

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 25 June 2019
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors D Burton (Chairman), Clark, English, Garten, Mrs Grigg (Vice-Chairman), McKay, 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.

AGENDA

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| 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 21 May 2019 | 1 |
| 9. Presentation of Petitions (if any) | |
| 10. Question and Answer Session for Members of the Public | |
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Issued on Monday 17 June 2019

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

- | | |
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| 16. Maidstone Local Plan Review: Scoping Themes & Issues consultation document (Regulation 18) | 43 - 156 |
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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 21 June 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.

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2019

Present: Councillor D Burton and Councillors Clark, English, Garten, Mrs Grigg, McKay, Munford, Parfitt-Reid and de Wiggondene-Sheppard

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor D Burton be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs Grigg be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2019/20.

5. DURATION OF MEETING

6.45 p.m. to 6.48 p.m.

2019/20 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Outside Bodies 2019/20	SPI	Jul-19	Angela Woodhouse	Caroline Matthews/ Mike Nash
S106 Legal Agreements - Monitoring Report	SPI	Jul-19	Rob Jarman	Rob Jarman
Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs)	SPI	Jul-19	Rob Jarman	Rob Jarman
IDP and Reg 123 Review	SPI	Jul-19	Rob Jarman	Tay Arnold/ Helen Smith
Sports Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategies Approval	SPI	Jul-19	Mark Egerton	Sue Whiteside
Town Centre Opportunity Areas: Planning Briefs	SPI	Jul-19	Rob Jarman	Sarah Lee/ Tay Arnold
Outcome of Low Emission Zone Feasibility Study	SPI	Jul-19	John Littlemore	Stuart Maxwell/ Duncan Haynes
M ^N Marden Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16	SPI	Jul-19	Mark Egerton	Sue Whiteside
Conservation Area Appraisals Programme	SPI	Sep-19	Deanne Cunningham	Paul Robertshaw
Greensand Ridge AONB	SPI	Jan-20	Rob Jarman	Deanne Cunningham
Agenda Item Request - Parking Outside Schools	SPI	TBC	Cllr Purle	N/A
Scoping Report for 20mph Speed Limits Review	SPI	TBC	TBC	TBC

2019/20 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
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Agenda Item 13

STRATEGIC PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

25 June 2019

Key Performance Indicators Quarter 4 Update – 2018/19

Final Decision-Maker	Policy & Resources Committee
Lead Head of Service	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications, and Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Anna Collier, Policy & Information Manager, Clare Harvey, Data Intelligence Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee is asked to review the progress of Key Performance Indicators that relate to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020. The Committee is also asked to consider the comments and actions against performance to ensure they are robust.

This report makes the following recommendations to Wider Leadership Team:

1. That the summary of performance for Quarter 4 of 2018/19 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Corporate Leadership Team	21/05/2019
Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee	04/06/2019
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	18/06/2019
Strategic, Planning & Infrastructure Committee	25/06/2019
Policy & Resources Committee	26/06/2019

Key Performance Indicators Quarter 4 Update – 2018/19

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Having a comprehensive set of actions and performance indicators ensures that the Council delivers against the priorities and actions set in the Strategic Plan.
- 1.2 Performance indicators are judged in two ways. Firstly, on whether performance has improved, sustained or declined, compared to the same period in the previous year. This is known as direction. Where there is no previous data, no assessment of direction can be made.
- 1.3 The second way is to look at whether an indicator has achieved the target set and is known as PI status. If an indicator has achieved or exceeded the annual target, they are rated green. If the target has been missed but is within 10% of the target it will be rated amber, and if the target has been missed by more than 10% it will be rated red.
- 1.4 Some indicators will show an asterisk (*) after the figure. These are provisional values that are awaiting confirmation. Data for some of the indicators were not available at the time of reporting. In these cases, a date has been provided for when the information is expected.
- 1.5 Contextual indicators are not targeted but are given a direction. Indicators that are not due for reporting or where there is delay in data collection are not rated against targets or given a direction.

2. Quarter 4 Performance Summary

- 2.1 There are 18 key performance indicators (KPIs) which were developed with Heads of Service and unit managers and agreed by the four Service Committees for 2018/19. 4 are reported to the Committee for this quarter.
- 2.2 Overall, 100% (4) of targeted KPIs reported this quarter achieved the quarterly target. The out-turns for 75% (3) have improved compared to the same quarter last year and 50% (2) of out-turns have improved compared to the previous quarter.

RAG Rating	Green	Red	Total
KPIs	4	0	4
Direction	Up	Down	Total
Last Year	3	1	4
Last Quarter	2	2	4

3. Performance by priority

Priority 2: Securing a successful economy for Maidstone Borough

- 3.1 The indicators measuring the processing of planning applications within statutory timescales have all shown strong performance in quarter 4 with all exceeding their quarterly targets and all three showing an improvement when compared to compared to quarter 4 in 2017/18. The overall volume of planning applications determined has declined slightly by 1.7%, this decrease however, did not cause any significant changes in the workloads of officers.
- 3.2 In quarter 4, 53 affordable homes were delivered against a target of 45. This was made up of 17 social rented homes and 36 shared ownership homes. This quarters performance is an improvement compared to the previous quarter. The 2018/19 target for affordable homes is lower than in 2017/18 as the programme is derived on the development plan and is based on the site starts dates. We had expected a further 29 affordable completions of which were originally planned for completion this year, of which 19 were shared ownership and 10 were affordable rent.

4. Other Performance Data

- 4.1 In November 2018 the committee agreed two new Key Performance Indicators alongside the agreement of the new Local Enforcement Plan. These were formally agreed as Key Performance Indicators for 2019/20 in April following agreement of the Council's Strategic Plan.
- 4.2 However to ensure Members are kept up to date in the intervening period the data has been reported below. Please note the reporting tool for performance against Priority 1 and Priority 2 cases (enforcement) was not working at the time of reporting and is being fixed.
- 4.3 There are 212 live cases open at the time of reporting these can be categorised as follows:
- 152 are live actions/under investigation,
 - 11 are awaiting dates for compliance/checks for compliance/awaiting prosecution,
 - 17 are at appeal,
 - 2 have injunctions on the land, and
 - 30 are held in abeyance awaiting decisions on planning applications.

5. RISK

- 5.1 This report is presented for information only, committees, managers and heads of service can use performance data to identify service performance and this data can contribute to risk management.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The Key Performance Indicator Update is reported quarterly to the Service Committees: Communities Housing and Environment Committee, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, and Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee. Each Committee will receive a report on the relevant priority action areas. The report is also presented to Policy & Resources Committee, reporting only on the priority areas of: A Clean and Safe Environment, Regenerating the Town Centre, and a Home for Everyone.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The Council could choose not to monitor the Strategic Plan and/or make alternative performance management arrangements, such as frequency of reporting. This is not recommended as it could lead to action not being taken against performance during the year, and the Council failing to deliver its priorities.

8. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The key performance indicators and strategic actions were part of the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2015-20 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. They also cover a wide range of services and priority areas, for example waste and recycling.	Policy & Information Manager
Risk Management	The production of robust performance reports ensures that the view of the Council's approach to the management of risk and use of resources is not undermined and allows early action to be taken in order to mitigate the risk of not achieving targets and outcomes.	Policy & Information Manager
Financial	Performance indicators and targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and determining good value for money. The financial implications of any proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and associated annual budget setting process. Performance issues are highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Staffing	Having a clear set of targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place	Policy & Information Manager

Legal	There is no statutory duty to report regularly on the Council's performance. However, under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) a best value authority has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. One of the purposes of the Key Performance Indicators is to facilitate the improvement of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of Council Services. Regular reports on the Council's performance assist in demonstrating best value and compliance with the statutory duty.	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Privacy and Data Protection	The data will be held and processed in accordance with the data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 2018 and in line with the Data Quality Policy, which sets out the requirement for ensuring data quality. There is a program for undertaking data quality audits of performance indicators.	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Equalities	The Performance Indicators reported on in this quarterly update measure the ongoing performance of the strategies in place. If there has been a change to the way in which a service delivers a strategy, i.e. a policy change, an Equalities Impact Assessment is undertaken to identify the impact on individuals with a protected characteristic and where required, put in place mitigations	Equalities & Corporate Policy Officer
Crime and Disorder	None Identified	Policy & Information Manager
Procurement	Performance Indicators and Strategic Milestones monitor any procurement needed to achieve the outcomes of the Strategic Plan.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement

9. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Key Performance Indicator Update Quarter 4 – 2018/19

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Performance Summary

This is the quarter 4 performance update on indicators set against Maidstone Borough Council’s Strategic Plan 2015-20. It sets out how we are performing against Key Performance Indicators that directly contribute to the achievement of those priorities. Performance indicators are judged in two ways; firstly, whether an indicator has achieved the target set, known as PI status. Secondly, we assess whether performance has improved, been sustained or declined, compared to the same period in the previous year, known as direction.

Key to performance ratings

RAG Rating	
	Target not achieved
	Target slightly missed (within 10%)
	Target met
	Data Only

Direction	
	Performance has improved
	Performance has been sustained
	Performance has declined
N/A	No previous data to compare

RAG Rating	Green	Red	Total
KPIs	4		4
Direction	Up	Down	Total
Last Year	3	1	4
Last Quarter	2	2	4

A Home for Everyone

Performance Indicator	Q4 2018/19				
	Value	Target	Status	Last Year	Last Quarter
Processing of planning applications: Major applications (NI 157a)	95.45%	88.00%			
Processing of planning applications: Minor applications (NI 157b)	91.89%	80.00%			
Processing of planning applications: Other applications (NI 157c)	99.58%	90.00%			
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	53	45			

Agenda Item 14

Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

25 June 2019

4th Quarter Budget Monitoring 2018/19

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Mark Green, Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Chris Hartgrove, Interim Head of Finance
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the financial position for the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (SPI) Committee at the end of Quarter 4 2018/19 against the revenue and capital budgets (i.e. the final outturn, subject to audit). The SPI Committee is now responsible for the service areas formerly overseen by the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee which has now been decommissioned.

For this Committee, after taking into account grants to be carried forward of £70,000, there is an overspend against the revenue budget of £54,000.

Capital expenditure totalling £67,000 has been incurred during 2018/19 for the projects which sat within the SPST Committee's remit, representing slippage of £161,000.

The report also includes projected costs for completing the forthcoming Local Plan Review.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That:

1. The financial performance for 2018/19 be noted.
2. The slippage within the capital programme in 2018/19 be noted.
3. The projected costs for completing the Local Plan Review be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee	25th June 2019

4th Quarter Budget Monitoring 2018/19

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2018/19 onwards was agreed by full Council on 7 March 2018. This report advises and updates the Committee on how each service has performed in regards to revenue and capital expenditure against the approved budgets within its remit.
 - 1.2 The Director of Finance & Business Improvement is the Responsible Financial Officer, and has overall responsibility for budgetary control and financial management. However in practice, day to day budgetary control is delegated to service managers, with assistance and advice from their director and the finance section.
 - 1.3 Attached at **Appendix 1** is a report detailing the position for the revenue and capital budgets at the end of the 2018/19 financial year.
 - 1.4 The Committee has received various reports on the Local Plan Review, which will involve significant financial resource over the next few years. The costs of undertaking this work are acknowledged in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), which was approved by Council on 27 February. The MTFS includes a provision for additional resources, above and beyond base budgets, of £800,000 over the years 2017/18 to 2021/22, for the Local Plan Review. So far none of this provision has been drawn down. **Appendix 2** sets out projected resource requirements for the Local Plan Review, and shows that the work can be delivered within the budgetary provision of £800,000.
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2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 There are no matters for decision in this report. The Committee is asked to note the contents but may choose to take further action depending on the matters reported here.
-

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In considering the current position on the revenue budget and the capital programme at the end of 2018/19 the committee can choose to note this information or it could choose to take further action.
 - 3.2 The committee is requested to note the content of the report and agree on any necessary action to be taken in relation to the budget position.
-

4. RISK

- 4.1 This report is presented for information only and has no risk management implications.
- 4.2 The Council has produced a balanced budget for both capital and revenue expenditure and income for 2018/19. This budget is set against a backdrop of limited resources and a difficult economic climate. Regular and comprehensive monitoring of the type included in this report ensures early warning of significant issues that may place the Council at financial risk. This gives this committee the best opportunity to take actions to mitigate such risks.
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5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 No consultation has been undertaken in relation to this report.
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6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The fourth quarter budget monitoring reports are being considered by the relevant Service Committees in June 2019 including a full report to Policy & Resources Committee on 26th June 2019.
- 6.2 Details of the discussions which take place at service committees regarding budget management will be reported to Policy and Resources Committee where appropriate.
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7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	This report monitors actual activity against the revenue budget and other financial matters set by Council for the financial year. The budget is set in accordance with the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy which is linked to the strategic plan and corporate priorities.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Risk Management	This has been addressed in section 4 of the report.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement

Financial	Financial implications are the focus of this report through high level budget monitoring. The process of budget monitoring ensures that services can react quickly to potential resource problems. The process ensures that the Council is not faced by corporate financial problems that may prejudice the delivery of strategic priorities.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Staffing	The budget for staffing represents a significant proportion of the direct spend of the council and is carefully monitored. Any issues in relation to employee costs will be raised in this and future monitoring reports.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Legal	The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget and this monitoring process enables the committee to remain aware of issues and the process to be taken to maintain a balanced budget for the year.	Team Leader (Corporate Governance), MKLS
Privacy and Data Protection	No specific issues arise.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Equalities	There are no equalities implications as a result of this update report.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Crime and Disorder	No specific issues arise.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Procurement	No specific issues arise.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Fourth Quarter 2018/19 Revenue and Capital Monitoring – Strategic Planning and Infrastructure

- Appendix 2: Resource Requirements for Local Plan Review
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Fourth Quarter Budget Monitoring 2018/19

Strategic Planning and Infrastructure

Committee

25 June 2019

Lead Officer: Mark Green

Report Authors: Chris Hartgrove / Paul Holland

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Executive Summary

This report is intended to provide Members with an overview of performance against revenue and capital budgets and outturn for the 2018/19 financial year for the services that fell within the remit of the Strategic Planning Sustainability and Transportation (SPST) Committee. Although the SPST Committee has now been decommissioned the service areas for which it was responsible now fall under this Committee.

Robust budget monitoring is a key part of effective internal financial control, and therefore is one of the elements underpinning good corporate governance.

The aim of reporting financial information to service committees at quarterly intervals is to ensure that underlying trends can be identified at an early stage, and that action is taken to combat adverse developments or seize opportunities.

It is advisable for these reports to be considered in conjunction with quarterly performance monitoring reports, as this may provide the context for variances identified with the budget and general progress towards delivery of the Council's strategic priorities.

Headline messages for this year are as follows:

- For the SPST Committee, after taking into account grants to be carried forward of £70,000 there is an overspend against the revenue budget of £54,000.
- Capital expenditure totalling £67,000 has been incurred during 2018/19 for the projects which sat within the remit of the SPST Committee. This represents slippage of £0.161m.

Revenue Budget 2018/19



Revenue Spending

At the end of the year, after taking into account grants to be carried forward of £70,000 there is an overspend against the revenue budget of £54,000 for this Committee.

The budgets for each service committee now include a figure for assumed salary slippage to reflect the forecast level of vacant posts across the year. This was previously shown as a figure for the whole Council as part of the budget monitoring report for this Committee.

As illustrated by the chart below all committees stayed within their expenditure budgets with the exception of Policy & Resources Committee, although this is offset by income in excess of the budget figure. With the exception of Heritage Culture & Leisure Committee the remaining committees have all underachieved on their income budgets.

