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

The report provides information on the council's approach to publishing personal information in relation to the Planning Service

This report makes the following recommendations to the Strategic Planning Sustainable and Transportation Committee

1. That the briefing be noted

Timetable

Meeting	Date
SPST Committee	12 March 2019

Publication of Personal Information on the Planning Web Pages

1. Briefing Report

- 1.1 On 4 December 2018, the Committee considered the Statement of Community Involvement Consultation responses, they agreed that the statement be adopted and also requested a report clarifying the policy for publishing respondent's personal details as part of consultation processes, and in particular planning matters to be submitted to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee.

Authority wide approach to Consultation

- 1.2 The Council has in place a central resource to support consultation across the Council in the form of the Policy and Information Team and the SNAP consultation system.
- 1.3 Maidstone Borough Council is a member of the Consultation Institute which sets out seven Best Practice Principles that its members should regard for. These principles are:
- **Integrity** – If you are going to consult on something you need to be prepared to listen to what people say.
 - **Visibility** – Ensure that the relevant stakeholders are made aware of the consultation
 - **Accessibility** – The survey method should be accessible for the intended audience and hard to reach groups.
 - **Transparency** – The governance arrangements for how consultation outcomes will feed into the decision making process should be transparent.
 - **Disclosure** – All relevant materials and content should be disclosed.
 - **Fair Interpretation** – Decisions should be representative of the entire spread of opinion.
 - **Publication** – Participants have a right to receive feedback on the final output and result of the process.
- 1.4 Where the Policy and Information Team are engaged to support a service in running consultations they will work with the service to ensure the principles above are adhered to and work with that service to deliver the consultation that is most appropriate for them. They may for example deliver focus groups where a specific issue needs to be tackled in depth or assist with interviews, for bigger consultations a quantitative based survey may be more appropriate.

Data Protection

- 1.3 To comply with Data Protection legislation all surveys which involve the collection and processing of personal information should have a link to the Council's privacy statement. The collection of personal information should be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose for which it is collected. Personal data is any information that can identify a living person. This includes information that, when put together with other information, can then identify a person e.g. a name, an identification number, location data, an online identifier or one or more factors relating to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.
- 1.4 In order to process personal data the Council must have a legal reason to do so. The Council is allowed to process data for a number of reasons including:
- it is necessary to perform our statutory duties
 - as part of a contract with an individual
 - it is required by law
 - it is necessary for employment purposes
 - it is necessary for legal cases
 - it is to the benefit of society as a whole
 - it is necessary to protect public health
 - you, or your legal representative, have given consent
 - it is necessary to protect someone in an emergency
- 1.4 If the Council does not have a legal basis for processing personal data we are required to get consent from an individual for using their personal data. In most cases we process data to fulfil a public task.

Publication of Personal Information on the Planning Portal

- 1.5 As this Committee will be aware the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the Council's policy for consulting and engaging with individuals, communities and other stakeholders, both in the preparation and revision of local development plan documents and in development control decisions. In regard to plan making the level and type of consultation is dependent on the type of plan and its consultation stage. Unless there is a good reason not to, the Council must follow the SCI once adopted, failure to comply with the SCI could lead to the quashing of any planning permission issued.
- 1.6 The SCI outlines at para 6 that:

"People can submit comments on [local development plan] documents and planning applications either online, by email or by letter. Individuals,

businesses and other groups must provide a name and address for their comments to be valid, and any comments received are treated as a public document and are made public. Personal data held on the Council's databases are subject to the prevailing data protection regulations that exist at the time."

- 1.7 In the case of consultation responses relating to the preparation and revision of local development plan documents the Council does not publish personal details, albeit that this would be available to the Secretary of State. In terms of publishing comments as long as at the point of collection (for example through a privacy notice) it was made clear that comments would be published it would be acceptable to publish comments as they are received in accordance with the consultation process. The SCI makes it clear that "*any comments received are treated as a public document and are made public.*"
- 1.8 In the case of consultation responses received regarding a planning application, in addition to the requirements set out in paragraph 1.6 above, the SCI states (at para. 46) that: "*representations submitted on a planning application can be found on the Council's website*" (i.e. through its publically accessible planning portal). The Council does therefore have to publish formal representations submitted on its website in accordance with its adopted SCI. The SCI does not, however, prescribe that personal details (including names and addresses) must be published on the publically accessible planning portal. It simply advises that personal data will be held in accordance with data protection regulations.
- 1.9 The public's right to obtain information held by local authorities is contained in various legislative provisions:

The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 allows, with certain exceptions, for the public to attend most Council meetings and inspect documents prepared or provided in connection with the business discussed at those meetings. It also permits a person to inspect a document, to make copies of, or extracts from it, or request a photocopy (paying a reasonable fee).

The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR) and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), give rights of public access to information held by public authorities. The Council publishes comments on the website in accordance with regulation 4 of the EIR which has a general presumption in favour of being as open and transparent as possible, and actively promotes 'electronic means' of access.

As such, subject to legislative exceptions, any correspondence (incorporating personal details) should be made available for public inspection and any person is entitled to make copies thereof. The placing of these details on the publically accessible planning portal on the Council's website as well as the public file would allow everyone to assess the weight of the representation made in an open and transparent manner.

1.10 In an effort to meet the requirements of transparency whilst complying with data protection legislation, the Council has also published information advising the public as to how personal data collected as part of the planning application process will be processed and why. This information is explicitly contained in the Council's published guidance - "*Planning Applications -Have your say*"¹, which states:

"Any written comment you make about an application must, by law, be placed on the file (which we make available via the Council's website and include in any other form of the file held). This does not give permission for any re-use of the information, for any purpose. What this means is that:

- Your comment including your name and address will form part of the planning application documents and will be available for public inspection on the website and any other form of application record (currently a paper file).*
- We will not publish the following personal information: signatures, phone numbers, email addresses on the website. To help us, please do not include personal telephone numbers and use a printed signature. Business contact details will normally be published.*
- We also do not publish medical or commercially sensitive information – before submission please consider the need to supply this information as part of a comment.*
- Letters marked confidential (including in the text at the end of emails) will not normally be taken into account as they cannot be made publicly available*
- Any comments received will be retained on the public file and will be kept publicly viewable during the appraisal period, after the decision has been made and thereafter*

Therefore it may be possible for your name and address to be identified through a search on internet browsers and search functions such as Google and Yahoo.

Exceptions

- In exceptional circumstances we will consider keeping your name and/ or address confidential e.g. if a person is officially recorded as being the subject of harassment. If you feel your comment should be kept confidential please write a letter setting out your reasons and marked "confidential" to the Head of Planning who will make a judgement and advise you whether or not submission of a comment without the required personal details is possible.*

¹ "*Planning Applications -Have your say*" can be accessed here (https://www.maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/71899/Planning-Applications-Have-Your-Say.pdf).

2. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	No implications	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Risk Management	No implications	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Financial	No implications	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Staffing	No implications	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Legal	No implications	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Privacy and Data Protection	The briefing sets out how the Council meets its privacy and data protection requirements.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance (Data Protection Officer)
Equalities	No implications.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Public Health	No implications.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Crime and Disorder	No implications.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Procurement	No implications.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

Agenda Item 14

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

12 March 2019

Update on Maidstone Integrated Transport Package

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Director of Regeneration and Place
Lead Officer and Report Author	Abi Lewis, Economic Development Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the delivery of the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package.

This report makes the following recommendations to Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee:

1. That the Committee notes the update outlined in this report.

Timetable

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee	12 March 2019

Update on Maidstone Integrated Transport Package

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the position of the business cases forming the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package ("**MITP**").
- 1.2 The MITP aims to relieve congestion and improve journey time reliability across the borough, in doing so delivering the MBC Integrated Transport Strategy ("**ITS**") and Local Plan, whilst complying with Department for Transport scheme performance and approval criteria to justify the investment of capital funds.
- 1.3 The overall MITP has an estimated value of £13.57m. This is broadly split across funding years from 2016 to 2020 and comprises £8.9 million Local Growth Fund (LGF) Round 1 contribution secured from central Government by Kent County Council ("**KCC**") and £4.67m Section 106 contributions. The provisional LGF spend profile is:

16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	TOTAL
£1.3m	£2m	£2.45m	£2.45m	£8.9m

- 1.4 Local Growth Fund project funding is only secured following the completion of a full business case, its subsequent appraisal by the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) independent technical evaluator and approval by SELEP Accountability Board.
- 1.5 KCC initially submitted a bid for Local Growth Fund monies to SELEP to deliver two Park and Ride sites in Maidstone. However, MBC decided not to pursue a new Park and Ride at Linton Road and an expanded Park and Ride at Sittingbourne Road. In 2015 the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board ("**MJTB**") agreed not to progress the park and ride site, and agreed instead (with SELEP approval) to progress work at a number of junctions across the borough instead, collectively referred to as the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package. These were:
- A274 Willington Street/ Wallis Avenue Junction ("**Scheme 1**")
 - A20/ M20 Junction 5 ("**Scheme 2**")
 - A20/Hermitage Lane ("**Scheme 3**")
 - A229/A274 Wheatsheaf Junction ("**Scheme 4**")
 - A20/ Willington Street Junction ("**Scheme 5**")

- 1.6 The schemes were subsequently incorporated into Maidstone's adopted Integrated Transport Strategy, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Local Plan, to help support the growth contained in the Local Plan. Note that scheme numbering above relates to the project numbers utilised in KCC's 2015 MTJB report.