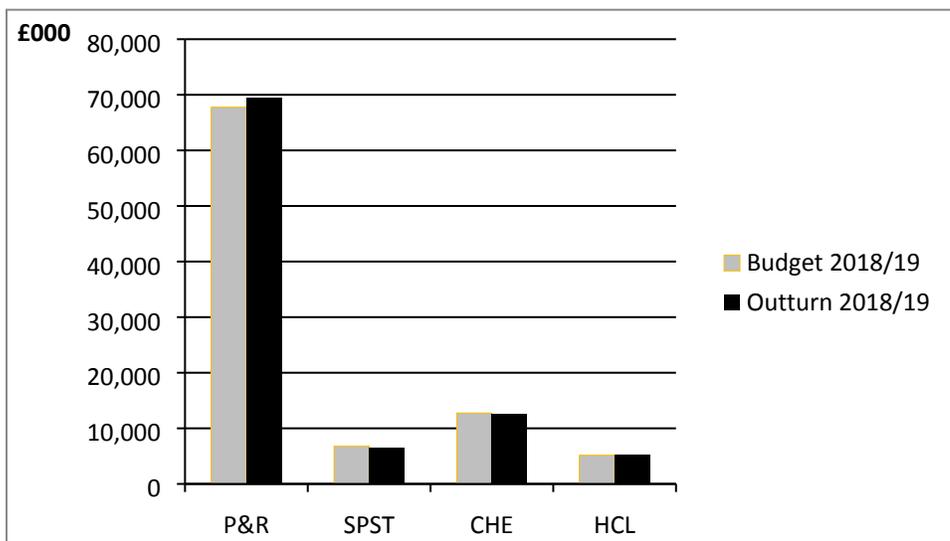


Chart 1 Performance against budget analysed by service committee (Expenditure)

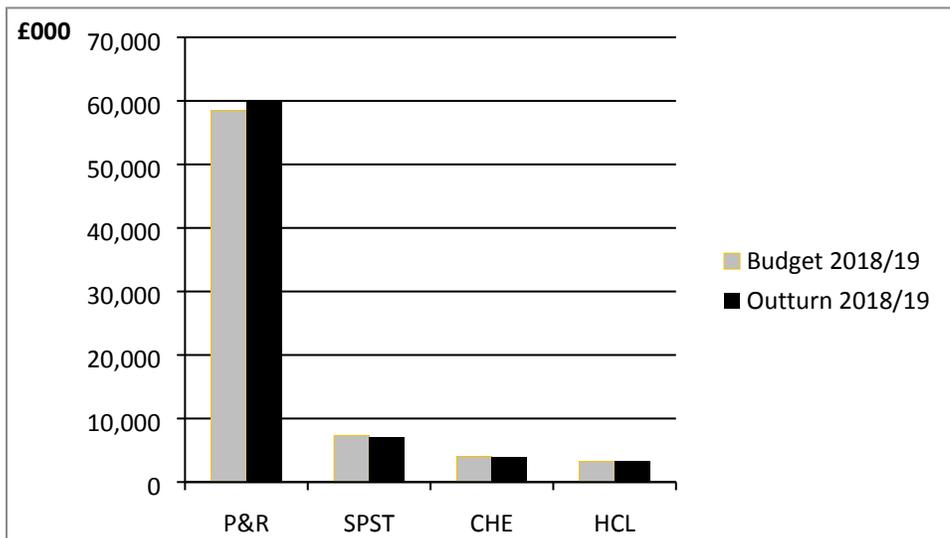


Chart 2 Performance against budget analysed by service committee (Income)

The table on the following page details the budget and expenditure position for the SPST Committee's services at the end of 2018/19. These figures represent the net budget for each cost centre. The actual position includes expenditure for goods and services which we have received but not yet paid for.

The columns of the table show the following detail:

- a) The cost centre description;
- b) The value of the total budget for the year;
- c) The actual spend to that date;
- d) The variance between expected and actual spend;

The table shows net income of £471,000 against a net income budget of £525,000 which is an overspend of £54,000. The table separates the overall figures into the two main functions of this committee, Planning Services and Parking Services, in order to show the budget and outturn for each function.

Revenue Budget Summary Q4 2018/19

Cost Centre	Budget for Year	Outturn	Variance
	£000	£000	£000
Building Regulations Chargeable	-320	-358	38
Building Control	-1	1	-2
Street Naming & Numbering	-49	-131	82
Development Control Advice	-56	-201	145
Development Control Appeals	117	88	29
Development Control Majors	-893	-599	-294
Development Control - Other	-621	-631	10
Development Control Enforcement	66	66	0
Planning Policy	219	96	123
Neighbourhood Planning	56	56	-0
Conservation	-11	4	-15
Town Centre Opportunity Area Project	55	55	0
Land Charges	-289	-222	-67
Development Management Section	1,063	1,200	-137
Spatial Policy Planning Section	405	414	-9
Head of Planning and Development	150	149	1
Development Management Enforcement Section	287	210	77
Building Surveying Section	401	420	-19
Mid Kent Planning Support Service	502	478	24
Heritage Landscape and Design Section	200	201	-1
Planning Business Management	155	165	-10
Mid Kent Local Land Charges Section	52	47	4
Salary Slippage	-74	0	-74
Sub-Total - Planning Services	1,414	1,507	-94
Environment Improvements	17	17	0
Name Plates & Notices	18	17	0
On Street Parking	-364	-367	2
Residents Parking	-263	-215	-48
Pay & Display Car Parks	-1,777	-1,887	110
Non Paying Car Parks	11	10	1
Off Street Parking - Enforcement	-75	-147	72
Mote Park Pay & Display	-174	-158	-16
Sandling Road Car Park	-1	-9	9
Park & Ride	241	360	-118
Socially Desirable Buses	48	57	-9
Other Transport Services	-10	-18	9
Parking Services Section	390	362	27
Sub-Total - Parking Services	-1,939	-1,978	39
Total	-525	-471	-54

Table 1 Revenue Budget Position Q4 2018/19 – Planning Services (Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee)

Significant Variances

Within the headline figures, there are a number of adverse and favourable variances for individual service areas. This report draws attention to the most significant variances, i.e. those exceeding £30,000, and the table below provides further detail regarding these variances.

	Positive Variance Q4	Adverse Variance Q4
Planning Services		
Building Regulations Chargeable - Income has performed ahead of budget for the whole year, and the year-end surplus will be transferred to earmarked reserves.	38	
Street Naming and Numbering - Income has exceeded the budgeted figure as a result of the number of new developments in the borough.	82	
Development Control Advice - There has been significant additional income from both pre-application advice and the new Planning Performance Agreements.	145	
Development Control Majors - As has been forecast in previous reports this area has shown a significant fall in income due to the reduced number of planning applications received compared to estimates.		-294
Planning Policy – This variance represents unused budget that will be set aside for local plan development work.	123	
Development Management Section - This variance is predominantly due to high agency staff costs. Unfortunately the costs have not declined as planned due to agency cover for the Major Projects Manager who left in September and also another staff member on maternity leave.		-137
Development Management Enforcement Section - This variance represents unused budgets for appeals costs.	77	
Salary Slippage - Assumed saving from normal level of turnover in staff. The actual savings are reflected in individual cost centres.		-74

	Positive Variance Q4	Adverse Variance Q4
Parking Services		
Residents Parking - The 'overspend' in this area is entirely due to under-achieved Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) income in residents' areas. This is partly due to lower contraventions having to be issued due to an adjudicator ruling. This however is offset by the over-achieved PCN income in Off Street Parking.		-48
Pay & Display Car Parks - Income was £146,000 below budget at year end. However this has been offset by a favourable variance of £43,000 from Season tickets and the parking reserve budget which is £165,000, thus leaving a favourable variance overall.	110	
Off Street Parking – Enforcement - PCN income in car parks is above expectation, this is however offset by a reduction of income for PCN's in resident areas.	72	
Park & Ride - The introduction of pay to park has not generated the income that was expected. Income was £104,000 below expectation at year end. The Park and Ride model will change again for 19/20.		-118

Table 3 Significant Variances – Parking Services (Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee)

Capital Budget 2018/19



Capital Spending

The five-year capital programme for 2018/19 onwards was approved by Council on 7th March 2018. Funding for the programme remains consistent with previous decisions of Council in that the majority of capital resources come from New Homes Bonus (NHB) along with a small grants budget.

The outturn position for 2018/19 is set out in the table below. For the year expenditure totaling £67,000 has been incurred against a budget of £0.228m, representing slippage of £0.161m.

Capital Budget Summary 2018/19

Capital Programme Heading	Revised Estimate 2018/19 £000	Outturn 2018/19 £000	Budget Remaining £000	Budget Not Required £000
Riverside Towpath	40		40	
Bridges Gyratory Scheme	188	67	121	260
Total	228	67	161	260

Table 4 Capital Expenditure 2018/19

- The remaining budget for the Bridges Gyratory Scheme is for residual costs around the landscaping elements of the scheme and flood defence works that will be undertaken around the Medway Street underpass.

Appendix 2

Resource requirements for the Local Plan Review

Following a request from Members, officers have set out the resource requirements associated with the production of the Local Plan Review. This is provided in the below table. The table sets out the various Local Plan Review stages as well as the key evidence requirements in the first column. The final column provides the estimated time period for when work associated with each stage will take place. The table indicates that the Local Plan Review will cost up to approximately £800,000.

LPR Work area	External Resource (Internal resource to be covered within wider establishment)	Start/Finish
Strategic Housing Market Assessment and Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment	£57,500.00	Feb 19- Jun 20
Playing pitch and sports strategy update	£10,000.00	Jan 20 - Jun 20
SLAA (including call for sites)	covered within wider establishment	Jan 19 - Jun 20
New Growth Masterplanning	covered within wider establishment	June 19 - Jun 20
Town Centre, employment and retail needs study	£57,000.00	Feb 19- May 20
Case for Leeds Langley Relief Road	KCC led	ongoing - Jun 20*
Strategic Transport Modelling and Linked Air Quality Modelling	£265,000.00 (our estimated contribution)	Aug 19 - Jun 20
Evidence for Sustainable Transport Measures	£20,000.00	Apr 19 - Sep 20
Green and Blue infrastructure review	£40,000.00	Sept 19 - Oct 20
Open Space Assessment	£20,000.00	Feb 19 - Jul 19

Appendix 2: Resource Requirements for Local Plan Review

Infrastructure Review including IDP	covered within wider establishment	Sept 19 - Jun 20
Viability Assessment	£20,000.00	Jan 20 - Jun 20
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	£15,000.00	May 19 - Jun 20
Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment including Habitat Regulations Assessment	£65,000.00	Jan 19 - Mar 22
Regulation 18a, scoping, themes and choices consultation	Covered within wider establishment	Mar 19 - Oct 19
Regulation 18b, preferred approach consultation	£5,000.00	Oct 19 - Jun 20
Regulation 19 proposed submission LPR consultation, including Full Council agreement	£10,000.00	Jun 20 - Dec 20
Submission LPR	£10,000.00	Dec 20 - Mar 21
LPR EXAMINATION AND ADOPTION		
Preparation for Examination	£9,000.00	Apr 21 - Jul 21
Hearings	£135,000.00	Jul 21 - Oct 21
Post examination including consultation	£6,000.00	Oct 21 - Mar 22
Adoption		Apr-22
All design including masterplanning, visuals, printing, publicity etc	£50,000.00	Throughout the LPR
TOTAL	£794,500.00	

Agenda Item 15

Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

25th June 2019

Local Plan Review - Duty to Co-operate

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Gavin Ball, Principal Planning Policy Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the standard process whereby the Council will fulfil its requirement to complete statements of common ground in order to satisfy the Duty to Co-operate incumbent in the preparation of the Local Plan Review.

This report makes the following recommendations to Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

1. That the proposed set of cross-boundary issues and engagement activities to be undertaken to ensure the Council complies with Duty to Co-operate in the preparation of the Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan Review be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee	25 June 2019

Local Plan Review - Duty to Co-operate

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Maidstone Borough Council is the Local Planning Authority for Maidstone Borough, and has the responsibility for preparing, maintaining, and reviewing the Local Plan for the area. The Council is in the early stages of undertaking a Local Plan Review of the current Plan (adopted in 2017), to be completed and adopted by 2022.
- 1.2 Local Plan-making authorities are required by the Duty to Co-operate to seek agreement with each other when preparing or supporting policies which address strategic issues. The Local Plan Review will include a combination of strategic and detailed planning policies, and as such the Duty to Co-operate will need to be satisfied with regard to the strategic issues.
- 1.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that plan-making authorities should produce, maintain, one or more statement(s) of common ground detailing the agreement that has been reached on strategic cross-boundary issues throughout the plan-making process.

What is a statement of common ground?

- 1.4 A statement of common ground is a written record of the progress made by strategic policy-making authorities during the process of planning for strategic cross-boundary issues. It documents where effective co-operation is and is not happening throughout the plan-making process, and is a way of demonstrating that plans are deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working across local authority boundaries. For Local Planning Authorities, it also forms part of the evidence required to demonstrate that they have complied with the Duty to Co-operate.
- 1.5 A Statement of Common Ground is expected to contain the following:
 - a. A short written description and map showing the location and administrative areas covered by the statement, and a brief justification for these area(s);
 - b. the key strategic issues being addressed by the statement, for example meeting the housing need for the area, air quality etc.;
 - c. the plan-making authorities responsible for joint working detailed in the statement, and list of any additional signatories (including cross-referencing the issues to which each is a signatory);
 - d. governance arrangements for the cooperation process, including how the statement will be maintained and kept up to date;

- e. if applicable, the housing requirements in any adopted and (if known) emerging strategic policies relevant to housing within the area covered by the statement;
- f. distribution of needs in the area as agreed through the plan-making process, or the process for agreeing the distribution of need (including unmet need) across the area;
- g. a record of where agreements have (or have not) been reached on key strategic issues, including the process for reaching agreements on these; and
- h. any additional strategic issues to be addressed by the statement which have not already been addressed, including a brief description how the statement relates to any other statement of common ground covering all or part of the same area.

What are the strategic issues on which cooperation is required?

1.6 Section 33A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 identifies each of the following as a “strategic matter”—

(a) sustainable development or use of land that has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas, including (in particular) sustainable development or use of land for or in connection with infrastructure that is strategic and has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas, and

(b) sustainable development or use of land in a two-tier area if the development or use is a county matter, or has or would have a significant impact on a county matter.

1.7 20 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out a framework of themes that a Local Plan’s strategic policies should make provision for. The Council has considered these “themes” and proposed a set of *strategic issues* which the Plan will seek to address. It is these issues we intend to consult on with cross-boundary authorities as the basis of Maidstone’s Statement of Common Ground. This will include neighboring authorities as well as KCC and statutory authorities including¹ (but not limited to) the Natural England, Historic England, and the Environment Agency.

Strategic Theme (NPPF Paragraph 20)	Strategic Issue for Maidstone borough
Set out an overall strategy for the scale, pattern and quality of development and make sufficient provision for ...	
...Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development	Meeting the borough’s local housing need and helping to meet needs across the relevant Housing Market Area/s
	Ensuring a sufficient supply of affordable housing
	Ensuring sufficient land and floorspace is provided to support economic growth in the

¹ See Reg. 4 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and Reg. 169 of the The National Treatment Agency (Abolition) and the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (Consequential, Transitional and Saving Provisions) Order 2013

Strategic Theme (NPPF Paragraph 20)	Strategic Issue for Maidstone borough
	borough and to contribute to the needs of the wider economic market area Ensuring that Maidstone has a vital and vibrant town centre which maintains its role in the sub-region and that a network of local centres continue to serve local retail and service needs.
...Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation	Ensuring that the borough's environmental assets such as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Landscapes of Local Value, the countryside and Green Belt are suitably protected Ensuring that the borough's biodiversity and wildlife habitats are suitably protected and managed Ensuring that the borough's historic assets are conserved and managed Contributing to an overall improvement in air quality, in particular in the Maidstone Air Quality Management Area. Managing the risk of flooding from all sources. Addressing climate change
...Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat)	Ensuring sufficient transport infrastructure is provided to serve the new development that is planned. Ensuring sufficient utilities infrastructure is provided to serve the new development that is planned.
...Community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure);	Ensuring that sufficient provision is made for health and education to serve the new development that is planned. Ensuring a sufficiency of parks and open spaces Ensuring that sufficient provision is made for community infrastructure

Process of Consultation on Strategic Issues

- 1.8 The issues above are set out in the Local Plan Review: Themes, Issues and Initial Choices document, an early consultation version of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review. This consultation will be utilised as the opportunity to raise with cross-boundary authorities the potential scope of cross-boundary issues which will be addressed in the Local Plan Review. A draft Statement of Common Ground, including the proposed set of signatories for each issue is included as Appendix A of this Report.
- 1.9 Not all of the issues identified above will require cross boundary agreement. Where that is the case, it is proposed that the statement of common ground will simply note this fact. The full list of issues is included in the draft Statement of Common Ground so that neighbouring authorities can agree that they are, or are not issues for which cross-boundary agreement ought

to be sought. The Council will expect to receive consultation responses from all cross-boundary authorities indicating whether the issues identified are correct, and whether they would expect to agree the approach to managing them.

- 1.10 Following the consultation, the Statement of Common Ground will be updated to include any changes requested by neighbouring authorities in response to the consultation, and a set of meetings will be set up to scope the issues and likely areas of agreement and disagreement for each issues.
- 1.11 The frequency and content of meetings will depend on the issues identified. Some may be one-offs (where we agree), and some may be needed to review further evidence, whereupon we have meetings to agree the issue and outcome and agree/agree to disagree. Representatives will normally include officers of at least Principal Planning Officer level, with other planning officers where relevant.
- 1.12 The Council will produce a summary of the issues addressed and outcomes for each meeting in the Duty to Cooperate document. Such a summary will be taken by officers present in the meeting. This will comprise the key issues and outcomes from the meetings, and will be appended to the Duty to Co-operate document as a set of Appendices.
- 1.13 The next stage of the Local Plan Review is scheduled to be in February 2019, with consultation on a Preferred Approach version of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review document. It is intended for this to include potential spatial distribution(s) of development, and will be the first opportunity for cross-boundary authorities to agree or disagree with the way that the Plan responds to cross-boundary strategic issues.
- 1.14 It is expected that cross-boundary working will have informed the content of this version of the Plan. The Preferred Option version of the Plan will be accompanied by an updated Statement of Common Ground detailing the cross-authority communication and work undertaken to address cross-boundary strategic issues.
- 1.15 The Council will be required to judge what amendments to the Plan could be made following the responses received on the Plan's Preferred Approach Plan, and draft Statement of Common Ground. Any changes will be set out in the Proposed Submission version of the Plan in (Scheduled for September 2020).
- 1.16 The Council will expect to receive consultation responses from all neighbouring authorities indicating where our approaches are agreed with, as well as where there is the potential for disagreement. Where agreement can be secured, this will be recorded in the Statement of Common Ground.
- 1.17 There is expected to be a significant level of co-operation between Maidstone Borough Council and Kent County Council (as set out in Appendix A). One of the outcomes of the new ways of working with KCC is that a new Maidstone Strategic Infrastructure Board will be created, consisting largely of Members and Senior Officers from KCC and MBC. The terms of reference are presently being finalised and the inaugural meeting is scheduled to

occur in Sept 2019. This will be an accepted forum for duty to cooperate discussions between the two authorities.

What if there are areas of disagreement?

- 1.18 If a cross-boundary authority signals that they disagree with the approach proposed to manage a cross-boundary issue during the Preferred Approaches consultation, the Council will work with them to see whether the issue can be rectified, and a solution agreed on, prior to the Examination in Public. This may involve a set of structured meetings, and potentially further evidence gathering. This process may even require a change to the Local Plan Review document.
- 1.19 It is possible that after undertaking discussion that it may not be possible to secure agreement between the Council and a relevant body. In this event the Statement of Common Ground will note this, and it is likely that this will become one of the issues for discussion during the Examination in Public of the Local Plan Review.

How will MBC feed into other Authorities Statements of Common Ground?

- 1.20 Officers will hold meetings with cross-boundary authorities as they identify issues and content for agreement in their Local Plans.
-

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee are asked to note the content of this report.
-

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The proposed draft Statement of Common Ground is included at Appendix A.

4. RISK

- 4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework.
- 4.2 The planning inspector appointed to examine the local plan will check whether an LPA has complied with the duty to co-operate and will recommend that the local plan is not adopted if the duty has not been complied with, in which case the examination will not proceed any further.
- 4.3 If agreement is secured on all issues we are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

4.4 It is recommended that consideration is shown in this report at paragraph 1.15-1.16 and identifies some risks assessed rated as “**RED**” in relation to agreement not being secured on all issues. However, we are satisfied that the further responses to those risks shown at 1.15-1.16 are sufficient to bring their impact and likelihood within acceptable levels. We will continue to monitor these risks as per the Policy.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 N/A

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 The draft Statement of Common Ground will be sent to each strategic cross-boundary authority identified within it, seeking agreement of the issues contained within the document, as well as offering a meeting to discuss how each relevant issue can be addressed through the Plan.

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 the objectives of the Strategic Plan. We set out the reasons other choices will be less effective in section 2	Head of Planning & Development
Risk Management	The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council’s Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council’s risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.	Head of Planning & Development
Financial	The activities required to comply with the Duty to Co-operate can be carried out within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	implementation.	
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Planning & Development
Legal	<p>The report is for noting. Section 33A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a duty upon local planning authorities and county councils to cooperate in the preparation of development plan documents, insofar as they relate to a strategic matter.</p> <p>LPA's will be expected to demonstrate evidence of having effectively co-operated to plan for issues with cross-boundary impacts when their local plans are submitted for examination (paragraph 27, Chapter 3 Plan-making, NPPF). The statement of common ground is the means by which strategic policy-making authorities can demonstrate that a plan is based on effective cooperation and that they have sought to produce a strategy based on agreements with other authorities.</p> <p>The planning inspector appointed to examine the local plan will check whether an LPA has complied with the duty to co-operate and will recommend that the local plan is not adopted if the duty has not been complied with, in which case the examination will not proceed any further.</p> <p>Acting on the recommendations is within the</p>	Russell Fitzpatrick (MKLS)

	Council's powers as a Local Plan making authority	
Privacy and Data Protection	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council, the information provided will be public information on behalf of cross-boundary organisations.	Russell Fitzpatrick (MKLS)
Equalities	No impact identified.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix A: Draft Statement of Common Ground

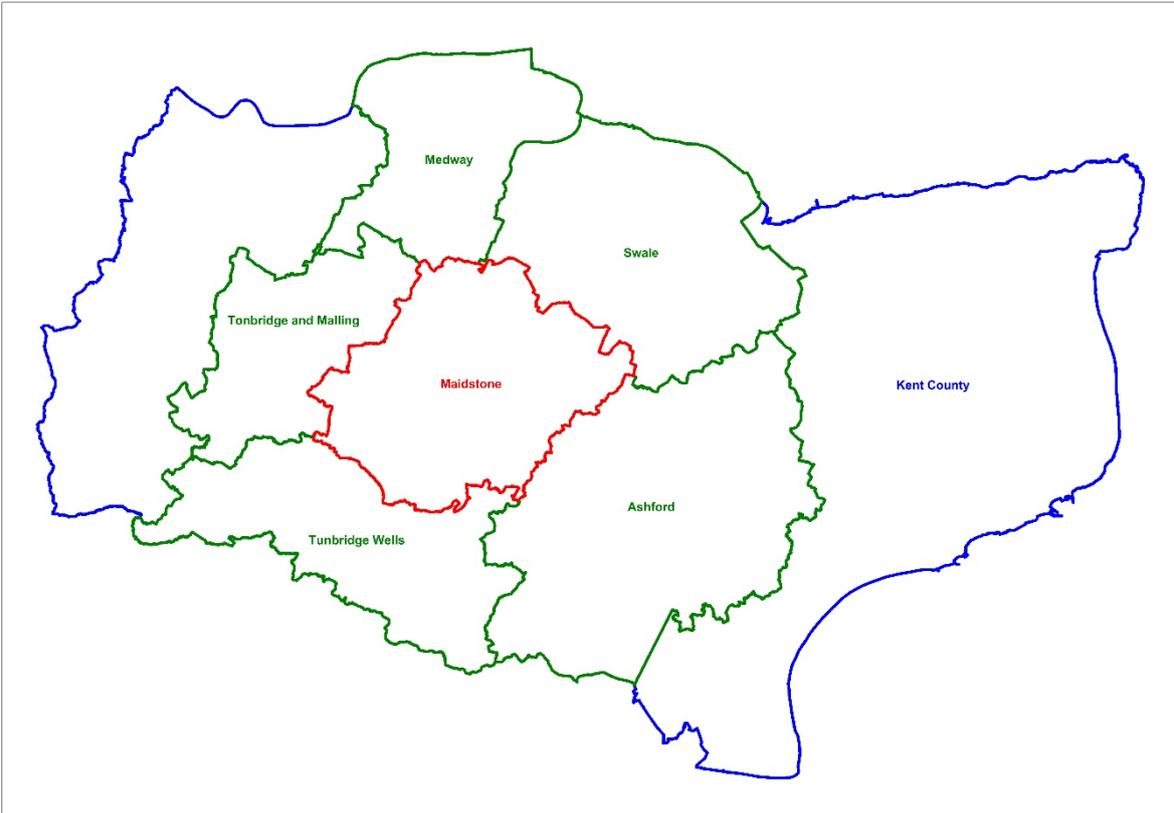
9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The issues set out in this report are also within the Committee Report for the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Review – Issues & Options consultation (Regulation 18a).

Appendix A: Draft Statement of Common Ground

Maidstone’s context

Maidstone is a Borough Council within the County of Kent.. Maidstone is the Local Planning Authority, while Kent County Council has responsibility for the provision of services including transport and education. Maidstone is surrounded by the Kent District Councils of Ashford, Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Swale, and Medway Council, which is a unitary authority which works collaboratively with Kent CC to provide services.



The key strategic issues being addressed by this statement

The key strategic issues being addressed by this Statement are listed below. Included is the intended cross-boundary signatory we expect to seek agreement on the section of the Statement of Common Ground with (where appropriate).

Strategic Issue for Maidstone borough	Geographical area relevant for the 'Duty to Co-operate' ¹	Possible Statement of Common Ground signatories
Meeting the borough’s local housing need and helping to meet needs across the relevant Housing Market Area/s Ensuring there is a sufficient supply of affordable housing	Housing Market Area/s; neighbouring authority areas	[extent of HMA to be confirmed through future evidence]
Ensuring sufficient land and floorspace is provided to support economic growth in the borough and to contribute to the needs of the wider economic market area	Functional Economic Market Area	[extent of FEMA to be confirmed through future evidence] South East Local Enterprise Partnership

¹ Subject to the selected spatial strategy.

Ensuring that Maidstone has a vital and vibrant town centre which maintains its role in the sub-region and that a network of local centres continue to serve local retail and service needs.	Retail Catchment Area	[extent of RCA to be confirmed through future evidence]
Ensuring that the borough's environmental assets such as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Landscapes of Local Value, the countryside and Green Belt are suitably protected	Green Belt	Tonbridge & Malling BC.
	Kent Downs AONB; setting of High Weald AONB	Tonbridge & Malling BC; Medway; Swale BC; Ashford BC; Tunbridge Wells BC. North Downs AONB Unit
	Landscapes of Local Value	Tonbridge & Malling BC; Ashford BC; Tunbridge Wells BC.
Ensuring that the borough's biodiversity and wildlife habitats are suitably protected and managed	North Downs Woodlands Special Area of Conservation and, potentially, European designated sites in other boroughs	[extent of impacts to be identified through the Habitat Regulations Assessment]. Kent Nature Partnership
	SSSIs, Local Wildlife Sites, ancient woodland which straddle the borough's boundaries.	Natural England Tonbridge & Malling BC; Ashford BC; Medway; Swale BC; Tunbridge Wells BC.
Ensuring that the borough's historic assets are conserved and managed	Maidstone borough	Historic England
Contributing to an overall improvement in air quality, in particular in the Maidstone Air Quality Management Area.	Maidstone AQMA; AQMA in the Malling area of Tonbridge & Malling.	Kent County Council (as highway authority); Tonbridge & Malling BC.
Managing the risk of flooding from all sources.	Catchments of the River Medway, Stour, Beult & Teise.	Environment Agency; Tonbridge & Malling BC; Medway; Ashford BC; Tunbridge Wells BC
Addressing climate change	Maidstone borough. [Significant overlap with air quality and transport issues]	-
Ensuring sufficient transport infrastructure is provided to serve the new development that is planned.	Strategic highway network, local highway network, and public rights of way within the borough and, potentially, key junctions falling in neighbouring authority areas. Rail infrastructure within the borough.	Kent County Council; Highways England; Network Rail; Tonbridge & Malling BC; Ashford BC; Medway; Swale BC; Tunbridge Wells BC.
Ensuring sufficient utilities infrastructure is provided to serve the new development that is planned.	Maidstone borough (subject to the selected spatial strategy)	Utilities providers
Ensuring that sufficient provision is made for health and education to serve the new development that is planned.	Maidstone borough (subject to the selected spatial strategy)	Kent County Council; West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group; Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust.

Ensuring a sufficiency of parks and open spaces	Maidstone borough	-
Ensuring that sufficient provision is made for community infrastructure	Maidstone borough	-

Governance arrangements for the cooperation process

The Council will anticipate receipt of agreement, disagreements, additions and amendments to the above issues being set out in response to this consultation.

MBC officers will offer the opportunity to discuss all issues with each proposed cross-boundary authority. These will take place between Sep-Dec 2019, with the aim of agreeing the Plan's approach to managing each cross-boundary issue.

Where there are differences identified by an authority to the above schedule, the Council will set up a meeting to discuss the issue, and its potential inclusion in the next version of the Statement of Common Ground, as well as the Preferred Approach consultation in Spring 2020.

The Preferred Option consultation will be the key opportunity for a cross-boundary authority to signpost agreement or disagreement with the way a strategic issue has been addressed in the draft Plan. Where there is agreement, this will need confirming upon Publication of the Plan.

Where there is disagreement, the Council will seek to discuss the issue with the relevant cross-boundary authority body through a series of structured workshops, to see whether the Plan can be modified to secure agreement. Where it can, the change will be noted a schedule within the Statement of Common Ground, and where it cannot it will be noted within the Statement which accompanies the Publication of the Local Plan in September 2020.

Issues for which agreement is in place

This is a record of where agreements have (or have not) been reached on key strategic issues, including the process for reaching agreements on these. This will be filled out following consultation responses received in relation to the Preferred Options Consultation in Spring 2020.

Issues for which agreement is not in place

Where we have sought, and failed to come to an agreement, the list of outstanding areas of disagreement will be set out here. This is a record of where agreements have not been reached on key strategic issues, including the process undertaken in seeking agreement on these.

Meeting Housing Need

The housing requirements being planned for in neighboring authorities is set out below.

LPA	Swale	Medway	Ashford	Tonbridge & Malling	Tunbridge Wells
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Housing Target	13,192	37,143	16,872	13,920	10,096
Plan Until	2031	2035	2030	2031	2033
Unmet need	0	0	0	0	Not available
New Plan Stage	Adopted	Reg 18	Post-EiP	Submitted	Reg 18

**Strategic Planning & Infrastructure
Committee**

25th June 2019

**Maidstone Local Plan Review: Scoping, Themes & Issues
consultation document (Regulation 18)**

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning & Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Mark Egerton (Strategic Planning Manager) & Sarah Lee (Principal Planning Officer)
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report introduces the first stage of public consultation for the Local Plan Review. The consultation documents appended provide information on what are expected to be key issues for the Local Plan Review with the purpose of gathering feedback from the public and stakeholders on its content and coverage. The report explains how the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan (2019-2045) and the revised National Planning Policy Framework have been particularly influential on the content of the documents at this stage. The public consultation is scheduled for 10 weeks starting on Friday, 19th July.