Progress to date

- 1.7 An update report on the MITP was presented to the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board on 16 January 2019 outlining progress on the

schemes, the risks associated with their delivery and information relating to the submission of the remaining business cases. This report is appended for reference (Appendix 1).

- 1.8 The business cases for three of the remaining four schemes were submitted to SELEP by KCC on 1 February 2019 and are now being evaluated by SELEP's technical advisors, Steer. Feasibility work relating to the B2246 Hermitage Lane does not deliver the required capacity benefits and does not demonstrate good value for money, which is required for the approval of a submitted business case and release of remaining LGF funds. For this reason a business case for this scheme was not submitted, but design work continues to assess options for mitigation at this location.
 - 1.9 It is anticipated that a decision will be made on the release of remaining MITP funding at the next SELEP Accountability Board meeting on 12th April 2019.
-

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 None. This report is for noting only.
-

3. RISK

- 3.1 This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications.
-

4. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 4.1 A verbal update on KCC's delivery of the MITP was presented to this Committee on 9 October 2018, following which Members requested a written report.
 - 4.2 Since this Committee date, update reports on outstanding MITP schemes (save for the junction improvement comprising "Scheme 1") have been presented by KCC Officers to MJTB, the most recent occurrence being at the meeting on 16 January 2019.
-

5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 5.1 MBC Officers will continue to work with their counterparts at Kent County Council to ensure that SELEP's Technical Advisors and Accountability Board have all information required in order to approve the recently submitted business cases for the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package junction improvements.

- 5.2 MBC Officers will also continue to support the development of design work to ensure that the improvements are ready for delivery, subject to approval by the KCC Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport.
- 5.3 MBC Officers will continue to work with KCC to assess options and bring forward the delivery of mitigation and highway improvements on the B2246 Hermitage Lane.
- 5.4 Member briefings will be held over the forthcoming months to discuss the options and risks associated with each of the MITP junctions.
- 5.5 Whilst this report is presented for information only, Members must recognise the risks associated with the delivery of this package of works – as outlined in the 16 January 2019 MJTB report - and understand the timing constraint of 2021 for construction.

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities.	Head of Regeneration & Place
Risk Management	This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications.	Head of Regeneration & Place
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Regeneration & Place
Legal	No direct legal implications arise from this report. These highway improvement schemes/junction capacity improvements and transport interventions were agreed (amongst other highway	Russell Fitzpatrick, Lawyer (Planning), Mid Kent Legal Services

	schemes) as priorities at the Duty to Cooperate meeting with KCC Highways and Transportation on 12 May 2016 and build on the resolution of the MJTB meetings on 7 December 2015 and 13 July 2016 and were subsequently incorporated into Maidstone's adopted Integrated Transport Strategy, Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Local Plan (through plan policies), to help support the growth contained in the Local Plan.	
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications arising directly out of this report.	Mid Kent Legal Services
Equalities	No impact identified as a consequence of this update report and recommendations.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Head of Regeneration & Place
Crime and Disorder	N/A	Head of Regeneration & Place
Procurement	N/A	Head of Regeneration & Place

7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Report presented to Maidstone Joint Transportation Board on 16 January 2019 entitled "Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP)"

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Report presented to MJTB on 17 October 2018 entitled "Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP)" whose objective was to provide an update and recommendation in respect of the proposed junction improvements contained within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP) (Item 64 - "Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP)").
- Item 88 - Maidstone Integrated Transport Package and Associated Local Growth Fund Monies Update - Verbal Update given to SPS&T at its meeting of 9 October 2018
- Reference from MBC Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transportation Committee of 17 October 2018
- Draft Minutes of the MJTB meeting held on Wednesday, 17 October 2018
- Statement of Common Ground as agreed between MBC and KCC Highways & Transportation (16 September 2016)

Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

**16
January
2019**



Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP)

Decision Making Authority	Kent County Council/Maidstone Borough Council
Lead Director	Simon Jones
Lead Head of Service	Tim Read
Lead Officer and Report Author	Russell Boorman/Lee Burchill
Wards and County Divisions affected	Wards: Shepway South/Parkwood County Divisions: Maidstone South East
Which Member(s) requested this report?	Committee

This report makes the following recommendations:

That the report be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Maidstone Joint Transportation Board	16 January 2019

Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP)

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides an update in respect of the proposed junction improvements contained within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP).

2. A20 Coldharbour Roundabout:

- 2.1 An initial feasibility design has been completed which proposes to significantly enlarge the existing signalised Coldharbour roundabout (100m diameter). Due to the increased size of the proposed roundabout, sufficient capacity, modelled to 2032, will be generated increasing the free flow of traffic and therefore does not require this junction to be signalised.
- 2.2 This scheme requires the acquisition of third-party land to accommodate the roundabout enlargement. Early discussions have been undertaken with the land owner (RBLI) who are responsive to the purchase of the required land. However, the relatively small area of land required forms part of a much larger plot that is subject to a quite onerous overage held by the NHS; this poses a significant risk to the project and assistance has been sought from KCC Property to resolve. Further discussions have identified the Secretary of State would need to approve the overage removal or indeed request recompense for any lost revenue. A meeting has been arranged with all relevant parties to move forward.
- 2.3 A commission has been issued to develop the feasibility design through to detailed design and this will be completed in July 2019.
- 2.4 It was initially hoped to commence construction in 2019, this may still be achievable, however due to the large quantity of works on the network in the surrounding area, it is more realistic to plan for a 2020 commencement, this can still be delivered before the SELEP 2021 constraint.

3. B2246 Hermitage Lane:

- 3.1 A feasibility design has been completed which addresses congestion at this location. Due to the constrained urban environment, the proposal requires the use of a parcel of the adjacent heathland and the removal of mature trees.
- 3.2 A traffic regulation order, TRO, will also be required to remove 'on street' parking, enabling the free flow of traffic along Fountain Lane. Residential properties have existing 'off street' parking, however, due to multiple car households, opposition to the TRO poses a risk to the scheme.
- 3.3 The scheme proposes the linking of the traffic signals at the junction with A26 Tonbridge Road and B2246 Hermitage Lane by fibre connection allowing them to work together.

- 3.4 A commission has been raised to develop the concept design to outline design. Design work has commenced and is due to be completed in December 2018.
- 3.5 The above proposal does not deliver the required capacity benefits and does not demonstrate good value for money which is required for the approval of a submitted Business Case.
- 3.6 Alternative proposals have been identified which would deliver the required congestion relief. However, it is felt these proposals would not be received positively and meet opposition.
- 3.7 This junction has therefore been postponed from the MITP delivery until such times that a agreed mitigation measure can be found that will satisfy all criteria and stakeholders.

4. A229 Loose Road Maidstone (including the Wheatsheaf):

- 4.1 A commission has been raised for outline design on the A229 Loose Road corridor. This includes the proposal for the 'Wheatsheaf' junction. The commission was due to complete in December 2018. Due to the A26 sink hole, data was not able to be collected until November 2018. This has now been collected, validated and passed to the consultant to test the benefits of the proposed junction improvements.
- 4.2 A reduced size roundabout is being considered at the Wheatsheaf junction, this will limit the requirement for third-party land to deliver the scheme. This proposal will however still require the closure of Cranbourne Avenue at its junction with the A229 Loose Road. This is due to the traffic demand on the A229/A274 and would cause significant delays in Cranbourne Avenue itself and would negate and capacity benefit a roundabout at this location would deliver/
- 4.3 It must be noted that without support there is a significant risk that this proposal would not be delivered within the required SELEP timeframes and funding may be lost. It must be further noted that if the smaller roundabout option does not demonstrate the capacity benefits and good value for money, the larger option will be reverted too which also carries significant risks of limited support.
- 4.4 Due to the confined urban environment, the proposals for the rest of the A229 Loose Road corridor may also require the acquisition of third-party land. This has the potential to attract opposition and presents a high risk to the project.
- 4.5 Several surveys have been carried out to better inform the design which is progressing well and is anticipated completion of early 2019. Engagement will commence during the design phase with specific events for the residents and businesses being arranged.

5. A20 Ashford Road:

- 5.1 A feasibility design was completed to address congestion, which included a dedicated 'left turn lane' into Wellington Street. This required the use of existing highway land (verge area) to accommodate.
- 5.2 Local Member briefings were carried out and although the scheme itself was accepted, it was felt that it did not address the entire congestion issue and a re-design was requested. Local members were advised that this would require the acquisition of Mote Park land and repositioning of the flint wall, which is listed. There was a general acceptance that this approach would be beneficial and KCC were to proceed accordingly.
- 5.3 A commission has been raised for a feasibility design to be undertaken that satisfies the requirements of local members to address the congestion on all approaches. This commission was completed in October 2018.
- 5.4 The proposal requires the acquisition of the adjacent Mote Park land on the southern side of the A20 Ashford Road. The existing listed 'Rag-Stone' wall will also need to be relocated to accommodate the widening required. This element of the scheme requires a planning application to be submitted, which may be subject to objections.
- 5.5 The revised design currently exceeds the allocated budget from the MITP. An independent cost consultant is reviewing the initial estimate and we are hopeful this will demonstrate this can be delivered within the allocation. Other funding opportunities are also being investigated to ensure this essential scheme can be delivered.
- 5.6 The expected commencement of this project (subject to roadspace availability) will be late 2019 early 2020.