Purpose of Report

The matters covered in this report are for decision.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That:

1. The Maidstone Local Plan Review Scoping, Themes and Issues document (Regulation 18) in Appendix 1 be agreed for public consultation.
2. The summary document in Appendix 2 be agreed for public consultation
3. Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning & Development to finalise the documents for publication.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee	25 th June 2019

Maidstone Local Plan Review: Scoping, Themes & Issues consultation document (Regulation 18)

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p>Impact on Corporate Priorities</p>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council’s ability to achieve each of the 4 corporate priorities. The ways that the Local Plan Review can help to do this are set out within the body of the consultation document in Appendix 1.</p>	<p>Rob Jarman (Head of Planning & Development)</p>
<p>Cross Cutting Objectives</p>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>Links to the cross cutting objectives are signposted at the start of each section of the main consultation document (Appendix 1).</p>	<p>Rob Jarman (Head of Planning & Development)</p>
<p>Risk Management</p>	<p>The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council’s Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council’s risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.</p> <p>The Sustainability Appraisal/SEA process provides a check on the overall sustainability of the emerging Local Plan Review, including the testing of the future preferred spatial option against realistic alternatives.</p>	<p>Rob Jarman (Head of Planning & Development)</p>

Financial	Funding has been set aside for the Local Plan Review in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. This includes funding for the specific consultation work described in this report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning & Development)
Legal	Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers as set out in the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The technical document has had legal input during its preparation.	Russell Fitzpatrick (MKLS)
Privacy and Data Protection	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The preferred option will ensure that an inclusive approach is taken to consultation on the Local Plan Review in line with the Statement of Community Involvement. It is important that the consultation process is accessible to all communities including seldom heard groups. A separate equalities impact assessment has been undertaken for the Local Plan Review. This is a live document that will be revisited at various stages of the review.	Equalities & Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will have, or have the potential to have, a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. Particular links signposted in the main consultation document (Appendix 1).	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation can potentially have a positive impact on Crime and Disorder. as highlighted in the body of the main consultation document in Appendix 1.	Rob Jarman (Head of Planning & Development)
Procurement	On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises for document printing. We will complete this exercise in line with financial procedure rules.	Section 151 Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In July 2018 the Council agreed that it would prepare a Local Plan Review. The Council also agreed a timetable in the form of the Local Development Scheme to achieve adoption of the Local Plan Review by April 2022.
- 2.2 The first milestone in this timetable is an initial stage of public consultation ('Regulation 18' consultation) scheduled to start in July 2019. The purpose of this stage is to get views on what matters the Local Plan Review will need to consider and address i.e. its scope. The relevant regulations¹ specify that, as part of the plan preparation process, we should invite representations about what the local plan ought to contain.
- 2.3 This report presents the consultation material that has been prepared for this stage, namely;
- a. Scoping, Themes & Issues main document (Appendix 1). This is the principal consultation document which sets out in full our consideration of what the Local Plan Review should cover, including a degree of technical content.
 - b. Summary document (Appendix 2). This provides a short overview of the content of the main document, written in plain English.

Content & Structure

- 2.4 The main Scoping, Themes & Issues consultation document (Appendix 1) is structured as follows;
- introductory section explaining what the Local Plan is and why a Local Plan Review is needed;
 - identification of the particular influences on the process and content of the review, including the Duty to Co-operate;
 - discussion of the issues associated with amount, type and quality of new development which the Local Plan Review will need to plan for;
 - presentation of three initial options for how new housing could be distributed in the borough;
 - discussion of the background to each of the technical areas which the Local Plan Review may need to cover. These sections cover a comprehensive suite of matters such as infrastructure provision, biodiversity, landscape protection and climate change; and
 - a 'next steps' section.
- 2.5 At this scoping stage, the document does not draw conclusions on the way forward for any particular matter. Its content is focused on describing the background to the relevant planning matters, signalling forthcoming issues and identifying and inviting possible future considerations. It does not prescribe what the Local Plan Review should conclude on a particular matter as, at this early stage, we do not have the up-to-date evidence base needed to ensure future decisions are soundly-based. Issues raised during the formal consultation stages in addition to the focused input of specialist bodies (for example infrastructure providers) will also inform the future direction and content of the Local Plan Review, as will the revised National

¹ Regulation 18 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012

Planning Policy Framework and guidance. The preparation of the Local Plan Review is an iterative process and possible options will narrow and refine in response to emerging information and evidence as work on the plan progresses.

- 2.6 There are a number of specific aspects of the document to highlight.
- 2.7 **Maidstone Strategic Plan (2019-2045)** – The council’s Corporate Strategic Plan (the “Strategic Plan”) has directly informed the structure, content and tone of the main consultation document. The Strategic Plan sets four clear, long term priorities – ‘embracing growth and enabling infrastructure’, ‘safe, clean and green’, ‘homes and communities’ and ‘a thriving place’. The Local Plan Review will help to deliver each of these. The first (‘embracing growth and enabling infrastructure’) illustrates the council’s commitment to take control of new development and to shape it so that it can bring benefits for both existing and future residents and businesses.
- 2.8 There is commentary throughout the consultation document explaining how the Local Plan Review contributes to the delivery of the Strategic Plan priorities, outcomes and identified areas of importance for the period 2019-24. Each of the subject areas in the document will also be colour coded according to the Strategic Plan priority/ies which it could help deliver and this graphical approach is illustrated in the sample pages in Appendix 3. Linkages with the four cross-cutting themes in the Strategic Plan are specifically highlighted at the start of each section in the document.
- 2.9 **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**² – The NPPF is an important influence on the Local Plan Review’s content. Compliance with the NPPF is one of the tests for soundness³ against which the Local Plan Review will be measured. Relevant aspects of national policy and guidance have been highlighted throughout the main document - a specific example being the Government’s standard methodology which will result in a significant increase in the annual housing requirement for the borough.
- 2.10 Chapter 3 of the NPPF provides the guiding principles for Plan-making. In particular, the NPPF sets out a list of matters which the strategic policies in the Local Plan should address⁴. Strategic policies should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision (in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development) for:
- (a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
 - (b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);

² The NPPF was first published on 27 March 2012 and updated on 24 July 2018 and 19 February 2019. This sets out the government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

³ Paragraph 35 of the NPPF.

⁴ Paragraph 20 of the NPPF

- (c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
- (d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.

To ensure that all of these are covered at this scoping stage we have included a table in the consultation document showing the relationship between the NPPF matters and the Strategic Plan priorities and outcomes.

2.11 **Cross-boundary matters & the Duty to Co-operate⁵** – this is included as a specific section in the main consultation document. As we prepare the Local Plan Review we must ensure that cross boundary issues are being dealt with on an on-going basis and demonstrate this through the preparation of Statements of Common Ground.

2.12 The Duty to Co-operate is the subject of a separate, more detailed report on this agenda which identifies the potential cross-boundary issues for the Local Plan Review and the relevant co-operation bodies. This analysis is replicated in the main consultation document so that we can get wider input on our proposed list of issues and participants.

2.13 The consultation document also includes a factual discussion on joint working. As a minimum, this must be sufficient to demonstrate compliance with the duty and it can range from shared involvement in evidence gathering all the way to the preparation of a joint Local Plan.

2.14 **Initial spatial options** – the consultation document considers the various types and sources of new housing sites and puts forward three initial options for the distribution of the new housing. These are described as;

- A - Maidstone focus,
- B - Dispersal and
- C - Focus on planned new settlements and major extensions to existing settlements.

The options are not site-specific as this scoping stage is taking place in advance of any assessment of the Call for Sites submissions. Views are being sought on these initial options and we propose to ask people which combination of options would be appropriate if their favoured option is insufficient to meet needs on its own. Employment options will be developed at a later stage in the review process as we gain a more detailed understanding of both the types and amount of new floorspace that will be needed.

2.15 **Infrastructure** – this is given substantial attention in the document which includes sections on transport, utilities, education and health, community infrastructure and parks and open spaces. To get infrastructure planned, funded and delivered we will need to collaborate effectively with infrastructure providers and use the Local Plan Review process to make clear our infrastructure-related expectations of developers.

⁵ Paragraph 21 and 24 - 27 of the NPPF

- 2.16 **Consultation questions** – we have included a set of 7 overarching questions at the start of the consultation document. Framed by the Strategic Plan priorities, these questions ask how the Local Plan Review, and the growth it will enable, can have positive outcomes for the borough as a whole. In the body of the document there are a further 33 questions which relate more closely to its detailed and/or technical content. The last question asks if there are any additional matters which the Local Plan Review could address. Respondents need only answer the questions which are relevant for them.
- 2.17 **Technical areas** – in addition to the commentary on infrastructure, the technical sections also cover the full suite of environmental matters (including biodiversity, climate change, landscape, air quality, flood risk and heritage). There are also specific sections on housing needs (including specialist and affordable housing), economic growth and the town and local centres.

Next steps

- 2.18 **Presentation of the documents** - Subject to the Committee's decision, the consultation documents will be finalised for publication. To enable this, delegated authority is requested for the Head of Planning & Development to finalise the documents. This will comprise;
- a) Formatting the documents to presentation standard, including all graphical content;
 - b) Effecting any changes required by this Committee; and
 - c) Minor wording/structural changes
- 2.19 A sample of the proposed format for the consultation documents is included in Appendix 3.
- 2.20 **Consultation arrangements** - Public consultation is programmed to commence on Friday, 19th July and will run for 10 weeks to Friday 27th September to allow for the summer holiday period. We are working closely with the council's Communications Team to prepare the consultation and associated publicity. The consultation arrangements will comply with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (2018) and will include;
- publication of consultation documents on MBC's website
 - consultation documents available for viewing in libraries and The Link
 - consultation portal for the submission of on-line comments
 - notifying statutory bodies, stakeholders and everyone on our consultation database
 - public notice in the local newspaper
 - press release/s
 - use of social media to publicise the consultation
- 2.21 In addition, we propose to hold an event with parish councils early in the consultation period to provide an overview of the document, its content and purpose.
- 2.22 The Strategic Planning team will be working on the evidence base for the plan over the summer, including the categorisation and assessment of the

sites submitted during the recent Call for Sites. The outcomes of the evidence gathering and the responses to the Scoping, Themes & Choices documents will feed into the Preferred Approaches consultation stage, scheduled for February 2020.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The regulations do not prescribe that a consultation document must be produced at this stage. The Committee could elect to meet the consultation requirements through other means.

Option A – *do not produce formal consultation document/s at this stage and meet the regulatory requirements to consult on the scope of the plan through other means.*

- 3.2 This would mean that the regulatory requirement to invite representations on what the Local Plan should contain would have to be achieved through other means. This could include an extended series of open discussions, meetings and other types of engagement where the potential content of the Local Plan Review could be discussed and views sought. These consultation exercises would need to cover all the technical areas. The outcomes of all these events would need to be recorded and, in time, published to demonstrate how the requirement had been met.

Option B – *prepare and consult on scoping-style consultation documents*

- 3.3 This comprises the option set out in this Report. Consultation document/s will be produced setting out the council's starting position on what the scope of the Local Plan Review could be and invite feedback on its scope, including any relevant matters not raised in the document. The matters raised during the consultation period will be collated and published.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The publication of consultation documents (Option B) provides a useful starting point which interested parties can use as they formulate their views on the content of the Local Plan Review. They provide valuable background information, including highlighting the relationships with the Strategic Plan, to help frame and inform the content of the responses. This is particularly useful as the review is likely to be quite wide ranging. They also help ensure everyone has access to the same level of information and so provide a consistent basis for everyone's responses, whether they are experienced contributors or first time participants. Including a question asking about any relevant matters missing from the documents allows for respondents to make additional points beyond those the council has identified. The documents provide a structure from which responses can be collated, presented and analysed with a view influencing the content of the Local Plan Review. Having consultation documents will also help provide a clearer audit trail in the future for how the feedback received has affected the content and direction of the plan.

4.2 The advantages of Option B largely equate to the disadvantages of Option A. Without the context that consultation documents provide, the responses received (via an Option A approach) are likely to be very diverse and to range beyond the remit of a land use plan. Significant resources (time and financial) will need to be devoted to arranging, facilitating and summarising the outputs arising from the range of consultation measures. This will divert the Strategic Planning team from progressing the technical background work which is pivotal to the Local Plan Review process. There is also some risk that the overall consultation process will be perceived as being less transparent compared with that associated with Option B.

4.3 **Option B** is the preferred option.

5. RISK

5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

6. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Maidstone Local Plan Review: Scoping, Themes & Issues consultation document (Regulation 18)
 - Appendix 2: Summary consultation document
 - Appendix 3: Sample pages (graphics)
-

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Statement of Community Involvement (2018)
https://www.maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/266525/Statement-of-Community-Involvement.pdf

Maidstone Borough Council

Local Plan Review

Scoping, Themes and Issues

Consultation (Regulation 18)

July 2019



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FORWARD

Chair of Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

[to be agreed after SPI Committee]

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

We are at the first consultation stage of the review of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan. The purpose of this document is to set out – and get views on – the key issues that the Local Plan Review will need to address. This will help MBC decide what the overall scope of the review should be.

The issues are, potentially, wide ranging and some are quite technical in nature. This document provides the background we think you might find useful. We have also prepared a ‘bitesize’ summary document which is available separately.

Most of this initial document is structured under key ‘issues’ such as ‘ensuring a sufficient supply of affordable housing’ or ‘addressing climate change’. Where possible - and recognising that we are at an early stage - we have set out initial considerations for how a particular issue could be addressed. In addition to considering the themes and issues in this document we are seeking your views on what the plan ought to contain.

The council’s Strategic Plan ([insert link](#)) has played an important role in framing this document. Amongst other things the Strategic Plan is clear that the council will embrace future growth and will play its part to ensure associated infrastructure is planned for and delivered. As we are particularly interested in your views about how we can best embrace growth, we have posed the following set of seven overarching questions that apply to the whole of the document and which we would also like you to consider as you read it.

OQ1 – What can the Local Plan Review do to make the growth we need ‘good growth’?

OQ2 – What could the Local Plan Review do to help make our town and village centres fit for the future?

OQ3 – How can the Local Plan Review ensure community facilities and services are brought forward in the right place and at the right time to support communities?

OQ4 – What overall benefits would you want to see as a result of growth?

OQ5 - What infrastructure and services, including community services and facilities, do you think are the most important for a successful new development?

OQ6 – How can the Local Plan Review help support a thriving local economy, including the rural economy?

OQ7 – How can the Local Plan Review ensure we have an environmentally attractive and sustainable borough?

More detailed consultation questions are included throughout the main body of this document. You do not need to answer all the questions; just focus on the ones which are of particular interest to you.

As stated, we are at an early stage. Subsequent stages will become more and more detailed as we gather together the evidence and assess and refine the potential ways forward. Options and choices will narrow down and become more specific and the next consultation stage to follow this one will be on a 'preferred approaches' style document. We will then be working towards producing a full draft of the Local Plan Review (the 'pre-submission' plan) for public consultation. This will be the version of the plan we intend to submit for independent Examination.

More evidence is being prepared to support the Local Plan Review. Public consultation feedback will be used in conjunction with this evidence and other assessments and information to inform the future iterations of the Local Plan Review.

How you can respond to this consultation

Please submit your comments online here [\[add link\]](#) or use the dedicated response form.

The deadline for your response is **5pm Friday 27th September 2019**.

CHAPTER 2 - BACKGROUND TO THE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Maidstone Borough Council's (MBC's) activities impact on the lives of people living and working in the borough in a variety of ways. From collecting refuse from homes and businesses, keeping our public open spaces clean, tidy and fit for purpose, actively intervening to make the borough 'open for business', managing the housing register and finding safe places to live for those in greatest housing need, all the way to managing the elections in the borough, the council's responsibilities and activities are diverse.

This responsibility is reflected in MBC's recently adopted Strategic Plan which highlights our responsibility "to make every effort to deliver its services and produce cohesive plans for – economic, environmental, social and cultural prosperity. We have stewardship of our future and it is important that we get it right."

MBC is also a 'local planning authority'. This means the council makes the decisions on planning applications and is responsible for preparing a 'Local Plan' for the borough.

What is a Local Plan and what does it do?

A Local Plan is a document produced by councils across the country which guides the way new development will happen over the coming years. It provides the key framework for future decisions on planning applications. It sets out how much new development is needed, where it should be built and what supporting infrastructure such as roads, schools and health centres should be provided. It also guides the quality of development. Like the Strategic Plan, the Local Plan is a forward-looking document. It can be thought of as a blueprint for the future growth of the borough. It is relevant for anyone interested in the future success of the borough - residents, workers, businesses, landowners, developers and infrastructure providers.

Maidstone's Local Plan is not concerned simply with new development. The planning policies and designations it contains also help to protect what is most valued in the borough – landscapes, historic buildings, wildlife habitats – by ensuring that new development is directed away from the locations that are the most sensitive and new development is planned in a way which enhances the overall quality of the borough. Its policies and proposals also have the potential to positively affect communities by adding social value.

There is already a Local Plan in place for this borough. The Maidstone Borough Local Plan was 'adopted' (finished) in October 2017 and it looks ahead to 2031, anticipating and planning for the new homes, business premises, shops and infrastructure needed over the coming years.

What is the Maidstone Local Plan Review?

Whilst it might seem early to start a review, there are some key influences why this needs to be done;

1. MBC has adopted a new Strategic Plan which sets its aspiration for the borough through to 2045 and how we are going to achieve it.
2. The independent Planning Inspector who examined the adopted Local Plan decided that an early review of the plan would be needed (see Policy LPR1 in the adopted Local Plan)
3. The Government now requires Local Plans to be reviewed at least every five years.
4. National planning policy – in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the associated guidance – has been updated since the Local Plan was adopted. This is important as MBC’s Local Plan needs to stay in line with the Government’s requirements for example in terms of new housing numbers

We will take these matters in more detail in turn;

1. Maidstone has ensured that its Strategic Plan has been produced prior to the start of the Local Plan Review. It contains ambitious priorities that recognise the potential of the borough whilst setting long terms aspirations that will benefit our residents, businesses and partners now and in the future. The Strategic Plan makes it clear that a fundamental way to achieve our aspirations is by being good stewards and ensuring we take a long term view. As the plan states “the choices we make today will impact on the state of our environment and the quality of life enjoyed by our residents decades from now.” Fundamentally this is why it is so important for the council to have its long-term Strategic Plan in place with a Vision to lead us towards a planned future where we embrace controlled growth.

Our Vision is “Maidstone - a vibrant, prosperous urban and rural community at the heart of Kent where everyone can realise their potential”

The Strategic Plan sets out the council’s aspiration for Maidstone through to 2045 and how we are going to achieve it.

The Vision translates into priorities and outcomes – reproduced below – which emphasise the council’s role in directing and delivering positive growth with its partners that also seeks to add social value from new development. The Local Plan Review will play an important role in respect of these priorities and this will be elaborated on throughout this document



The Local Plan Review will also contain a vision; this could draw heavily on that contained in the Strategic Plan and adapted to correspond with the land use focus of the Local Plan Review. The proposed vision and objectives for the Local Plan Review will be included in the later preparatory stages as the content of the plan becomes more specific, informed by the evidence which supports it.

2. The current Maidstone Borough Local Plan was adopted in October 2017 following extensive public consultation and independent examination by a Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. It covers the period up to 2031. It is a comprehensive local plan containing a range of policies which guide development in the borough. It also sets out where growth will meet local housing and employment needs.

There are four types of policies in the Local Plan (highlighted in bold below), 168 policies in all which are set out over eight chapters:

- a. Introduction to Maidstone Borough Local Plan
- b. Key Influences – including national policy and guidance, and other complementary plans and strategies.
- c. Spatial Portrait – setting out the Vision and Objectives for the Plan

- d. **Strategic Policies** (31) – identifying the Spatial Strategy of where growth will go, setting strategic policy for the larger settlements in the borough, and policies managing strategic cross-borough issues including housing mix, economic development, sustainable transport and development in the countryside.
- e. **Strategic Site Policies** (95) – identifying sites which will deliver the homes that Maidstone required to meet local need (66), detailed policies for broad locations for housing growth (3), detailed site allocations policies for Gypsy & traveller accommodation (16), detailed site allocation policies for retail and mixed use (6), and detailed site allocation policies for employment (4).
- f. **Development Management Policies** (26) – setting out how planning applications will be determined on local matters including management of the natural environment, design and density, and management of open spaces.
- g. Development Management Policies for the town centre (3);
- h. Development Management Policies in the countryside (12);
- i. **Monitoring & Review Policy** (1)

Policy LPR1 of the adopted Local Plan sets out a requirement to undertake a review of the Local Plan and includes a list of specific matters which an early review of the plan needs to consider.

Policy LPR 1 Review of the local plan

The council will undertake a first review of the local plan. The matters which the first review may need to address include:

- i. A review of housing needs;
- ii. The allocation of land at the Invicta Park Barracks broad location and at the Lenham broad location if the latter has not been achieved through a Lenham Neighbourhood Plan in the interim;
- iii. Identification of additional housing land to maintain supply towards the end of the plan period and, if required as a result, consideration of whether the spatial strategy needs to be amended to accommodate such development;
- iv. A review of employment land provision and how to accommodate any additional employment land needed as a result;
- v. Whether the case for a Leeds-Langley Relief Road is made, how it could be funded and whether additional development would be associated with the road;
- vi. Alternatives to such a relief road;
- vii. The need for further sustainable transport measures aimed at encouraging modal shift to reduce congestion and air pollution;
- viii. Reconsideration of the approach to the Syngenta and Baltic Wharf sites if these have not been resolved in the interim; and
- ix. Extension of the local plan period.

The target adoption date for the review of the local plan is April 2021.

The positive decision to prepare a Local Plan Review demonstrates the council's commitment to take active control over the borough's future growth. Through the review, we will locally shape, inform and make decisions about the locations for new development. This will help avoid 'planning by appeal' in the future. In the worst case, authorities which do not make sufficient progress preparing local plan risk having the plan prepared for them by central government.

3. It is very important that the plan is kept up to date – overall, decisions on planning applications should follow what it says. Having an up to date plan is a key way to make sure that the council keeps control of the new homes needed in future and avoids 'planning by appeal'. The NPPF now requires plans to be reviewed at least every five years.

This is a **review** of the adopted Local Plan, not a completely new plan. Some aspects of the current plan will not need to be updated or changed. Others will need to be amended because of changes to national planning policy or other significant changes of circumstances. One change will be extending the number of years that the plan covers - to at least 2037 – and dealing with the additional new development requirements which that will bring. Further key alterations will be needed because of Government changes to the calculation of housing requirements which results in a significant increase in the number of new homes which will be needed.

4. England has a town and country planning system that is 'top-down' in nature with central Government taking a significant, directing role towards local planning authorities like MBC. The Government's approach to town and country planning, which includes the preparation of Local Plans, is prescribed in its 'National Planning Policy Framework' (NPPF). The NPPF provides overall national guidance, policy and objectives that local authorities like MBC must apply to their areas. The NPPF was most recently updated in February 2019 following a substantial revision in July 2018. which has many fundamental consequences for the production of the Local Plan Review and its content.

The purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development to the greatest extent possible. Sustainability has three dimensions; economic – helping to build a strong, responsive and competitive economy; social – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities; and environmental – contributing to the protection and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment. These aspects can sometimes compete with one another and the Local Plan Review will aim to strike a successful balance between the three. A key way this will be considered is through the parallel process of Sustainability Assessment (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment). This is explained in greater detail in Chapter 3.

An important component of the Government's ethos is that the development that the country needs – new homes, new commercial premises, community facilities and the associated infrastructure - should be planned. The way to do this is to have a Local Plan in place which anticipates the development required and puts the planning arrangements in place to make it happen in a sustainable way.

How will the Local Plan be reviewed?

Our new Strategic Plan notes that “We invest in regular consultation, engaging with our residents, parish councils, businesses and partners on important issues and decisions that affect and benefit us all. This underpins our decision-making and the direction and journey we will take together.”

The preparation of the Local Plan Review is a public process. Decisions on the content of the plan are made by elected councillors at public committee meetings. Iterations of the Local Plan Review will be open to full public consultation. We have also produced a Statement of Community Involvement which, among other matters, confirms the steps and arrangements for public involvement on the Local Plan Review. [\[insert link\]](#)

In addition to the public's involvement, the Local Plan Review will include a significant degree of collaboration. As the Strategic Plan states, “we value the relationships with partners, both in the private and public sector. We will continue to collaborate so that we use our finite resources to get the best results, particularly in meeting the communities' housing needs, improving health and employment opportunities and delivering sustainable transport and infrastructure solutions.” The Statement of Community Involvement affirms that we will engage on an on-going basis with a range of stakeholders and interest groups as the Local Plan Review progresses.

Producing the plan is only the start of the process; collaboration will need to continue as we deliver the finalised Local Plan Review. The Vision set out in the Strategic Plan is ambitious and the outcome we are seeking to achieve will require working with our partners and key stakeholders across the borough to drive forward positive outcomes. The Strategic Plan recognises that we have a key role in the borough through our direct service delivery as well as the services we commission. Furthermore, it says “We are keen to take an active role in shaping the borough through investing our resources in housing and regeneration as well as leading the development of new communities”. For the Local Plan Review this means that the Council could take an active role in delivering the new growth that is planned.

There are also a number of other key plans and strategies prepared both by MBC and partners which we will pay regard to in preparing the Local Plan Review and we have referred to these throughout.

Following periods of public consultation the Local Plan Review will be independently examined by a Government-appointed Planning Inspector who will consider and challenge its content and any objections to it and reach a decision on its overall ‘soundness’. The Local Plan Review will need to meet the NPPF’s ‘tests of soundness’ as follows:

- “a) **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- b) **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- c) **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- d) **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework.”

These tests will guide the work on the Local Plan Review from the outset. There are also specific legal tests that it will need to pass, including that MBC has engaged positively with its strategic partners as part of its ‘Duty to Co-operate’.

The ‘tests of soundness’ underline the importance of evidence underpinning the content of the Local Plan Review. This evidence needs to be sufficiently up to date to be a sound foundation for the review. We will take a proportionate approach so that resources are focused on the studies which are integral to the plan, that they contain sufficient but not excessive detail and that best use is made of the adopted Local Plan evidence which is still fit for purpose.

We have also completed an initial review of the policies in the adopted Local Plan to check which are likely to need to be amended, based on the information we have at this point. The outputs from this assessment are included in a schedule in Appendix B. For each policy, we indicate whether it is likely to require significant change, limited change or no change and the schedule gives reasons for the conclusions reached.

The timetable for the Local Plan Review is set out in a document called the ‘Local Development Scheme’ which was agreed by the Council in July 2018 [inset link]. In line with this programme, the Local Plan Review will be submitted for Independent Examination in March 2021, following three stages of public consultation of which this is the first.

Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood plans are a way that local communities can influence the planning of the area in which they live and work. Parish councils and designated neighbourhood forums can prepare plans for their designated neighbourhood areas.

Neighbourhood planning is very active in Maidstone, and the council takes a positive approach to its duty to assist, confirmed by the Council's Strategic Plan which commits MBC to "working with parishes and community groups on neighbourhood plans."

Two plans have already been completed ('made'): the North Loose Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031 and the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2031. At the time of writing, an additional eight plans are in preparation:

- Loose Neighbourhood Plan has recently completed a successful examination and will be subject to local referendum in the near future;
- Lenham Neighbourhood Plan, which is allocating land to house 1,000 homes in accordance with the area's 'broad location' status, and Marden Neighbourhood Plan have both completed first rounds of public consultation; and
- Boughton Monchelsea, Otham, Sutton Valence, Tovil and Yalding Neighbourhood Plans are at various stages of progression towards publication for public consultation.

A further six parishes are designated neighbourhood areas, a first step to producing neighbourhood plans in the future.

The Government requires neighbourhood plans to conform to national policies and be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan. The draft plan must be approved by an independent Examiner and pass a local referendum before it can be 'made' by MBC at which point it becomes part of the Development Plan (see diagram in Chapter 3).

Neighbourhood plans can allocate sites for development, including for housing, over and above the sites allocated in an adopted Local Plan. Similarly, the Local Plan Review may need to allocate sites in addition to those included in a neighbourhood plan, to ensure that the new borough-wide growth targets are met in full.

Neighbourhood plans and Local Plans should be complementary to avoid any conflict between policies or land allocations. The Local Plan Review will need to take into account the policies of made neighbourhood plans. Where neighbourhood plans are emerging alongside the review, the parish councils and MBC will need to work together to minimise any potential conflicts. In the case where there is a conflict, neighbourhood plans will need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of Maidstone's adopted Local Plan and then also with the strategic policies contained in the Local Plan Review. Government legislation requires that where other policies in neighbourhood plans and local plans overlap, the last document to become part of the Development Plan has primacy.

Local plans should now include a housing requirement for designated neighbourhood areas, which reflects the plan's strategy for the spatial distribution of development, i.e. the pattern and scale of development. It is envisaged that housing targets for neighbourhood areas will be set out in the Local Plan Review, based on the spatial strategy.

CHAPTER 3 –A FRAMEWORK FOR THE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

There are a variety of influences which will impact on the process and content of the Local Plan Review and two are of particular note;

- Maidstone Strategic Plan
- The requirements of the English planning system

Maidstone Strategic Plan (2019-2045)

The Maidstone Strategic Plan sets out the overarching priorities, outcomes and short-term actions to be given particular importance, to deliver the overall Vision. In addition it identifies four cross-cutting themes which are correlated to the short-term actions and, by extension, to the identified outcomes. We will make sure these priorities, outcomes and additional cross-cutting themes are embedded in our approach to the Local Plan Review.

The English Planning System

The degree of prescription in the Government's NPPF, and the guidance contained in the associated National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), means that the council does not have a free hand to decide what the Maidstone Local Plan Review should and shouldn't contain. We must also prepare the plan within the framework that national (and European) legislation creates.

The NPPF sets out that Local Plans should include strategic policies, which address the key strategic issues for the borough, as well as policies which will help to inform decision making on planning applications. The strategic policies of the Local Plan Review will need to:

“...set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development, and make sufficient provision for:

- a) housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development;
- b) infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
- c) community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
- d) conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation”¹

¹ NPPF paragraph 20

We have taken these NPPF strategic themes and attuned them to make them more specific for Maidstone borough, as shown in the table below.

Strategic Theme (NPPF Paragraph 20)	Strategic Issue for Maidstone borough
Set out an overall strategy for the scale, pattern and quality of development and make sufficient provision for	
...Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development	<p>Meeting the borough’s local housing need and helping to meet needs across the relevant Housing Market Area/s</p> <p>Ensuring a sufficient supply of affordable housing</p> <p>Ensuring sufficient land and floorspace is provided to support economic growth in the borough and to contribute to the needs of the wider economic market area</p> <p>Ensuring that Maidstone has a vital and vibrant town centre which maintains its role in the sub-region and that a network of local centres continue to serve local retail and service needs.</p>
...Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation	<p>Ensuring that the borough’s environmental assets such as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Landscapes of Local Value, the countryside and Green Belt are suitably protected</p> <p>Ensuring that the borough’s biodiversity and wildlife habitats are suitably protected and managed</p> <p>Ensuring that the borough’s historic assets are conserved and managed</p> <p>Contributing to an overall improvement in air quality, in particular in the Maidstone Air Quality Management Area.</p> <p>Managing the risk of flooding from all sources.</p> <p>Addressing climate change</p>
...Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat)	<p>Ensuring sufficient transport infrastructure is provided to serve the new development that is planned.</p> <p>Ensuring sufficient utilities infrastructure is provided to serve the new development that is planned.</p>
...Community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure);	<p>Ensuring that sufficient provision is made for health and education to serve the new development that is planned.</p> <p>Ensuring a sufficiency of parks and open spaces</p> <p>Ensuring that sufficient provision is made for community infrastructure</p>

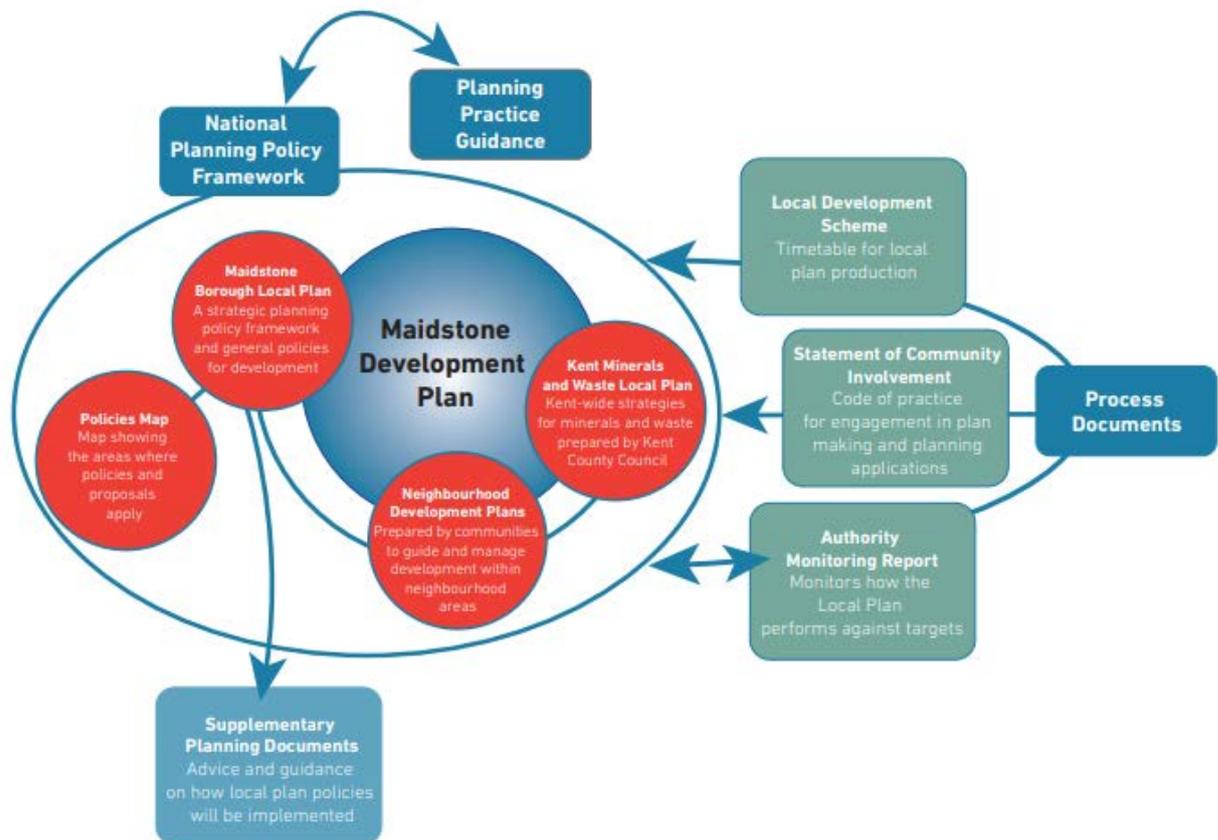
NPPF changes

The NPPF has also been revised significantly since the Maidstone Borough Local Plan was adopted. The most significant changes include:

- a. Strengthening the requirement to produce a Statement of Common Ground concerning how overall need and cross-boundary co-operation is taking place;
- b. Introduction of the standard method for calculating the starting figure for the number of new homes an area needs termed 'local housing need' figure. This is explained in more detail in Chapter 4.
- c. A more detailed requirement to set out the housing needs of particular groups including families, older people, people with disabilities, students, and private renters;
- d. Increased guidance on how rural developments should make use of an area's existing infrastructure/services and that villages should work together to provide rural service networks;
- e. A requirement to make 10% of new homes on major² sites available for affordable home ownership
- f. A more onerous test of 'deliverability' setting out how local authorities should demonstrate availability and deliverability of land for new housing;
- g. Strategic policies to set out a housing requirement figure for designated neighbourhood areas;
- h. A requirement to set out a vision and strategy for economic growth locally;
- i. Promoting the re-use of existing and underutilised land and buildings to help meet local need;
- j. Clarifying that the 'agent of change' (or applicant) should be responsible for mitigating the impact of their scheme of potential nuisance arising from existing development;

² Defined as 10+ homes or a site of 0.5+ ha should this be 1ha

The Development Plan



The Government describes its planning system as ‘plan-led’; this means that decisions on planning applications should align with what the relevant adopted plans say, unless there are convincing planning reasons to do otherwise.

The above diagram illustrates the relationships between the national and local planning documents that apply in the borough. The ‘Development Plan’ is the collective term for the primary documents which are used in planning application decisions, including planning documents produced by Kent County Council (KCC), which is responsible for waste & minerals, MBC and neighbourhood planning authorities.

Currently the Maidstone Development Plan comprises the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan (2017), the adopted Kent Minerals & Waste Local Plan (2016), the North Loose Neighbourhood Plan (2016) and the Staplehurst Neighbourhood Plan (2016). Once the Local Plan Review is adopted, it will supersede elements of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

Evidence base

We will bring together a proportionate evidence base for the Local Plan Review using current and future studies, to include;

- 1) Sustainability Appraisal incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment
- 2) Strategic Housing Market Assessment
- 3) Economic Development Needs Study (includes retail assessment)
- 4) Strategic Land Availability Assessment
- 5) Open Space Assessment
- 6) Transport assessments and modelling
- 7) Air quality assessment and modelling
- 8) Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- 9) Sports Facilities Assessment
- 10) Landscape Character Assessment
- 11) Habitat Regulations Assessment
- 12) Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Assessment
- 13) Viability Assessment
- 14) Minerals Assessment

We may also draw on studies led by other, expert agencies. An example is the Kent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment published by the Kent Public Health Observatory which analyses the key health-related issues in the county.

An important foundation for the Local Plan Review will be the Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating the Strategic Environmental Assessment). This has an important role in influencing and impacting on the content of the review, including on the pattern of future development that is ultimately selected. It is an evidence document prepared in an iterative way and in parallel with the evolution of the Local Plan Review. It provides an assessment of the overall and relative sustainability of the plan's policies and approaches. The first Sustainability Appraisal document – the SA Scoping Report – is available here ([add link](#)).

Plan Period

The current, adopted Local Plan covers the period 2011-2031 and we will need to confirm what additional time period the Local Plan Review will cover.

The Government now requires a local plan to have a 15-year time horizon from the date it is adopted. This means that the end date for the Local Plan Review will need to be at least 2037, given the proposed adoption date of April 2022.

As the Local Plan Review is a 'rolling forward' of the current plan, and not a wholly new plan, there will be an overlap in the time horizon of the two. The development strategy of the adopted Local Plan will continue to be delivered up to 2031, including in particular the 'broad locations' which are currently programmed to be delivered in the post-April 2021 and post-2026 periods (Lenham and Invicta Barracks respectively). The Local Plan Review will address the additional development requirements for the post 2022 period resulting

from the Government’s standard methodology (for housing) and other evidence updates as well as the revised NPPF.

It may be pragmatic to have a longer timeframe for the Local Plan Review beyond 2037, particularly if the development strategy includes large scale developments which will take an extended number of years to build. As noted in Chapter 2, the Council’s Strategic Plan takes such a longer-term approach, looking ahead to 2045. Choosing a longer plan period would mean we’ll need to identify a greater amount of development land to cover the additional years.

A variation on this approach would be for only selected aspects of the plan to look beyond 2037. This could be like the broad locations approach in the adopted Local Plan which signal a longer term ‘direction of travel’ for major housing development with the detail to follow in subsequent iterations of the Local Plan or, in the case of Lenham, a neighbourhood plan.

With these choices in mind, and where appropriate, the evidence we are collecting is looking further ahead to 2042. This will give MBC information on longer term trends and requirements, recognising that predictions and forecasts become more uncertain the further into the future they look. This approach gives the council the option to select a longer plan period if this looks like being a prudent option.

TQ1 – What do you think should be the end date for the Local Plan Review? Why?

WHAT ARE THE KEY CROSS-BOUNDARY ISSUES?

The NPPF states “Local planning authorities and county councils (in two tier areas) are under a duty to co-operate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters which cross administrative boundaries.”³ It goes to note “Effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere.”⁴

Accordingly, in producing the Local Plan Review and associated evidence base we will engage with our council neighbours, KCC and statutory organisations on matters which have cross-boundary implications.

The duty to co-operate is an on-going process; joint working must be effective and ‘deal with strategic, cross-boundary matters rather than defer them’⁵. The purpose of the duty is to ensure that we take account of the implications of our plan for our neighbours and our

³ NPPF paragraph 24

⁴ NPPF paragraph 26

⁵ The ‘effective’ test of soundness, NPPF paragraph 35

statutory partners and that they do the same. Local plans should not be prepared in isolation from what is happening elsewhere. Importantly, these partners will also be involved in delivering aspects of the plan, notably the infrastructure needed to support the new development.

Joint working can take place to differing degrees. The greatest degree of integration is where councils collaborate to prepare a joint plan which could cover a limited number of topic areas that have cross-boundary implications or could be a comprehensive local plan for the combined area. A variation on this would be where councils each produce individual plans but the preparation timetable and overall approach to policy matters is integrated across the extended area. A more focused approach would be for councils to progress their own individual plans to their own independent timetables whilst ensuring that cross-boundary issues are addressed as the plans evolve through the duty to co-operate framework. In any scenario, it is open to a council to accept additional levels of development from a neighbour as part of this process and the duty to co-operate.

To date MBC and its neighbours have all progressed individual plans. Neighbouring authorities are all at varying stages with the preparation of their local plans as follows;

- Ashford Borough Council – adopted a comprehensive Local Plan in February 2019. The plan identifies sufficient land for the amount of new housing that the borough needs for the period 2011 to 2030, set at some 16,872 new homes and similarly provides for the new employment land needed. The adopted Local Plan states that a review of the plan will be adopted by the end of 2025 although at the time of writing no formal timetable for the review (Local Development Scheme) has been published.
- Tunbridge Wells Borough Council – has an adopted Core Strategy (2010) and a Site Allocations Local Plan (2016). A local plan to cover the period to 2033 is in preparation. TWBC produced an ‘Issues & Options’ consultation plan in May 2017 and intends to produce draft Local Plan (Regulation 18 consultation) in August 2019. The Examination is scheduled for Spring/Summer 2021. The local housing need figure for the borough using the standard methodology is some 682 homes/year.
- Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council – has a Core Strategy (2007), Development Land Allocations Development Plan Document (2008) and a Managing Development and the Environment DPD (2010). The ‘Tonbridge & Malling Local Plan’ has been submitted for Examination. The plan covers the period 2011-31. It makes provision for the full number of new homes needed, 13,930, and the matching employment land requirements. The current Local Development Scheme anticipates adoption of the Local Plan by the end of the year.
- Medway - is in the process of preparing a Local Plan for the period 2018-35. There have been 3 stages of consultation so far (2016, 2017, 2018) and a further ‘Regulation 19’ consultation stage planned for this summer. Adoption of the plan is

programmed for 2020. Under the Government's methodology, Medway's housing requirement is 37,143 homes.

- Swale – has adopted a comprehensive Local Plan (2017) which covers the period to 2031. It has commenced a review of this plan which will cover the period 2022-2038. There was an initial consultation stage in 2018 and, following further consultation stage/s, adoption of the plan is anticipated in Autumn 2021 according to the latest Local Development Scheme. Under the Government's methodology, the housing requirement is in the order of 1,054 homes/year.

With the imperative to have an up-to-date Local Plan in place, there has been no apparent appetite for councils to change their own preparation timetables to enable joint plans to be prepared. It is also pertinent that the links between the neighbouring authorities are quite diverse, varying according to both geography and subject matter.

To illustrate, Maidstone town and the Malling area of Tonbridge & Malling are physically closely connected and decisions on development quantum, transportation and air quality matters taken in one area impacts on the other. Work for the adopted Local Plan identified the extent of the Maidstone 'housing market area' stretching westwards to include the Malling area of Tonbridge & Malling borough, including West Malling and Kings Hill. On the other hand the Lenham, Harrietsham and Headcorn areas of this borough were found to fall with Ashford's housing market area. This analysis will be revisited as part of the new Strategic Housing Market Assessment which has been commissioned as part of the evidence for the Local Plan Review.

In a similar vein, the functional economic market area describes the broad geographical area over which the local economy operates. Research done for the adopted Local Plan found links with all our neighbouring boroughs with the strongest of these being with Tonbridge & Malling and Medway. Analysis of the functional economic market area/s will again be part of the forthcoming Economic Development Needs study.

A more comprehensive list of the links between this borough and its neighbours is set out in the table on page X.

As a minimum, we will need to demonstrate that we have complied with the duty to co-operate by engaging actively with our neighbours (and other required bodies). According to the matter at hand, this involvement may need to be more intensive and result in agreed approaches. Evidential studies will look beyond the borough boundaries where appropriate. Where feasible, we will explore the joint-commissioning of evidence with our partners.

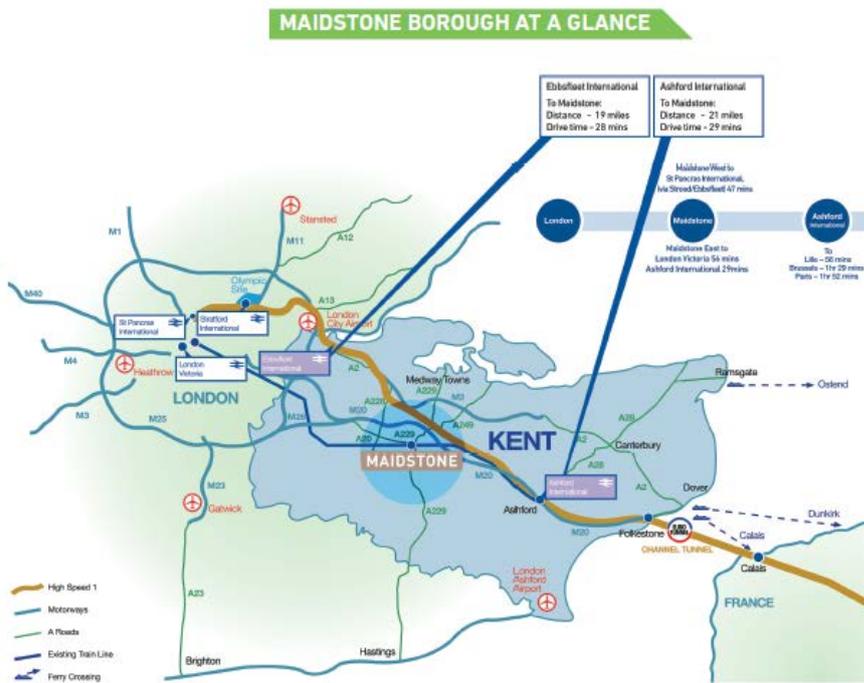
Factors which could affect any future decisions on joint planning include;

- Whether it will demonstrably achieve better planning outcomes for the borough;
- The imperative to maintaining an 'up to date' planning framework for the borough;
- Resource availability; and

- Political decision-making arrangements.

The co-operation that does occur will be formalised through a **Statement of Common Ground**. This statement is signed by the parties involved and affirms that the identified cross boundary issues have been dealt with. For this borough, the strategic bodies which may be involved, (in addition to other local authorities) could include the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, Kent Nature Partnership, infrastructure providers and advisory bodies. These additional signatories will only need to agree with those parts of the SCG that are directly relevant to role and required cooperation.

The map below shows Maidstone’s location within Kent and also shows some of the key transport connections for the borough.



The table below reproduces the strategic issues for the borough (taken from page x), indicates what the potential cross boundary issue may be and indicates which organisations may be party to the Statement of Common Ground.

Strategic Theme (NPPF Paragraph 20)	Strategic Issue for Maidstone borough	Geographical area relevant for the 'Duty to Co-operate' ⁶	Possible Statement of Common Ground signatories
Set out an overall strategy for the scale, pattern and quality of development and make sufficient provision for		-	-
75 ...Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development	Meeting the borough's local housing need and helping to meet needs across the relevant Housing Market Area/s	Housing Market Area/s; neighbouring authority areas	[extent of HMA to be confirmed through future evidence]
	Ensuring there is a sufficient supply of affordable housing		
	Ensuring sufficient land and floorspace is provided to support economic growth in the borough and to contribute to the needs of the wider economic market area	Functional Economic Market Area	[extent of FEMA to be confirmed through future evidence] South East Local Enterprise Partnership
	Ensuring that Maidstone has a vital and vibrant town centre which maintains its role in the sub-region and that a network of local centres continue to serve local retail and service needs.	Retail Catchment Area	[extent of RCA to be confirmed through future evidence]
....Conservation and enhancement of the	Ensuring that the borough's	Green Belt	Tonbridge & Malling BC.