6. Business Case Submission

- 6.1 The board raised concerns at the previous meeting in relation to the loss of LGF funding as Business Cases had not been submitted for the remainder of the MITP programme (these include 3, 4 and 5 above).
- 6.2 SELEP set a deadline of the 16th November for all business cases to be submitted. Confidence was given at the previous board meeting that this deadline would be achieved, and three separate consultants were working on their delivery.
- 6.3 With the exception of the B2246 Hermitage Lane, for reasons stated above, all business cases were completed on time. However, at this stage they are awaiting submission for the following reasons;
- 6.4 A20 Ashford Road was not demonstrating good value for money and returned a low Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) figure, which would not have been

received well by the SELEP's independent technical evaluator and risked losing this element of the funding.

- 6.5 The decision was taken to combine all the remaining Business Cases into one 'Phase 3' business case that gives a more robust picture of the quantitative and qualitative benefits of the package of schemes. This also provides an overview of the combined benefits that the junction improvements deliver on a wider scale. This gives a much greater chance of this being accepted by SELEP.
- 6.6 A change of scope was submitted to the SELEP before the 16th November 2018 Accountability Board to request that a larger scheme is delivered at the A20 Ashford Road with an increased LGF ask as part of Phase 1. SELEP Secretariat are reviewing the decision process for this change and early discussions have identified that this should be reviewed in conjunction with the Business Case submissions for the remaining schemes that KCC intend to submit for approval as part of Phase 3 of the MITP.
- 6.7 KCC are therefore currently working on a combined submission which will cover both the Phase 1 change of scope and the new schemes (rather than submitted separately). SELEP have asked that this submission should come forward before February 2019 in line for a decision at the next SELEP Accountability Board meeting in March/April 2019.
- 6.8 Members must recognise the risks associated with the delivery of the existing programme. It is therefore necessary, and prudent of KCC to include an additional junction improvement in the Phase 3 submission to mitigate any potential underspend or loss of funding.
- 6.9 Therefore, this submission does include mitigation measures on the A20 London Road Aylesford at the junction with Hall Road. This scheme demonstrates good value for money and achieves capacity benefits.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Kent County Council presents this report to Members for information. They must recognise the risks associated with the delivery of this package of works and understand the timing constraint of 2021 for construction.
- 7.2 KCC will keep Members and the board updated at key milestones throughout the next stages.
- 7.3 KCC also recognises the emotive nature of the acquisition of third-party land and will engage with the Local Members and affected parties accordingly. The improvements are aimed to address the current congestion and future growth and benefit all highway users.

**Strategic Planning,
Sustainability and
Transportation Committee**

12 March 2019

Maidstone Building for Life 12

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Rob Jarman
Lead Officer and Report Author	Rob Jarman
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary:

Building for Life 12 (endorsed by Government and referenced in the revised NPPF) provides a consistent structure for discussions on design principles. A 'Maidstone BC' version has been drafted which maintains the 12 questions but places emphasis on what is important to Maidstone BC.

This report makes the following recommendation to Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee :-

That:

1. The Maidstone Borough Council Building for Life 12, attached as Appendix 1, be approved for use and publication.
2. A Member Design Champion be appointed to work alongside the Head of Planning and Development.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
SPST	12 March

Maidstone Building for Life 12

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Paragraph 129 of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) states that "*Local planning authorities should ensure that they have access to, and make appropriate use of, tools and processes for assessing and improving the design of development. These include...assessment frameworks such as Building for Life*" (Birkbeck D and Kruczkowski S (2015) Building for Life 12: The sign of a good place to live). Strategically, the revised NPPF has an entire chapter dedicated to good design and it is clear that central government are putting great emphasis on delivering good design.
- 1.2 Building for Life 12 ("**BfL 12**") is a national assessment tool giving structure and consistency to discussions on design principles. BfL 12 helps guide development proposals towards better design. It is a mechanism through which local planning authorities can promote good design practice within their administrative boundaries and against which developers can set benchmarks for their businesses. Developments that are based on these principles will help developers demonstrate to local planning authorities that their proposals are well considered and responsive to considerations such as local characteristics specific to a given site.
- 1.3 The latest version of BfL 12 is 2018. The eponymous 12 questions (falling into 3 sections) are:-

Section 1: Connecting to/integrating into the neighbourhood

1. Connections
2. Facilities and services
3. Public transport
4. Meeting local housing requirements

Section 2: Creating a place

5. Character
6. Working with the site and its context
7. Creating well defined streets and spaces
8. Easy to find your way around

Section 3: Street & Home

9. Streets for all
10. Car parking

11. Public and private space

12. External storage and amenity

In relation to apartment blocks of three or more storeys - which create few, if any, new streets and where the key design issues are how blocks respond to their locality, existing streets and movement - alternative prompts are incorporated within the guidance to accommodate such developments.

1.4 Based on a 'traffic light' system the aim is to pass as many of the above 12 questions as possible and passing a minimum of 9 is recommended.

1.5 Design South East were commissioned last year (2018) to produce a Maidstone version of Building for Life 12 and this has been achieved and is produced at Appendix 1. There were design trips with councillors to new housing developments within Maidstone Borough and there was also a member workshop, the purpose of which was to raise awareness of good design in general and stimulate discussion and then focus on what was important to Maidstone Building for Life 12.

1.6 The draft Maidstone version of BfL 12 does not change any of the 12 questions but in the preface and examples emphasis is placed on the importance of :-

a) Vernacular detailing and materials

b) Landscaping being integral to good design

c) The importance of streets for all

d) Sustainable design principles

e) Bio-diversity being integral to good design

1.7 The Maidstone BfL 12 has been designed to be used to support consultation and community participation. It will also be used to: guide masterplans and design codes; frame pre-application discussions (applicants will be expected to self-assess their emerging proposals); inform design reviews; structure design and access statements; support local decision making, give a framework to the design section in committee reports (with the full BfL 12 assessment potentially included as an appendix); and where necessary, justify conditions relating to detailed aspects of design, such as materials.

1.8 Good design can only be delivered by, amongst other things, a constructive working relationship between members and officers and so it is recommended that there is a member design champion. There was a member design champion previously at this Authority.

1.9 In terms of operational practice, it is common for major proposals, in particular to be the subject of pre-application discussion normally in the form of a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA). Normally there would be at least one bespoke meeting on the theme of 'design' but it will

become standard practice to explicitly measure the proposal against the 12 questions set out in the Guidance in order to achieve passes on at least 9 as an objective. This will often be an iterative process. Planning Committee reports will highlight this where appropriate. Where schemes are not of an appropriate design standard then they are likely to be refused with the Guidance being explicitly referred to. However, the main thrust of the Guidance will be to provide for a structured and consistent conversation on design rather than a 'box ticking' exercise.

- 1.10 If agreed then the Maidstone Building for Life 12 would form the foundation for further local design guidance, for example, the design of streets in housing developments.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 'Do nothing': this would mean that Maidstone Borough Council is not visibly endorsing central government's emphasis on the delivery of well designed development. Secondly, without using a design assessment tool such as Building for Life 12 there may well be unstructured and inconsistent design discussions. This option would effectively mean keeping the status quo although this would not negate the fact that Building for Life 12 is a material planning consideration given the explicit reference in the revised NPPF.
- 2.2 SPST could approve one recommendation but not the other. This would dilute this Council's commitment to working collaboratively in delivering good design.
- 2.3 Approve both recommendations as this clearly shows that this Authority is committed to the achievement of good design and is seeking to set clear guidance on how this is to be achieved.

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The preferred option is to approve both recommendations, namely:
 - 1) To approve the Maidstone BC version of Building for Life 12 (set out in Appendix A) for use and publication.
 - 2) Appoint a member design champion to work alongside the Head of Planning and Development to promote good design.

This would show commitment and provide a foundation for informed, consistent and structured discussion on good design and set clear guidance as to how this is to be achieved.

4. RISK

4.1 There are risks around not approving the first recommendation in terms of reputation and inconsistent decisions on design.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 This is not to be adopted as supplementary planning guidance as there is no need to do so.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 As well as being published on the web site, planning officers will make explicit reference to the document in pre-application discussions and Planning Committee reports as appropriate.

6.2 As stated above, the document will form the foundation for further more specific design guidance and there will be further design tours and workshops to discuss and observe best practice.

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council’s ability to achieve development with a clear sense of place.	Rob Jarman
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section.	Rob Jarman
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Mark Green
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Rob Jarman
Legal	No direct legal implications arise from this report.	Russell Fitzpatrick, Lawyer

		(Planning) Mid Kent Legal Services
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications arising directly out of this report	Russell Fitzpatrick, Lawyer (Planning) Mid Kent Legal Services
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. .	Rob Jarman
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation will not have a negative impact on Crime and Disorder.	Rob Jarman
Procurement	N/A	Rob Jarman

8. REPORT APPENDICES

8.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Draft Maidstone Borough Council Building for Life 12

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Revised NPPF (2018)
- Building for Life 12 (2018)

Building for Life 12

Maidstone Edition 2018





Building for Life 12 (BfL12) is a design tool designed to help structure discussions about proposed new residential development between home builders, Urban Development Corporations, local authorities, communities and other stakeholders. BfL12 is England's leading process for creating well-designed homes and neighbourhoods – used by an increasing number of home builders, local authorities and community groups.

Endorsed by the government and cited in the National Planning Policy Framework, Building for Life 12 is managed by three partners - Design Council CAbE, Design for Homes and the Home Builders Federation.

BfL12 was created in 2012 to support the Government's commitment to:

- Building more homes
- Building better designed homes and neighbourhoods
- Creating a more creative and collaborative planning system
- Involving local communities in shaping development proposals

This version of the document was created to showcase examples of best practice in and around Maidstone, to help reinforce the Council's commitment to good design, and to using the BfL12 questions to help shape better development. In particular, streets that are places in their own right rather than just for cars, green and blue corridors that support ecology and design that imaginatively reflects the character and identity of the area should be a key focus for any new development. We aim to raise the bar in terms of sustainability, so new homes should be designed to the highest energy and adaptability standards. Finally, we hope that in using BfL12, all stakeholders can maximise the benefits that good design brings.



An introduction

Maidstone Council is committed to good design at every scale, from new places that create thriving communities to individual buildings that minimise their environmental impact. It is everyone's duty to ensure that what is built here is of the highest quality. This document is intended to help designers and decision-makers improve design, by highlighting common design issues and suggesting simple ways to embed quality.

To do this, a bespoke version of Building for Life 12 (BfL12) has been developed for use in the Borough. Planning applications involving residential development are expected to demonstrate how they address the quality design criteria within BfL12. It is therefore suggested that designers use the Maidstone BfL12 to help them develop their designs.

Applicants should, and the local authority's planning officers will use the Maidstone BfL12 to structure their discussions as they develop their proposals. Applicants should also demonstrate how they have used the Borough's BfL12 in their Design and Access Statements. Maidstone's officers and elected members will use BfL12 to help assess planning applications for design quality.

Maidstone Borough Council places particular emphasis on :-

1. Vernacular materials and architectural detailing either used in an authentic manner or in a modern idiom.
2. Landscaping being integral to design. For example, 'green corridors' which function as ecological corridors which are part of the 'spine' to layouts and which physically connect with corridors outside of the site.
3. Streets for all. Streets which are not dominated, in design terms, in order to cater for the car.
4. The application of sustainable design principles.
5. Features to promote bio-diversity being integral to the design of a scheme.

National background to Maidstone's own BfL12

Maidstone Council is committed to good design at every scale, from new places that create thriving communities to individual buildings that minimise their environmental impact. It is everyone's duty to ensure that what is built here is of the highest quality. This document is intended to help designers and decision-makers improve design, by highlighting common design issues and suggesting simple ways to embed quality.

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12 easy-to-understand questions

Each question is followed by a series of additional questions that are intended as prompts to stimulate discussions and ensure that all aspects of a scheme have been well considered. We've also provided five recommendations for how you might respond with the aim of offering a range of responses.

Recommendations are designed to stimulate discussion with local communities, the project team, the local authority and other stakeholders to help you find the right solution locally. No one is required to meet all recommendations, instead they are prompts to guide you to better design solutions.

National policy and BfL12

37

By using the Maidstone BfL12 as a dialogue tool throughout the design process, consistency with the NPPF can be achieved; although national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) is yet to be updated from the 2014 version aligned with the 2012 NPPF, the Borough's BfL12 is not inconsistent with its design guidance either.

They have been designed to stimulate discussion with local communities, the project team, the Borough Council and other stakeholders, to help home builders to find the right solution locally. No one is required to meet all recommendations, instead they are prompts to guide towards better design solutions.

The table at the end of this document illustrates the relationship between the twelve questions and the 2018 NPPF (and the soon-to-be-updated PPG). The Maidstone BfL12 is therefore an easy way to ensure that proposed developments are consistent with national policy – a more streamlined way of approaching housing design than working through all of the individual NPPF policy and PPG references.

Each of the twelve main questions is followed by others that are intended as prompts to stimulate discussion and ensure that all aspects of a scheme have been well-considered. This Maidstone version of BfL12 also provides recommendations for a range of possible responses.

Integrating into the neighbourhood



1 Connections

Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site?



2 Facilities and services

Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?



3 Public transport

Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?



4 Meeting local housing requirements

Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?

Creating a place



5 Character

Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?



6 Working with the site and its context

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimates?



7 Creating well defined streets and spaces

Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?



8 Easy to find your way around

Is the scheme designed to make it easy to find your way around?

Street & home



9 Streets for all

Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?



10 Car parking

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?



11 Public and private spaces

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to be attractive, well managed and safe?



12 External storage and amenity space

Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling as well as vehicles and cycles?



Section 1:
Connecting to the neighbourhood



Q1: Connections

Does the scheme integrate into its surroundings by reinforcing existing connections and creating new ones, while also respecting existing buildings and land uses around the development site?



We recommend

Thinking about where connections can and should be made; and about how best the new development can integrate into the existing neighbourhood rather than creating an inward-looking cul-de-sac development.

Remembering that people who live within a new development and people who live nearby may want to walk through the development to get somewhere else, so carefully consider how a development can contribute towards creating a more walkable neighbourhood.

Thinking carefully before blocking or redirecting existing routes, particularly where these are well-used. Carefully consider connectivity around the edges of the development, bearing in mind that a network of private drives can frustrate and block pedestrian and cycle movement.

Creating a network of connections that are attractive, well-lit, direct, easy to navigate, overlooked and safe. Bear in mind that a pedestrian or cycleway through an open space may be attractive as a route during daylight hours, but less so early in the evening during winter.

Ensuring that all street, pedestrian and cycle-only routes pass in front of people's homes, rather than to the back of them.

Remembering that **connections are needed for natural systems too,** so green and blue corridors should be provided where possible to connect ecological systems across a site.

We recommend that you avoid

Seeing connectivity only in term of access to a development and not considering how the layout of a development could be designed to improve connectivity across the wider neighbourhood.

Not considering where future connections might need to be made - or could be provided - in the future. This could include links to footpath networks beyond the site as well as to existing streets.

Leaving space between the end of a route and the edge of a site that could later become a ransom strip, stopping developments next to each other from joining up.

Addressing green and blue corridors as if there were an add-on rather than integral to the layout. Retrofitting ecological corridors is difficult, so they should be included at the outset.

1a Where should vehicles come in and out of the development?

1b Should there be pedestrian and cycle only routes into and through the development? If so, where should they go?

1c Where should new streets be placed, could they be used to cross the development site and help create linkages across the scheme and into the existing neighbourhood and surrounding places?

1d How should the new development relate to existing development? What should happen at the edges of the development site?



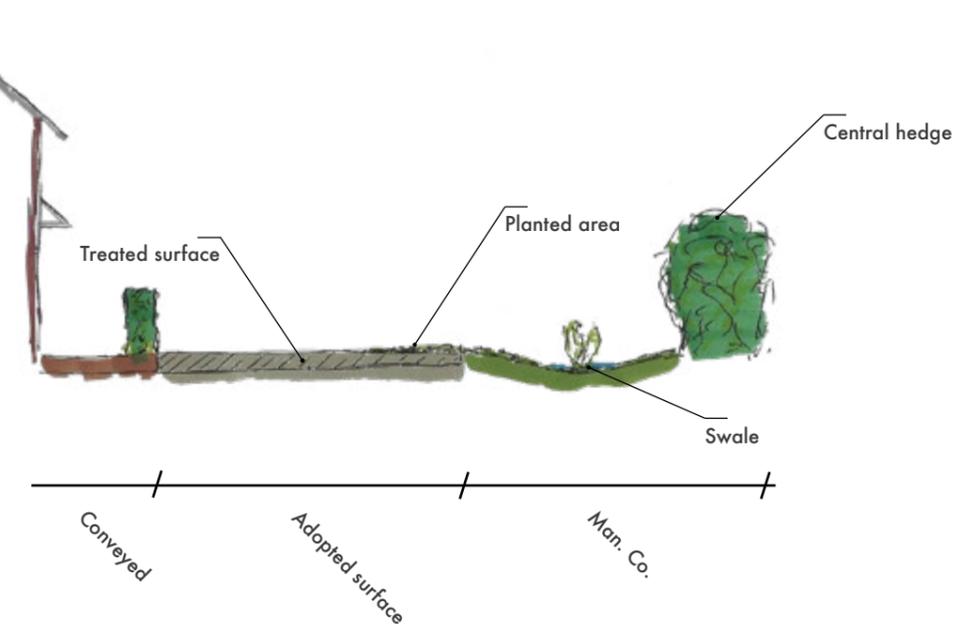
Pedestrian links: This short, well-lit and well-sighted pedestrian link allows people to walk and cycle into and out of the site. Keeping pedestrian and cycle-only routes well-overlooked encourages their use.



Desire lines: New routes should be aligned so that people can move as directly as possible. Here, the path takes the long route around the green, whereas the quickest and most direct route is partially blocked.

Connecting the edges

Private drives serving only a small number of units are often used at the edges of sites, as building streets to adoptable standards with buildings only on one site is expensive. Often, this means that they do not connect together, and create edges that are difficult to move along. A solution is to create an adoptable sub-base but to surface only part of it, with soft planting on the rest. This provides a narrow, low-speed lane that can be adopted and widened if needed in the future.





Q2: Facilities and services

Does the development provide (or is it close to) community facilities, such as shops, schools, workplaces, parks, play areas, pubs or cafes?



We recommend

Planning development so that everyday facilities and services are located within a short walk of people's homes. The layout of a development and the quality of connections it provides can make a significant impact on walking distances and people's travel choices.