⁶ Subject to the selected spatial strategy.

natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation	environmental assets such as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Landscapes of Local Value, the countryside and Green Belt are suitably protected	Kent Downs AONB; setting of High Weald AONB	Tonbridge & Malling BC; Medway; Swale BC; Ashford BC; Tunbridge Wells BC.
		Landscapes of Local Value	Tonbridge & Malling BC; Ashford BC; Tunbridge Wells BC.
	Ensuring that the borough's biodiversity and wildlife habitats are suitably protected and managed	North Downs Woodlands Special Area of Conservation and, potentially, European designated sites in other boroughs	[extent of impacts to be identified through the Habitat Regulations Assessment]. Kent Nature Partnership
		SSSIs, Local Wildlife Sites, ancient woodland which straddle the borough's boundaries.	Natural England Tonbridge & Malling BC; Ashford BC; Medway; Swale BC; Tunbridge Wells BC.
	Ensuring that the borough's historic assets are conserved and managed	Maidstone borough	Historic England
	Contributing to an overall improvement in air quality, in particular in the Maidstone Air Quality Management Area.	Maidstone AQMA; AQMA in the Malling area of Tonbridge & Malling.	Kent County Council (as highway authority); Tonbridge & Malling BC.
	Managing the risk of flooding from all sources.	Catchments of the River Medway, Stour, Beult & Teise.	Environment Agency; Tonbridge & Malling BC; Medway; Ashford BC; Tunbridge Wells BC

	Addressing climate change	Maidstone borough. [Significant overlap with air quality and transport matters]	[see air quality and transport matters]	
77	...Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat)	Strategic highway network, local highway network, and public rights of way within the borough and, potentially, key junctions falling in neighbouring authority areas. Rail infrastructure within the borough.	Kent County Council; Highways England; Network Rail; Tonbridge & Malling BC; Ashford BC; Medway; Swale BC; Tunbridge Wells BC.	
	Ensuring sufficient utilities infrastructure is provided to serve the new development that is planned.	Maidstone borough (subject to the selected spatial strategy)	Utility providers	
...	Community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure);	Ensuring that sufficient provision is made for health and education to serve the new development that is planned.	Maidstone borough (subject to the selected spatial strategy)	Kent County Council; West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group; Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust.
		Ensuring a sufficiency of parks and open spaces	Maidstone borough	-
		Ensuring that sufficient provision is made for community infrastructure	Maidstone borough	-

TQ2 – Have we identified the correct cross boundary issues? Please give reasons for your answer.

Bringing the framework together

The table below brings together the Strategic Plan’s priorities and outcomes, the NPPF strategic themes and the associated strategic issues for Maidstone borough. This table helps provide the basis for the structure of the remaining chapters of this document.

Each of the priorities in the Strategic Plan has a specific reference colour and this same colour coding has been used throughout this document to help signify the integration of the Strategic Plan and the Local Plan Review. At the start of each section we also denote where there are particularly strong links to one or more of the four cross-cutting objectives from the Strategic Plan. To recap, these are;

- Heritage is respected
- Health inequalities are addressed and reduced
- Deprivation is reduced and social mobility is improved
- Biodiversity and environmental sustainability is respected.

Maidstone Strategic Plan Priorities	Maidstone Strategic Plan outcomes	Strategic Theme (NPPF Paragraph 20)	Strategic Issue for Maidstone borough
Embracing growth & enabling infrastructure Homes & Communities	Council leads masterplanning and invests in new places which are well designed Existing housing is safe, desirable and promotes good health and well being	Set out an overall strategy for the scale, pattern and quality of development and make sufficient provision for	
Embracing growth & enabling infrastructure Homes and communities	Housing need is met including affordable housing Homelessness and rough sleeping are prevented	...Housing (including affordable housing), employment, retail, leisure and other commercial development	Meeting the borough's local housing need and helping to meet needs across the relevant Housing Market Area/s
Embracing growth & enabling infrastructure Homes and communities	Housing need is met including affordable housing Homelessness and rough sleeping are prevented		Ensuring a sufficient supply of affordable housing
Embracing growth & enabling infrastructure A thriving place	Key employment sites are delivered Skills levels and earning potential of our residents are raised		Ensuring sufficient land and floorspace is provided to support economic growth in the borough and to contribute to the needs of the wider economic market area

Maidstone Strategic Plan Priorities	Maidstone Strategic Plan outcomes	Strategic Theme (NPPF Paragraph 20)	Strategic Issue for Maidstone borough
	Local commercial and inward investment is increased		
A thriving place	Our town and village centres are fit for the future A vibrant leisure and cultural offer		Ensuring that Maidstone has a vital and vibrant town centre which maintains its role in the sub-region and that a network of local centres continue to serve local retail and service needs.
Safe clean and green	An environmentally attractive and sustainable boroughConservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation	Ensuring that the borough's environmental assets such as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Landscapes of Local Value, the countryside and Green Belt are suitably protected
Safe clean and green	An environmentally attractive and sustainable borough		Ensuring that the borough's biodiversity and wildlife habitats are suitably protected and managed
Heritage is respected (Cross-cutting objective)			Ensuring that the borough's historic assets are conserved and managed
Safe, clean & green	A borough that is recognised as clean and well cared for by everyone		Contributing to an overall improvement in air quality, in particular in the Maidstone Air Quality Management Area.
Safe clean and green	People feel safe and are safe		Managing the risk of flooding from all sources.

Maidstone Strategic Plan Priorities	Maidstone Strategic Plan outcomes	Strategic Theme (NPPF Paragraph 20)	Strategic Issue for Maidstone borough
Embracing growth and enabling infrastructure	An environmentally attractive and sustainable borough Sufficient infrastructure is planned to meet the demand of growth		
Safe, clean and green	An environmentally attractive and sustainable borough		Addressing climate change
Embracing growth & enabling infrastructure	Sufficient infrastructure is planned to meet the demands of growth	...Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat)	Ensuring sufficient transport infrastructure is provided to serve the new development that is planned.
Embracing growth & enabling infrastructure	Sufficient infrastructure is planned to meet the demands of growth		Ensuring sufficient utilities infrastructure is provided to serve the new development that is planned.
Homes & communities	Community facilities and services in the right place at the right time to support communitiesCommunity facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure);	Ensuring that sufficient provision is made for health and education to serve the new development that is planned.
Safe, clean and green	Everyone has access to high quality parks and green spaces		Ensuring a sufficiency of parks and open spaces
A thriving place	A vibrant leisure and cultural offer		
Homes and communities	A diverse range of		Ensuring that sufficient provision is made

Maidstone Strategic Plan Priorities	Maidstone Strategic Plan outcomes	Strategic Theme (NPPF Paragraph 20)	Strategic Issue for Maidstone borough
Safe, clean & green	community activities is encouraged. People are safe and feel safe		for community infrastructure

CHAPTER 4 – CREATING A STRATEGY FOR THE SCALE, PATTERN AND QUALITY OF GROWTH

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objectives for this topic are:

- Heritage is respected
- Health inequalities are addressed and reduced
- Deprivation is reduced and social mobility is improved
- Biodiversity and environmental sustainability is respected

THE AMOUNT OF NEW HOUSING GROWTH

The Strategic Plan is clear that as we embrace growth, we will also meet the required need for housing. This aligns with the Government's NPPF objective to significantly boost the overall supply of housing as well as meeting wider development needs. Furthermore, the Strategic Plan is clear that we need the right type of growth and that this will be pro-actively led by the council, particularly regarding masterplanning and investing in new places which are well designed. The Council is keen to ensure that the growth that occurs benefits local communities and that developers are clear on the expectations of what development must deliver.

The adopted plan's spatial vision, objectives, spatial strategy – and the site allocations which fit within it - will continue to be implemented and this will make a significant indent into the borough housing requirements over the coming years. This means that the review will be concerned with identifying the spatial strategy to achieve the additional growth needed as an outcome of the standard methodology (explained further below), updated evidence requirements and the extended plan period.

We have recently undertaken a **Call for Sites**, requesting information about sites which could be suitable for development in the future. The extent to which the council is seeking to take a pro-active role is signified by this Call for Sites and specifically the council's decision to seek from developers a comprehensive suite of information and evidence to support their submissions. The Call for Sites' important purpose is to give MBC a starting list of candidate sites to consider. As the site registration and processing is a work in progress, this consultation document does not include any conclusions about the submitted sites. In due course the outcomes of the sites assessment will be compiled into a single report called a Strategic Land Availability Assessment which will be one of the evidence documents underpinning the Local Plan Review.

So what is the scale of the housing growth we will need to plan for?

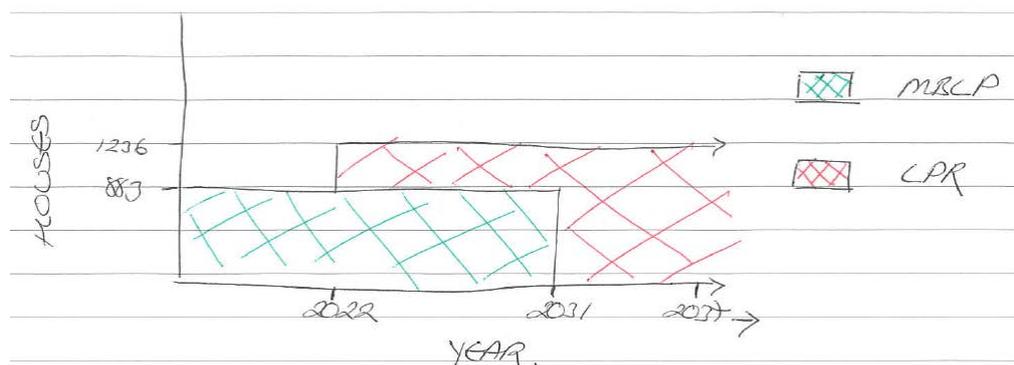
The Government introduced a standard way to calculate an areas new housing requirement, in November 2018.

The standard approach gives Maidstone borough a starting point 'local housing need' figure of **some 1,236 homes/year**. This is a working figure will apply from 2022 onwards.. This figure is an increase of 40% when compared with the adopted Local Plan target of 883 homes/year. The NPPF goes on to state that "in addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for". As things stand, the councils which neighbour Maidstone borough are, or are intending to, meet their housing requirements within their own boundaries.

The standard approach caps the potential increase in an area's housing requirement to no more than 40% of the target in an adopted local plan. An advantage of this standard approach is that there will be less dispute over what the housing target for the borough should be; the Government confirms – through its National Planning Policy Framework –its expectation that the standard methodology will be followed unless there are exceptional reasons to do otherwise.

In any event, the 'local housing need' figure can be expected to change as a result of national data updates. More fundamentally, the Government has already announced that it intends to revise its standard approach following unexpected outputs from the population projections issued in September 2018.

As stated, this Local Plan Review is being prepared whilst the housing planned in the current, adopted Local Plan for the period up to 2031 is still being delivered. We will need to 'top up' our housing supply from 883 dwelling/year to approximately 1,236 dwellings/year from 2022 to 2031, and thereafter identify sufficient sites and locations to achieve the full 1,236 annual figure.



Housing Land Supply

The table below sets out our current housing land supply position.

This includes an allowance from development on windfall sites. A windfall site is one which is granted planning permission for housing which had not been previously identified for housing in a Local Plan. We can include a prediction for how many such sites will get

planning permission in the future in our housing land supply forecast. The revised NPPF changed the definition of a 'windfall site' to include greenfield sites in addition to previously developed sites (aka brownfield land).

The windfall calculation draws on historical data for small (1-4 dwelling) and large (5+ dwelling) windfall sites between 2008/09 and 2018/19. The table below shows the output of this calculation which uses the same method which was examined and accepted by the Inspector for the adopted Local Plan, adjusted to take account of the revised definition.

	Total (2022-37)
Small sites	1,665
Large sites	1,827
Total	3,492

REQUIREMENT		
Local housing need figure (2022-2037) (1,236 x 15 years)		18,540
Projected under supply from the adopted Local Plan @ 2022		100
10% contingency ((18,540+100) x10%)		1,864
Plan requirement (18,540+100+1,864)		20,504
SUPPLY		
Projected remaining supply from adopted Local Plan at 2022 (including remaining extant permissions, existing allocations with/without permission and broad locations between 2022 to 2031)	6,985	
Invicta Barracks post 2031	800	
Potential windfall allowance 2022 to 2037	3,492	
'Known' supply		11,277
BALANCE		9,227

The balance figure is the current estimate of how many new homes the Local Plan Review will need to find sites for.

TQ3 – Do you agree with our housing land supply calculation at this stage?

A key issue is how to achieve the annual rate of housebuilding needed throughout the years of the Local Plan Review. MBC will aim to achieve a deliverable portfolio of sites that will sustain a five year supply and compliance with the Housing Delivery Test.

TQ4 - How do you think the council can achieve a consistent annual rate of housebuilding throughout the Local Plan Review period?

THE PATTERN OF NEW HOUSING GROWTH

As we seek to embrace growth and meet the needs as committed in the Strategic Plan, we will need to consider various locations across the borough and these are described below. To achieve our growth requirements, a blend of these types of sites are likely to need to feature in the Local Plan Review.

Maidstone Town Centre –

The town centre provides various opportunities for embracing the new growth. We have already been working to produce planning guidance for five key brownfield sites, the **Town Centre Opportunity Areas**. Working with landowners, the purpose of this guidance is to help encourage the revitalisation of these sites and in particular to promote their potential for residential-led redevelopment. This is reiterated in the Strategic Plan which commits MBC to developing and delivering plans for the five opportunity sites which are;

- 1) Granada House and Buzz Bingo (formerly Gala Bingo) on Gabriels Hill;
- 2) Mote Road;
- 3) Len House (Robins & Day Peugeot);
- 4) Riverside (including the Baltic Wharf site); and
- 5) the area around Maidstone West station.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework supports the placement of housing in town centres and supports a ‘town centre first’ approach to planning for ‘main town centre uses’⁷. It also now incorporates a specific section about making the best use of land which, amongst other things, expects local plans to achieve significantly higher housing densities in town centres. Whilst the town centre has the potential to realise various benefits of growth, we will also need to be mindful that poor quality development can lead to unacceptable issues in terms of internal space and access to outside communal green space for example.

⁷ Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).

Rest of Maidstone urban area –

The ‘rest of the urban area’ comprises those parts of Maidstone beyond the town centre. There may be further such opportunities for embracing growth, including sites which are no longer suitable for their current use and which could be re-purposed through the Local Plan Review, or ones which could be used more intensively. This could include regenerating existing housing areas, in particular those managed by our Registered Provider partners.

Edge of Maidstone –

Sites at the edge of Maidstone could contribute to modest outwards extension of the town. Such sites are most likely to be greenfield in nature.

In and at the edge of the most sustainable villages –

Some villages could benefit from new growth. The revised NPPF confirms that housing in rural areas “should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services”⁸.

Countryside sites –

New housing sites in the countryside, away from the most sustainable villages and removed from services and good public transport links generally score more poorly in sustainability terms.

New Garden Communities –

New Garden Communities may also present opportunities for the council to take a proactive role in creating and investing in new places. However, New Garden Communities need to be of a sufficient scale to deliver meaningful supporting infrastructure. The Government defines ‘garden villages’ as being of between 1,500 and 10,000 homes and ‘garden towns’ as being of 10,000+ homes⁹. Such new settlements and major urban extensions are a potential way to help embrace a proportion of the growth the borough needs. This is an approach which has not been followed in Maidstone borough previously.

Small sites –

The NPPF includes a requirement for Local Plans to identify (‘allocate’) at least 10% of its housing requirement on sites of 1ha or less. For the Local Plan Review this could equate to a figure in the order of 1,854 dwellings.

⁸ NPPF paragraph 78

⁹ Garden Communities Prospectus, August 2018

Brownfield sites –

As part of our proactive approach to considering development opportunities, work will be done through the Economic Development Needs Study to test which of the borough's existing industrial estates continue to be fit for purpose. Any which do not have a commercial future could be considered for alternative uses, including for housing, and this chimes with the NPPF expectation that best use will be made of brownfield sites.

Exception sites –

The NPPF urges local authorities to support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local, rural needs. This includes potentially allowing some market housing on these sites to help facilitate development. This could be an avenue for neighbourhood plans to explore.

Entry-level exceptions sites are sites specifically ring-fenced for first time buyers/tenants. Support for the development of such sites is expected unless the need for such homes is already being met within an authority's area.

Other Approaches

Density standards for housing sites –

One of the ways MBC could proactively steer growth into the most sustainable locations would be through increasing development densities.

Building upwards, particularly in the town centre provides opportunities for well-designed development. We could also explore the option of identifying an area of the town centre for a cluster of tall buildings for housing. There could also be the potential to achieve increased densities on those remaining housing allocations in the adopted Local Plan (Policy H1) which do not yet have planning permission. The potential on each site will need to be assessed.

The approach is supported by the NPPF which urges average densities to be significantly increased in town centres and other locations well served by public transport, unless there are strong reasons not to do so. A range of minimum density standards for other areas of the borough should also be considered.

New and improved infrastructure in the town centre would be needed. Consideration would also need to be given to the impact of intensification on local character, the street scene and skyline.

TQ5 – Have we identified all the possible types of housing sites?