Providing access to facilities through the provision of safe, convenient and direct paths or cycle routes. Consider whether there are any barriers to pedestrian/cycle access (for example, busy roads with a lack of crossing points) and how these barriers can be removed or lessened.

Locating new facilities (if provided) where the greatest number of existing and new residents can access them easily, recognising that this may be at the edge of a new development or on a through route; but consider whether existing facilities can be enhanced before proposing new ones.

Remembering that new schools can provide high levels of activity, so locating these near to new shops and services can help improve viability as well as encouraging linked trips, reducing the need to travel.

Where new local centres are provided, design these as vibrant places with smaller shops combined with residential accommodation above (rather than a single storey, single use supermarket building). Work to integrate these facilities into the fabric of the wider development to avoid creating an isolated retail park type environment dominated by car parking and highways infrastructure.

Creating new places within a development where people can meet each other such as public spaces, community buildings, cafes and restaurants. Aim to get these delivered as early as possible. Think carefully about how spaces could be used and design them with flexibility in mind, considering where more active spaces should be located so as to avoid creating potential conflict between users and adjacent residents.

We recommend that you avoid

Locating play areas directly in front of people's homes where they may become a source of tension due to potential for noise and nuisance.

Carefully consider the distance between play equipment and homes in addition to the type of play equipment selected and the target age group.

Creating the potential for future conflict if residential uses and commercial premises are not combined thoughtfully. Noise and odours need to be considered carefully, as do servicing requirements and the hours of operation.

2a Are there enough facilities and services in the local area to support the development? If not, what is needed?

2c Are these new facilities located in the right place? If not, where should they go?

Where new facilities are proposed:

2b Are these facilities what the area needs?

2d Does the layout encourage walking, cycling or using public transport to reach them?



A mix of uses: New homes close to shops, a pub, and other services. Placing commercial uses near to where people live increases viability and helps reduce car journeys.



Play areas and green spaces: This play area is integrated into the green space without the need for fencing. It is well-overlooked without being too close to people's homes.



Q3: Public transport

Does the scheme have good access to public transport to help reduce car dependency?

We recommend

Maximising the number of homes on sites that are close to good, high frequency public transport routes, but ensure that this does not compromise the wider design qualities of the scheme and its relationship with its surroundings. 'Hail and ride' schemes agreed with public transport providers can help reduce the distance people need to walk between their home and public transport.

Carefully considering the layout and orientation of routes to provide as many people as possible with the quickest, safest, attractive and most convenient possible routes between homes and public transport.

Considering how the layout of the development can maximise the number of homes within a short walk from their nearest bus, tram or train stop where new public transport routes are planned to pass through the development. Locate public transport stops in well used places, ensuring that they are accessible for all, well overlooked and lit.

Considering how the development can contribute towards encouraging more sustainable travel choices, for example by establishing a residents car club, providing electric car charging points, creating live/work units or homes that include space for a home office.

Exploring opportunities to reduce car miles through supporting new or existing park and ride schemes or supporting the concept of transit orientated developments (where higher density and/or mixed use development is centred on train or tram stations).

We recommend that you avoid

Thinking about development sites in isolation from their surroundings, so that existing public transport services do not benefit from new passengers.

Where encouraging through-traffic might be problematic, bus-only routes (or bus plugs) can be used to connect a new development to an existing development and create a more viable bus service without creating new routes cars.

Relying on bus services to come into new developments when often the existing routes to the edges of developments are the most convenient. This means that existing bus routes need to be easy to get to.

3a What can the development do to encourage more people (both existing and new residents) to use public transport more often?

3b Where should new public transport stops be located?



Access to public transport: A bus stop sitting right outside the door of this new development, with good footpath connections linking to it for residents.



Shared footway / cycleway: Making surfaces wide enough so that both cyclists and pedestrians can be a good way to get less confident cyclists who are intimidated by main roads out on their bikes.



Q4: Meeting local housing requirements

Does the development have a mix of housing types and tenures that suit local requirements?



We recommend

Demonstrating how the scheme's housing mix is justified with regard to planning policy, the local context and viability.

Aiming for a housing mix that will create a broad-based community.

Considering how to incorporate a range of property sizes and types, avoiding creating too many larger or too many smaller homes from being grouped together.

Providing starter homes and homes for the elderly or downsizing households. People who are retired can help enliven a place during the working day. Providing for downsizing households can also help to rebalance the housing market and may help reduce the need for affordable housing contributions over time.

Designing homes and streets to be tenure-blind, so that it is not easy to differentiate between homes that are private and those that are shared ownership or rented.

Designing to the highest possible standards in terms of sustainability and adaptability, so that future residents have a home that is affordable to run and that can be adapted as their needs change over time.

We recommend that you avoid

Developments that create homes for one market segment unless the development is very small.

Using exterior features that enable people to easily identify market sale from rented / shared ownership homes, such as the treatment of garages or entrances.

Reducing the level of parking provision for rented / shared ownership homes. Rows of unbroken frontage parking (see bottom image, right) often highlight affordable housing within a development and reduce the quality of the street.

Designing only to the minimum standards for sustainability and adaptability, unless viability is truly an issue and can be demonstrated as such.

4a What types of homes, tenure and price range are needed in the area (for example, starter homes, family homes or homes for those downsizing)?

4b Is there a need for different types of home ownership (such as part buy and part rent) or rented properties to help people on lower incomes?

4c Are the different types and tenures spatially integrated to create a cohesive community?



Apartments that fit in: This block of apartments still retains a sense of scale appropriate for the location, and manages to sit comfortably next to smaller houses.



A mix of tenures: Here, affordable housing has been constructed to the same standards and appearance as market housing. Only the numbered parking bays suggest a different tenure. Small numbered plates marking the parking space would have been a more subtle approach.



Section 2:
Creating a place



Q5: Character

Does the scheme create a place with a locally inspired or otherwise distinctive character?

We recommend

Identifying whether there are any architectural, landscape or other features, such as special materials that give a place a distinctive sense of character as a starting point for design. It may be possible to adapt elevations of standard house types to complement local character. Distinctiveness can also be delivered through new designs that respond to local characteristics in a contemporary way.

Exploring what could be done to start to give a place a locally inspired identity if an area lacks a distinctive character or where there is no overarching character. The use of Kent ragstone for buildings and walls is a key characteristic of the area, and there is great scope for using vernacular details such as this in modern ways to reinforce local character.

Landscaping treatments are often fundamental to character, especially boundary treatments. For Maidstone and surrounding areas, post and rail fencing in split-logs or 'riven' is commonplace, as are picket fences and hedges.

Introducing building styles, details and public realm features that can be readily familiar to someone visiting the development for the first time. Where an area has a strong and positive local identity, consider using this as a cue to reinforce the place's overall character.

Varying the density, built form and appearance or style of development to help create areas with different character within larger developments. Using a range of features⁹ will help to create town and cityscape elements that can give a place a sense of identity and will help people find their way around. Subtle detailing can help reinforce the character of areas and in doing so, provide a level of richness and delight.

Working with the local planning and highway authority to investigate whether local or otherwise different materials can be used in place of standard highways surface materials and traffic furniture. Be creative and adventurous by exploring the potential to innovate - develop new ideas and build with new materials.

We recommend that you avoid

Using the lack of local character as a justification for further nondescript or placeless development. Ignoring local traditions or character without robust justification.

Using non-native planting for landscape treatments, especially for boundaries and street trees. The landscape character of the Kent Downs AONB is an especially relevant and useful source of inspiration in this area.

Timber knee rail or other bland and cheap boundary treatments rather than the types common in the area. Post-and-rail fencing made of locally sourced timber, picket fences and walls in brick or stone reference the character of the area. Native hedge species can be used to soften the street and improve biodiversity.

Using materials that do not support the character and identity of the area, such as bricks and boarding in the wrong colours or roofing materials that are out of character.

5a How can the development be designed to have a local or distinctive identity?

5b Are there any distinctive characteristics within the area, such as building shapes, styles, colours and materials or the character of streets and spaces that the development should draw inspiration from?



Locally inspired materials: This design uses materials that reflect the locality, such as riven post-and-rail fencing, tile-hanging, and a muted colour palette. Other details such as the consistent boundary treatments, and the swale to within the public realm help add character.



Buildings and spaces together: A great deal of the character can be generated from how buildings, streets and open spaces are combined. Using feature buildings at key locations along with a strong landscape structure can help new developments look and feel mature and attractive.



Q6: Working with the site and its context

Does the scheme take advantage of existing topography, landscape features (including water courses), trees and plants, wildlife habitats, existing buildings, site orientation and microclimate?



We recommend

Being a considerate neighbour. Have regard to the height, layout, building line and form of existing development at the boundaries of the development site. Frame views of existing landmarks and create new ones by exploiting features such as existing mature trees to create memorable spaces. Orientate homes so that as many residents as possible can see these features from within their homes. Carefully consider views into the development and how best these can be designed.

Assessing the potential of any older buildings or structures for conversion. Retained buildings can become instant focal points within a development. Where possible, avoid transporting building waste and spoil off site by exploring opportunities to recycling building materials within the development.

Working with contours of the land rather than against them, exploring how built form and detailed housing design can creatively respond to the topographical character; thinking carefully about the roofscape. Explore how a holistic approach can be taken to the design of sustainable urban drainage by exploiting the topography and geology.

Exploring opportunities to protect, enhance and create wildlife habitats. Be creative in landscape design by creating wildflower meadows rather than closely mown grassland and, where provided, creating rich habitats within balancing lagoons, rainwater gardens, rills and swales.

Considering the potential to benefit from solar gain through building orientation and design where this can be achieved without compromising good urban design or creating issues associated with over heating¹³. Finally have regard to any local micro-climate and its impact.

We recommend that you avoid

Leaving an assessment of whether there are any views into and from the site that merit a design response until late in the design process. Maidstone's relationship with the Kent Downs AONB is integral to the character and identity of the places in the area. Views out onto the Downs should be incorporated into new development rather than blocked by buildings.

Transporting uncontaminated spoil away from the site that could be used for landscaping or adding level changes where appropriate.

Simply turfing over retained spoil without a good layer of topsoil. Existing soil often contains important micro-organisms that can aid biodiversity.

Retaining existing landscape features without thinking about whether they are viable or contribute to the quality of the new development.

Not carefully considering opportunities for rainwater attenuation both on plot and off. Swales and ditches are commonplace in this part of the country and should be integrated into the development.

Not carefully thinking about what balancing lagoons will look like and how people could enjoy them as attractive features within an open space network. Careful thought in the design process can eliminate the need for fenced off lagoons that are both unsightly and unwelcoming.

6a Are there any views into or from the site that need to be carefully considered?

6b Are there any existing trees, hedgerows or other features, such as streams that need to be carefully designed into the development?

6c Should the development keep any existing building(s) on the site? If so, how could they be used?



Retaining existing features: Here, existing trees have been integrated into the design. Here, the landscape is as important as the buildings in making this development an attractive place to be.



Managing water: The verges in the development double as part of the water management system. Plants absorb run-off, with excess water travelling along the swale to storage areas in the main square. This means that the technical requirement to manage surface water is performed in a way that provides an attractive amenity for residents. It also provides opportunities to improve biodiversity.



Q7: Creating well defined streets and spaces

Are buildings designed and positioned with landscaping to define and enhance streets and spaces and are buildings designed to turn street corners well?

We recommend

Creating streets that are principally defined by the position of buildings rather than the route of the carriageway. Variations in the width of the street can add interest and allow for parking and landscape.

Designing building that turn corners well, so that both elevations seen from the street have windows to them, rather than offering blank walls to the street. Consider using windows that wrap around corners to maximise surveillance and bring generous amounts of natural light into people's homes.

Using a pattern of street types to create a hierarchy, and especially considering their enclosure, keeping to the well proportioned height to width ratios relative to the type of street.

Designing streets so that the hierarchy reinforces their role in organising movement on site, with more important streets for moving around being easily identifiable to visitors.

Varying the materials applied to buildings so that they support the hierarchy of streets, with more expensive materials use on the primary streets and most cost-conscious treatments applied to more minor streets.

Respecting basic urban design principles when designing layouts. For example, forming strong perimeter blocks, providing active frontages, and avoiding routes that are poorly overlooked.

Orientating front doors to face the street rather than being tucked around the back or sides of buildings.

We recommend that you avoid

Streets that lack successful spatial enclosure by exceeding recommended height to width ratios. Where a wide street is needed, tree planting can help add enclosure.

Over reliance on front-of-plot parking that tends to create over wide streets dominated by parked cars and driveways unless there is sufficient space to use strong and extensive planting to compensate the lack of built form enclosure.

Homes that back on to the street or offer a blank elevation to the street. This includes plots where the garden presents its edge to the street. For corners, the new home should address the highest order street with its front and put any return frontage onto the lower order street.

Locating garages and /or driveways (or service areas and substations) on street corners or other prominent locations, such as the 'end point' of a view up or down a street.

Open frontages to plots, so that the private space is not clearly defined from the public streets and footpaths. Instead, boundaries should be vertically delineated.

7a Are buildings and landscaping schemes used to create enclosed streets and spaces?

7b Do buildings turn corners well?

7c Do all fronts of buildings, including front doors and habitable rooms, face the street?



Defining the street: A simple building line, with doors that open to the front, a boundary treatment delineating the extent of the plot, and lots of windows onto the street help to support the usability and attractiveness of this street.



Well-overlooked public spaces: Public spaces that are well-overlooked are more likely to be used and less likely to attract antisocial behaviour. Here, the village green is addressed by buildings on all sides, helping to make the space attractive, welcoming and safe.



Q8: Easy to find your way around

Is the development designed to make it easy to find your way around?

We recommend

Making it easy for people to create a mental map of the place by incorporating features that people will notice and remember.

Create a network of well defined streets and spaces with clear routes, local landmarks and marker features. For larger developments it may be necessary to create distinct character areas. Marker features, such as corner buildings and public spaces combined with smaller scale details such as colour, variety and materials will further enhance legibility.

Providing views through to existing or new landmarks and local destinations, such as parks, woodlands or tall structures help people understand where they are in relation to other places and find their way around.

Making it easy for all people to get around including those with visual or mobility impairments.

Identifying and considering important viewpoints within a development, such as views towards the end of a street. Anticipate other, more subtle viewpoints, for example a turn or curve in the street and how best these can be best addressed.

Creating a logical hierarchy of streets. A tree lined avenue through a development can be an easy and effective way to help people find their way around.

We recommend that you avoid

Creating a concept plan for a scheme that does not include careful consideration as to how people will create a mental map of the place. Site planning should ensure that special and memorable structures and planting support wayfinding.

Dead-ends, or routes that appear to lead to somewhere important for the wider public but then stop. Allowing views along a street help to avoid this.

Blocking views of landscape and ridge lines often visible within the area, so that a connection to the wider landscape setting is lost.

8a Will the development be easy to find your way around? If not, what could be done to make it easier to find your way around?

8b Are there any obvious landmarks?

8c Are the routes between places clear and direct?



Visual connectivity: Make sure that people can see where routes lead to. Here, a strong visual connection between the main street at the front of the site and the park at the back helps people find the things they want.



Direct routes: Simple, direct streets and paths are easier to navigate. Making connections as direct as possible, avoiding unnecessary deflections and curves, is a key component of easy to navigate places.





Q9: Streets for all

Are streets designed in a way that encourage low vehicle speeds and allow them to function as social spaces?

We recommend

Creating streets for people where vehicle speeds are designed not to exceed 20 mph. Work with the Highways Authority to create developments where buildings and detailed street design is used to tame vehicle speeds. Sharp or blind corners force drivers to slow when driving around them while buildings that are closer together also make drivers proceed more cautiously. 20mph zones are becoming increasingly popular with local communities and are a cost effective way of changing driver behaviour in residential areas.

Thinking about how streets can be designed as social and play spaces, where the pedestrians and cyclists come first, rather than simply as routes for cars and vehicles to pass through.

Using the best quality hard landscaping scheme that is viable without cluttering the streets and public spaces.

Designing homes that offer good natural surveillance opportunities; carefully considering the impact of internal arrangement on the safety and vitality of the street. Consider maximising the amount of glazing to ground floor, street facing rooms to enhance surveillance opportunities creating a stronger relationship between the home and the street.

Creating homes that offer something to the street, thinking carefully about detail, craftsmanship and build quality. Afford particular attention to the space between the pavement and front doors. A thoughtful and well designed entrance area and front door scheme will enhance the kerb appeal of homes whilst also contributing towards creating a visually interesting street. Carefully consider changes in level, the interface between different materials, quality finishing and the discreet placement of utility boxes.

We recommend that you avoid

20mph speed limits enforced with excessive signage or expensive compliance systems or features.

Designing a scheme that allows drivers to cross pedestrian footpaths at speed to access their driveways. Consider how hard and soft landscaping can be used to make drivers approach their street and home more cautiously and responsibly.

Minimise steps and level changes to make them as easy as possible for pushchairs and wheelchairs.

A pavement that has lots of variation in levels and dropped kerbs to enable cars to cross it can encourage unofficial parking up on the kerb and may make movement less easy for those pushing a pushchair, in a wheelchair or walking with a stick or walking frame.

9a Are streets pedestrian friendly and are they designed to encourage cars to drive slower and more carefully?

9b Are streets designed in a way that they can be used as social spaces, such as places for children to play safely or for neighbours to converse?



Shared surface: In places with very low vehicle movements (less than 100 per day) it may be appropriate to create a shared surface like this one.



Streets for people: Minimal street clutter, lots of overlooking and a surface material that encourages low vehicle speeds help make this street a place in its own right.



Q10: Car parking

Is resident and visitor parking sufficient and well integrated so that it does not dominate the street?

We recommend

Anticipating car parking demand taking into account the location, availability and frequency of public transport together with local car ownership trends. Provide sufficient parking space for visitors.

Designing streets to accommodate on street parking but allow for plenty of trees and planting to balance the visual impact of parked cars and reinforce the spatial enclosure of the street. On street parking has the potential to be both space efficient and can also help to create a vibrant street, where neighbours have more opportunity to see and meet other people.

Prevent anti-social parking. Very regular and formal parking treatments have the potential to reduce anti-social parking. People are less prone to parking in places where they should not be parking, where street design clearly defines other uses, such as pavements or landscape features.

Making sure people can see their car from their home or can park it somewhere they know it will be safe. Where possible avoid rear parking courts.

Using a range of parking solutions appropriate to the context and the types of housing proposed. Where parking is positioned to the front of the property, ensure that at least an equal amount of the frontage is allocated to an enclosed, landscaped front garden as it is for parking to reduce vehicle domination. Where rows of narrow terraces are proposed, consider positioning parking within the street scene, for example a central reservation of herringbone parking. For higher density schemes, underground parking with a landscaped deck above can work well.

We recommend that you avoid

Relying on a single parking treatment. A combination of car parking treatments nearly always creates more capacity, visual interest and a more successful place.

Large rear parking courts. When parking courts are less private, they offer greater opportunity for thieves, vandals and those who should not be parking there.

Parking that is not well overlooked or near to the property it serves. Parking that is isolated will be poorly used and will lead to nuisance parking elsewhere.

Layouts that separate homes and facilities from the car, unless the scheme incorporates secure underground car parking.

Using white lining to mark out and number spaces. These are not only costly, but unsightly. It can be cheaper and more aesthetically pleasing to use small metal plates to number spaces, and a few well placed block markers to define spaces.

Not providing a clear and direct route between front doors and on-street parking or not balancing the amount of parking in front of plots with soft relief.

10a Is there enough parking for residents and visitors?

10b Is parking positioned close to people's homes?

10c Are any parking courtyards small in size (generally no more than five properties should use a parking courtyard) and are they well overlooked by neighbouring properties?

10d Are garages well positioned so that they do not dominate the street scene?



On-street parking: Allowing for on-street parking close to people's homes is a good way to ensure cars do not block pavements or clog up the carriageway.



Parking squares, not courts: Should there be a need for parking within the block, then forming a proper public space with active frontages and planting is preferable to a parking courtyard.



Q11: Public & private space

Will public and private spaces be clearly defined and designed to have appropriate access and be able to be well managed and safe in use?

We recommend

Clearly defining private and public spaces with clear vertical markers, such as railings, walling or robust planting. Where there is a modest building set back (less than 1m), a simple change in surface materials may suffice. Select species that will form a strong and effective boundary, such as hedge forming shrubs rather than low growing specimens or exotic or ornamental plants. Ensure sufficient budget provision is allocated to ensure a high quality boundary scheme is delivered.

Creating spaces that are well overlooked by neighbouring properties. Check that there is plenty of opportunity for residents to see streets and spaces from within their homes. Provide opportunities for direct and oblique views up and down the street, considering the use of bay, oriel and corner windows where appropriate. Designing balconies can further increase opportunities for natural surveillance.

Thinking about what types of spaces are created and where they should be located.

Consider how spaces can be designed to be multifunctional, serving as wide an age group as possible and how they could contribute towards enhancing biodiversity.

Think about where people might want to walk and what routes they might want to take and plan paths accordingly providing lighting if required. Consider the sun path and shadowing throughout the day and which areas will be in light rather than shade. Areas more likely to benefit from sunshine are often the most popular places for people to gather.

Exploring whether local communities would wish to see new facilities created or existing ones upgraded. Think how play can be approached in a holistic manner, for example by distributing play equipment or playable spaces and features across an entire open space.

Providing a management and maintenance plan to include a sustainable way to fund public or shared communal open spaces.

We recommend that you avoid

Informal or left over grassed areas that offer no public or private use or value and do little or nothing to support biodiversity.

Avoid creating small fenced play areas set within a larger area of open space where the main expense is the cost of fencing.

Landscaping that is cheap, of poor quality, poorly located and inappropriate for its location. Low growing shrubs rarely survive well in places where people are likely to accidentally walk over them (such as besides parking bays).

Narrow, segregated service strips at the side of carriageways that have the appearance of a very narrow footway.

11a What types of open space should be provided within this development?

11c How will they be looked after?

11b Is there a need for play facilities for children and teenagers? If so, is this the right place or should the developer contribute towards an existing facility in the area that could be made better?



Defining the plot: A simple and consistent boundary treatment helps to mark out what is public and what is private, creating defensible space in front of people's homes.



Accommodating services: Flat-laid blocks have been used to delineate the service strip at the edge of the carriageway. This creates the false impression of a footpath and should be avoided.



Q12: External storage and amenity space

Is there adequate external storage space for bins and recycling, as well as vehicles and cycles?

We recommend

Providing convenient, dedicated bin and recycling storage where bins and crates can be stored out of sight. Check with the local authority to determine exactly what space is required and minimise the distance between storage areas and collection points. Where terraced housing is proposed, consider providing integral stores to the front of the property (such as within an enclosed section of a recessed porch) or by providing secure 'twittens' between properties that provide direct access to the rear of properties.

Designing garages and parking spaces that are large enough to fit a modern family sized car and allow the driver to get out of the car easily. Where local authorities have requirements for garage sizes, parking spaces and circulation space design these into your scheme from the outset. If garages do not meet local requirements, do not count these as a parking space.

Considering whether garages should be counted as a parking space. If garages are to be counted as a parking space, ensure that sufficient alternative storage space is provided for items commonly stored in garages. Consider extending the length of the garage to accommodate storage needs or allowing occupants to use the roof space for extra storage.

Anticipating the realistic external storage requirements of individual households. Residents will usually need a secure place to store cycles and garden equipment. A storage room could be designed to the rear of the property (either attached or detached from the home), reviving the idea of a traditional outhouse. More creative solutions may be needed to satisfy the cycle storage requirements of higher density apartment accommodation.

Thinking carefully about the size and shape of outside amenity space. It is a good idea to ensure that rear gardens are at least equal to the ground floor footprint of the dwelling. Triangular shaped gardens rarely offer a practical, usable space. Allow residents the opportunity to access their garden without having to walk through their home.

We recommend that you avoid

Bin and recycling stores that detract from the quality of the street scene.

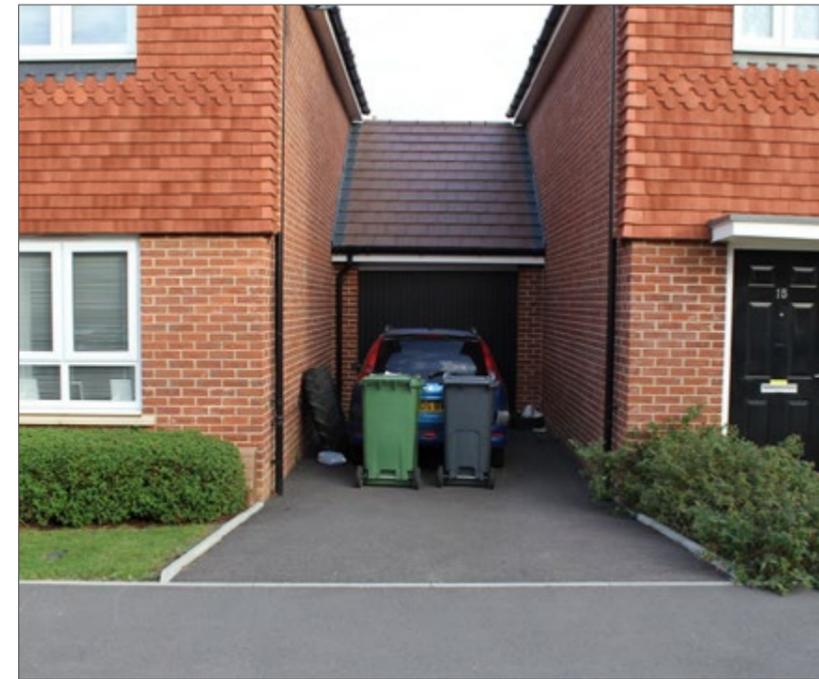
Locating bin and recycling stores in places that are inconvenient for residents, or they might find it easier to leave their bin and containers on the street.

Designing garages that are impractical or uncomfortable to use.

Cycle storage that is not secure or is difficult to access.

12a Is storage for bins and recycling items fully integrated, so that these items are less likely to be left on the street?

12b Is access to cycle and other vehicle storage convenient and secure?



A lack of storage: Here, the garage is too small to store the car, and the passage too narrow for the bins to be kept out of sight.



Keep an eye on drag distances: For private drives such as this one, bin collection points should be provided as often refuse collectors will not collect bins from properties along drives like this.



Using Building For Life 12 in urban locations

Supplementary design prompts were introduced into BfL12 in November 2014 in response to feedback from users about the need to better address design issues in more urban locations. This supplement deals with issues found where apartment blocks of three or more storeys create new developments with few, if any, new streets and where key design issues are how blocks respond to their locality, existing streets and movement.

Six of the twelve questions now have an alternative prompt to suit urban situations, which is especially relevant to the Maidstone context. Whilst the ethos of each question remains the same the emphasis and considerations reflect better the challenges and considerations associated with more urban locations and higher density developments. We recommend that design teams agree with the local authority which version of the questions are most appropriate to any proposed development.

Connections and scale

Does the scheme respond to the scale of its surroundings, respect existing view corridors (or create new ones), and reinforce existing connections and make new ones where feasible?

Design rationale: To emphasise visual connectivity whilst ensuring that where possible, the opportunity is taken to make physical connects that are going to be well-used and of benefit to residents and the wider community.

Easy to find your way in and around

Is the scheme designed to make it easy to understand the links between where people live and how you access the building, as well as how you move through it?

Design rationale: To emphasise the importance of creating a well defined entrance(s) to a development. Is it easy to find the front door?

Active Streets

Does the development engage with the street so passers-by will understand the movement between the building and the street, and is there an obvious visual link between inside and outside?

Design rationale: To emphasise the importance of creating active edges to a development at street level, carefully consider how the building relates to the street, how vehicle and servicing is designed and to avoid dead elevations.

Cycle and car parking

Will the development be likely to support and encourage cycling by providing cycle storage which people can use with confidence? Where parking is provided, is this easy to use? Are accesses to car parking designed not to impact on those not in cars? Are entrances to car parks over-engineered, visually obtrusive or obstructive to pedestrians and cyclists?

Design rationale: To emphasise the modal emphasis on bikes in more urban development where people are more likely to live close enough to work and leisure to cycle. Seeks to also promote well-designed entrances to parking areas whether at grade or underground.

Shared spaces

Is the purpose and use of shared space clear and is it designed to be safe and easily managed? Where semi-private or private spaces are created, are these clearly demarcated from the public realm?

Design rationale: To emphasise the importance of designing such spaces to be functional, attractive and well used.

Private amenity and storage

Are outdoor spaces, such as terraces and balconies, large enough for two or more people to sit? Is there opportunity for personalisation of these spaces? Is waste storage well integrated into the design of the development so residents and service vehicles can access it easily whilst not having an adverse impact on amenity for residents.

Design rationale: To focus on practical balcony sizes and well designed communal waste facilities that are well resolved in relation to building entrances and screened from publicly accessible routes.



Active streets: Retail centres such as Fremlin walk maximise the activity along their edges, making the spaces between buildings vibrant and attractive.



A mix of uses: Retail and residential uses mix well in town centres. Week Street in Maidstone town centre is a good example of this.



Why and how to use Building for Life 12

An increasing number of home builders are using BfL12 as a way of working to help speed up the planning process and improve the quality of the places they build. Ten years in the making, piloted on live planning applications and written to fit alongside both the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance, BfL12 has become the home building industry's preferred way of creating well-designed new homes and communities.

BfL12 is designed to be used as a design dialogue tool, a basis for discussion with 12 simple, easy to understand questions around which ideas can be shared and explored. BfL is ideal for facilitating local community participation in the place making process. It is also ideal for Neighbourhood Plans and Local Plans. BfL12 can be used to support planning applications and planning applications - but only where it has been used as a basis for discussion throughout the pre-application process.

Since 2012, BfL12 has been widely adopted across the home building industry, by Urban Development Corporations and an ever-increasing amount of local authorities. Its success has secured support from government as a way of not only building more homes, but better places to live.

A key benefit of BfL12 is that it can help local planning authorities consider the quality of both proposed and completed developments. The jargon free language of BfL12 will help planning officers to better communicate design considerations to Elected Members. BfL12 is also useful for creating site-specific briefs, structuring Design Codes and local design policies.

BfL12 is a way of working that helps guide development proposals towards better design. Developments that are based on these principles will help developers demonstrate to local planning authorities that their proposals are well considered and responsive to

considerations such as local characteristics specific to a given site.

Where BfL12 is used in this way and particularly where both the developer and local planning authority choose to use it as a basis for discussion, the planning process is often faster with a greater focus on design refinement rather than design fundamentals during the pre-application stage of a development.

BfL12 is therefore a mechanism through which local planning authorities can promote good design practice within their administrative boundaries and against which developers can set benchmarks for their businesses. BfL12 is the only tool that both the house building industry, government and an increasing amount of local planning authorities actively support. As such, BfL12 offers a routemap to consensus on what to focus on when discussing, designing and considering proposed new developments.

Today BfL12 is rapidly growing in both its popularity and its use:

- BfL12 is regularly referenced by government, Ministers and Members of Parliament as a constructive way of supporting house building rates without neglecting good design.
- Management consultancies evaluate whether house builders produce sustainable development using the BfL12 principles. For example, NextGeneration ranks major house builders by their commitment to it. (Source: NextGeneration).
- Building for Life 12 Wales is endorsed by Welsh Government and the Design Commission for Wales (DCFW). BfL12 is available in Welsh and English and complements the requirements of Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Note 12: Design. Training and support is available to Welsh authorities and communities from DCFW.

Securing Built for Life™ Accreditation

Building for Life 12 is about creating better places by promoting basic principles of urban design. Part of Building for Life is about recognising good practice and enabling developers that perform well against the 12 questions to demonstrate their commitment to good design to prospective home buyers. Any new development that secures at least nine 'green' indicators against the twelve questions are eligible to apply for a Built for Life™ quality mark.

Why nine out of twelve?

At times there are circumstances beyond the control of a developer that will mean it is not possible to secure a full complement of twelve 'green' indicators. These will normally only be justified in the first section of Building for Life 12, i.e. 'Integrating into the neighbourhood' (please see the 'Assessing what is appropriate' pages for more information). Developments that secure all twelve 'green' indicators are eligible quality mark is simple. To be considered for a quality mark a development must have secured planning permission.

The next stage is to upload details of the development onto www.builtforlifehomes.org. The scheme will then be subject to a 'light touch' review. If the development will have a strong likelihood of achieving a quality mark, the applicant will be invited to attend a Built for Life™ panel presentation where the scheme will be considered in more depth.

Previous versions of Building for Life (until 2010) relied on Accredited Assessors to provide definitive assessments of proposed developments, however this process has now changed. BfL12 places an emphasis on design focused discussions. At the start of the planning process, all those involved including local communities and other stakeholders are encouraged to contribute towards a discussion about what a place should become and what it needs to do. Particular stakeholders might have specific concerns or interests that can be captured in one or more of BfL12's questions.

In previous versions of Building for Life it was not uncommon for a developer to prepare an application,

engage in pre-application discussions with the local planning authority – within which no reference would be made to Building for Life. Yet once the application was formally submitted, the planning authority consulted an Accredited Assessor. Inevitably, where a scheme had not been designed with the Building for Life principles in mind they often failed to achieve them. This process often caused frustration and delays for both developers and local planning authorities.

The emphasis has therefore shifted away from formal assessments to using BfL12 primarily as a discussion tool. This way, those involved in an application can discuss each of the 12 questions in turn and agree what needs to be done to achieve 'greens' and in some cases, under what circumstances one or more 'ambers' may be justified.

Through this process, it is possible to identify areas of potential conflict or disagreement early. For instance, a draft set of proposals might be considered by the developer to achieve a 'green' against a particular question. However the local planning authority might consider the proposals to merit an 'amber' instead. At this point, a discussion should take place. The developer should demonstrate why they consider a 'green' to be merited, likewise the local planning authority should offer their perspective.

Where this approach is adopted, it is not uncommon for a consensus to be reached and in turn a solution found. If a consensus or solution cannot be found, we recommend using a local Design Review Panel. Many local panels now offer BfL12 based workshops and review services. The emphasis of BfL12 is about getting people to work better together and create better places.

If a scheme is considered a potential candidate for Built for Life™ accreditation there will be independent scrutiny of developments once an application has secured planning approval. Through this independent review process, home buyers can have the confidence that Built for Life™ accreditation is the sign of a good place to live.



National policy and BfL12

Building For Life 12 Question	Links with the NPPF (2018)	Links with Planning Policy Guidance (2014*)
Integrating into the neighbourhood		
1. Connections	84, 91a), 98, 103, 104c), 108a)	006, 008, 012, 015, 022
2. Facilities and services	72b), 83d), 85a), 91a), 104a), 110, 118a), 127e), 129	006, 014, 015, 017
3. Public transport	84, 110a), 102c), 105c), 123a), 137b)	012, 014, 022
4. Meeting local housing requirements	14b) and c), 15, 73, 75-78, 92e), 118, 145g)	014, 015, 017
Creating a place		
5. Character	79e), 85a), 110c), 125, 170b) and c)	006, 007, 015, 020, 023
 Working with the site and its context	57, 62, 72d), 84, 85, 104c), 108, 118, 121, 123c), 127e), 137, 158, 163, 168, 170a), 175, 180, 189	002, 007, 012, 020, 023
7. Creating well defined streets and spaces	8b), 91a), 102e), 110c), 127	008, 012, 021, 023
8. Easy to find your way around	8b), 91a), 110, 127	022
Street and home		
9. Streets for all	91a), 102, 110, 127d)	006, 008, 012, 022, 042
10. Car parking	122c), 105, 106	010, 040
11. Public and private space	8b) and c), 83d), 91b), 92a), 96, 97, 99-101, 127d), e) and f)	006, 007, 009, 010, 015, 016, 018
12. External storage and amenity	127	040

Generally:
 2018 NPPF: 124-127, 130, 131
 2014 PPG*: 001, 004, 005, 029, 031 - 038

*2014 paragraph references within 'Design' guidance category. PPG on design due to be updated in spring 2019, to align with 2018 NPPF (MHCLG, November 2019)

The Maidstone BfL has been approved and endorsed by the Council's **XXX** Committee. It is designed to be used to support consultation and community participation. It will also be used to: guide masterplans and design codes; frame pre-application discussions (applicants will be expected to self-assess their emerging proposals); inform design reviews; structure design and access statements; support local decision making, give a framework to the design section in committee reports (with the full BfL assessment potentially included as an appendix); and where necessary, justify conditions relating to detailed aspects of design, such as materials.

Credit: Kruczkowski, S

d:se

Design South East is a not-for-profit organisation and 100% independent. We facilitate understanding between local authorities, developers and local communities. We combine local knowledge with world-class expertise, providing clear, constructive and consistent advice on design issues. We provide great value for money, working alongside local authorities and developers to harness or complement their existing skills to create great buildings and spaces.

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