TQ6 – What approaches could we use to identify more small sites suitable for allocation in the Local Plan Review?

TQ7 – What approaches could we use to increase the number of new homes being built on brownfield sites and to make brownfield development more viable and attractive to developers?

TQ8 – What factors should we take into account when considering minimum density standards elsewhere in the borough, beyond the town centre?

OTHER TYPES OF GROWTH

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Offices, industry and warehousing

As part of a future spatial strategy for the local economy, we will seek to identify linkages with the spatial strategy for housing, particularly as part of an aim to minimise the number and length of journeys¹⁰. We are also clear that sufficient infrastructure should be in place or planned to meet the demands of economic growth and this is supported by the NPPF which identifies inadequate housing and infrastructure as potential barriers to economic growth¹¹.

To ensure that economic growth is successful, we will assess the requirements of different economic sectors and consider in particular the credentials which successful employment locations share¹², namely;

- Good quality of provision – they may not be ‘Grade A’ but are clean, modern and well maintained;
- Relatively strong public realm attributes – with good servicing areas that present a smart and tidy ‘first impression’;
- Flexibility of space – both in terms of the scale and internal configuration, enabling users to adapt business processes;
- Appropriate space for activity in the area – providing the appropriate size of space, mixes of floorspace types and permitting certain activities to meet prevailing demand trends; and
- Realistic price point compared to nature of stock – enabling businesses to afford space in the area.

As with housing growth, the adopted Local Plan provides a firm foundation for meeting future employment needs for the period up to 2031. The Plan’s approach was to identify extensions to existing successful rural business sites, to pinpoint opportunities in Maidstone town centre for new office development and to allocate land at Woodcut Farm adjacent to

¹⁰ National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 104

¹¹ National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 81

¹² Paragraph 6.16, Maidstone Qualitative Employment Site Assessment (2014), GVA.

Junction 8 of M20 for a substantial new mixed use business park. This site has subsequently received outline planning permission for 45,294sqm of mixed employment floorspace.

The adopted Local Plan also allocates land at Newnham Court for the Kent Medical Campus, a specialist hub for medical-related development. Outline consent for the medical campus was renewed in June 2017 and detailed applications have been consented for a 65-bed hospital and a care facility comprising a mixture of step-down residential, nursing, dementia, rehabilitation and respite care. Both these developments are currently under construction. The campus is part of the North Kent Enterprise Zone. In line with its Strategic Plan commitment to intervene where necessary to deliver key employment sites, MBC has recently submitted a planning application for a £9.5 million Innovation Centre, providing more than 3,500sqm of flexible office space, facilities and support for small and medium-sized enterprises working in the life science, healthcare and med-tech sectors, complementing the campus' existing offer to the medical sector.

The established local plan allocations will be refined only if and when up to date evidence points to the need for a revised planning approach on a particular site.

Types of sites

We recognise that to fully embrace employment growth which meets the needs of different sectors we may be required to consider a variety of different locations and types of site, for example;

Mixed use sites are an avenue which could be explored where complementary uses are co-located on the same site or broad area. There are clear benefits to this approach where large scale new development is planned – for example in the case of a New Garden Community or neighbourhood - as a way of making the new community more self-sustaining by providing some local employment. New infrastructure such as improved transport connections would benefit the local business community as well as residents. Mixed use development in the town centre may also be a way to make particularly efficient use of brownfield sites.

Further, **new business locations** may help. This approach has the particular potential to deliver modern-standard space on a site which can be planned comprehensively from the outset.

Embracing growth may also provide opportunities to make the most of **established, successful industrial estates and business parks** as a way to ensure there is a sufficient stock of commercial premises for new and expanding businesses. There may be scope to redevelop parts of these sites to boost the supply of modern business premises. Additionally, we could explore the scope to extend existing sites to provide land for

additional business growth. This approach can capitalise on existing infrastructure like road and public transport connections and services, although these may need to be upgraded. It could also mean that established firms are able to expand in situ without having to relocate to a new site. Opportunities for extensions may be limited however, particularly in Maidstone town, because existing sites are already surrounded by other land uses.

TQ9 – Have we identified all the possible types of employment sites?

RETAIL & LEISURE GROWTH

The Local Plan Review presents an opportunity to achieve an updated appreciation of the amounts and types of new retail floorspace needed as well as an understanding of future leisure needs as part of the new evidence base.

This will provide a firm foundation for embracing retail and leisure growth and ensuring that such growth is successful. We will consider the matters which could impact on the type and quantity of new retail floorspace and leisure needs, including:

- The potential to upgrade the quality of sub-optimal retail space – either in terms of quality or location
- The changing nature of retail – including on line shopping - and how the town centre can respond by attracting and accommodating modern retailers and linked uses

Work carried out for the adopted Local Plan showed that Maidstone town centre draws shoppers from Medway and Sittingbourne to the north, from the west towards, but not including, Bluewater, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells and from the east towards Ashford. Maidstone town centre performs as a major regional centre for shopping.

Taken as a whole, the retail market is in a highly dynamic phase and in order to embrace this change we will undertake work to predict the implications of these changes at the local level. Perhaps the most fundamental change in the retail sector is the prevalence of multi-channel and home shopping. These ‘special forms of trading’ as they are termed by retail experts, now account for close to 20% of total retail sales nationally. For perspective, this compares to just below 5% of total retail sales in 2008. The growth in on-line sales will have implications not only for the amount, type and location of the demand for new shopping floorspace but also potentially for travel patterns as shopping traffic is partially substituted with home delivery vehicles (often vans) operating from centralised distribution hubs. Conversely ‘click and collect’ points to a continuing need for physical shopping floorspace for people to browse for goods and also as a collection point for online orders.

Many high street retailers have changed their store format/model. For over two decades, high street national multiples have increasingly sought larger modern shop units (over

2,000sqm) with an increasing propensity to locate in the larger national, regional and sub-regional centres. Many retailers now require fewer, larger stores to serve their catchment areas. This trend looks set to continue.

The process of embracing this change has already commenced and will continue into the future. As with employment and housing, the adopted local plan puts the borough on a firm footing including through the allocation of a number of sites for redevelopment and new floorspace. An example is Maidstone East/Royal Mail Sorting Office site which is an edge of centre site is allocated for a mixed use redevelopment of some 10,000sqm of new retail floorspace, 4,000sqm of offices and 210 dwellings. The council has taken the decision to purchase this site with KCC who together are advancing an outline scheme for the site.

The adopted Local Plan also allows for the consolidation of the existing permitted retail floorspace at Newnham Court Shopping Village through redevelopment. The Mall is identified as a longer term redevelopment proposition which would substantially upgrade the quality of this indoor shopping centre and deliver a significant number of new homes (estimated at 400) as part of a comprehensive scheme.

We will proactively seek to understand which future sites we will need to bring forward to support the retail and leisure offer within the town centre for the Local Plan Review. In addition, and as set out previously, increasing the number of town centre homes can promote activity and vitality in the town centre, creating a local catchment of customers for the town centre businesses, during and outside normal working hours.

Types of sites

As we continue to help to shape the borough's retail and leisure offer, we will have regard to national guidance which advocates a 'town centre first' policy when deciding where new shops and leisure uses should be located. This means that a sequential approach is needed to site selection as we look to meet future needs for at least the next ten years¹³. The core of the town centre will be the first preference, although it is recognised that realistic opportunities for large scale redevelopment may prove to be limited with the exception of The Mall, then moving out to look at edge of centre sites next and only when these avenues are exhausted, looking to well-connected out of town sites.

TQ10 - What approaches could we use to identify sites in and at the edge of the town centre for future shopping and leisure needs?

¹³ NPPF, paragraph 85 d)

CREATING A STRATEGY FOR THE SCALE AND PATTERN OF GROWTH

Settlement hierarchy

The settlement hierarchy is a useful tool we can use to illustrate the respective roles and relative sustainability of the borough's settlements. It does not, of itself, prescribe where new development should be directed.

We will review the hierarchy of settlements by assessing available services and facilities. The hierarchy in the adopted Local Plan has three classifications as follows;

1 – Maidstone town

2- Rural Service Centres

Marden, Staplehurst, Headcorn, Harrietsham, Lenham.

3 - Larger Villages

Sutton Valence, Boughton Monchelsea, Yalding, Coxheath, Hollingbourne

Some of the factors which influenced the current hierarchy are the presence of a school, local shops and public transport connections such as access to a train station. It is possible that the sustainability credentials of a particular location can be made better if key improvements can be secured in conjunction with new development.

TQ11 – Do you think there should be changes to the current settlement hierarchy? If yes, what evidence do you have for your answer?

Initial spatial options

A fundamental part of the Local Plan Review process will be considering how we proactively take forward the various forms of growth in a way which can realise its benefits. This means we need to carefully consider the reasonable alternative ways that growth can be managed and that development requirements can be met before selecting the best approach for inclusion in the Review.

There are a number of factors which will help us make our decisions on our preferred spatial strategy and these include making sure infrastructure is planned to meet the demands of growth, deliverability, viability, sustainability appraisal and compliance with national policy and guidance.

In respect of sustainability appraisal, the NPPG confirms the following;

“Reasonable alternatives should be identified and considered at an early stage in the plan making process, as the assessment of these should inform the local planning authority in choosing its preferred approach”¹⁴

This means that we will need to identify distinct and realistic options need for what the spatial distribution of development could be and then assess these in a transparent and reasoned way, in particular through the sustainability appraisal process, to help conclude on the best approach for the Local Plan Review. The sustainability appraisal will be key to, amongst other things, an assessment of the overall and relative sustainability of the emerging options.

As part of our pro-active approach to considering and embracing growth, we have identified some initial spatial strategy options for illustration purposes. At this stage we have focused on options relating to housing. Employment options will be developed when more evidence on the nature and scale of future needs has been collected.

These options are presented in no order of importance and each on its own may not be sufficient to meet full housing needs;

- A. **Maidstone focus.** The ways this option could be achieved have been previously highlighted and include building at higher densities, regenerating existing housing areas, reusing commercial and institutional premises and other brownfield sites in the town for housing or for mixed commercial/housing development and allocating greenfield sites at the edge of Maidstone including, potentially, major urban extension(s).

Focusing significant additional growth in and at the edges of the town raises the following initial considerations;

- In terms of ensuring sufficient infrastructure is planned to meet the demand of growth, this approach could enable best use to be made of the town’s network of existing infrastructure – roads, services and facilities – and we will proactively seek to establish what further ambitious improvements are likely to be needed to address the future demands up to 2037 (or beyond), including by leading discussions with developers around bringing forward the right infrastructure at the right time for our communities.
- Brownfield sites, such as the Town Centre Opportunity Sites, present a wonderful opportunity to help regenerate and revitalise the town. A vibrant stock of business premises also needs to be retained and expanded to help secure the economic future of the town and wider borough.

¹⁴ NPPG paragraph: 017 Reference ID: 11-017-20140306

- Partnership working with Registered Providers (housing associations) may present opportunities to replace outdated homes with new modern stock and realistic opportunities for significant and comprehensive housing estate renewal may be revealed, even if the net number of additional homes that result could be limited.
- The Council would need to take a proactive lead on discussions with housebuilders to ensure housebuilding rates can be sustained and the contribution maximised within such a discrete area of the borough.
- Higher density development, particularly in the town centre, presents opportunities but must also be planned in a way that achieves well-designed development.

B. **Dispersal.** This approach would spread growth and its benefits into key locations across the borough, including Maidstone itself. It is worth noting that the adopted Local Plan’s spatial strategy has seen the majority of growth directed towards Maidstone (67%) with a lesser amount (24%) to the borough’s main villages (Rural Services Centres and Larger Villages) and the balance (8%) on sites in the countryside.

The dispersed approach raises the following initial considerations;

- In terms of ensuring sufficient infrastructure is planned to meet the demand of growth, this approach could enable best use to be made of the town and villages’ network of existing infrastructure – roads, services and facilities – and we will proactively seek to establish what further ambitious improvements are likely to be needed to address the future demands up to 2037 (or beyond) including leading discussions with housebuilders around bringing forward the right infrastructure at the right time for our communities.
- The diversity of sites and locations means that a number of different housebuilders can be building on different sites at the same time, serving differing segments of the local housing market. Supply is not dependent on a limited number of housebuilders and the approach can be a good way to sustain high rates of housebuilding.
- The impacts and benefits of growth are spread across the communities of the borough.

A variant on this approach (Option Bi) could be to further disperse new housing to a fourth tier of villages that more limited facilities than the Rural Service Centres and Larger Villages.

- C. **Focus on planned new settlements and major extensions to existing settlements ('garden suburbs')** – as demonstrated by the Call for Sites exercise which included a Garden Communities Prospectus, Maidstone is committed to embracing all forms of future growth. This option would place emphasis on new settlements and major extensions to achieve the right types of growth for the borough.

The approach raises the following initial considerations. This option is not specific to a particular location or locations in the borough at this stage;

- Growth would be directed to a particular geographical area or areas which means that the impacts and benefits of the growth are more focused on specific local communities. The approach would provide a longer term strategy, including potentially rolling forward into the next iteration of the Local Plan and could present an opportunity for the council to take a leading role on masterplanning and investing in new places, proactively working with housebuilders, developers and infrastructure providers to ensure maximum benefits of growth. A concerted approach to masterplanning could also help to minimise lead in time that would allow us to deliver housing in the medium to longer term.
- This option gives the best opportunity for comprehensively planning a new neighbourhood from the bottom upwards using a masterplanning approach, achieving 'economies of scale' by planning for a new community or neighbourhood which is of a sufficient size to support a school, GP surgery, local employment or highway improvements for example and achieving a range of types and tenures of housing.
- We would need to supplement this approach with additional sites to a) provide housing in the shorter term whilst the new communities are coming on stream; and b) to sustain delivery rates at the required levels.
- This approach has the potential to deliver a significant number of new homes overall.

TQ12 - What is your preferred option for the future pattern of growth (A, B, Bi or C) and why?

TQ13 – For your preferred option, what infrastructure would you want to see brought forward as a priority?

TQ14 – If your favoured option won't achieve the number of new homes needed, at the rate they are needed, what combination of options do you think would be best?

QUALITY OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

MBC's Strategic Plan is clear that well designed places are a fundamental part of embracing growth. The quality of future development is crucial to the council and it will take a lead role in the masterplanning of, and investment in, new places which are well designed.

Throughout the masterplanning process, the council will work collaboratively with developers in the planning and co-ordination of strategic scale development from inception through to delivery on the ground.

To ensure a holistic and successful design that also adds social value, a masterplan should also consider:

- the neighbourhood's character and heritage;
- the creation of mixed communities in terms of land uses and house types, tenures and sizes;
- the provision of a range of open space and leisure facilities with regard to function, size and scale;
- the protection of significant biodiversity and landscape assets;
- the provision of supporting infrastructure, such as public transport, schools, shops, employment and utilities; and
- connecting pedestrian and cycling routes to existing and proposed infrastructure.

The NPPF underlines the importance of good design and describes the creation of high-quality buildings and places as "fundamental" to the planning and development process. To quote - "Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities"¹⁵.

It is also clear that plan making should set a design vision and expectation and that design policies should be developed with local communities, reflecting local aspirations. There may be a particular role for neighbourhood plans in this regard.

A recent example of MBC's action is ***Building for Life 12 Maidstone Edition***. The Council has adopted this assessment tool which consists of 12 design questions that focus on connection and integration of neighbourhoods, the creation of place, the streets and the home. The Maidstone version places particular local importance on;

- vernacular detailing and materials;
- landscaping being integral to good design;
- the importance of streets for all;
- sustainable design principles; and
- biodiversity being integral to good design.

¹⁵ NPPF paragraph 124

It has been designed to support consultation and community participation and to;

- guide masterplans and design codes;
- frame pre-application discussions;
- inform design reviews;
- structure design and access statements;
- support local decision making;
- give a framework to the design section in committee reports; and
- where necessary justify conditions relating to detailed aspects of design.

The Government has produced technical guidance on a 'nationally described space standard' (2015) which sets minimum limits for the internal space within new homes.

[\[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524531/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard_Final_Web_version.pdf\]](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/524531/160519_Nationally_Described_Space_Standard_Final_Web_version.pdf). To have

weight in planning decisions, we would need to incorporate these standards into the Local Plan Review.

TQ15 – Have we identified the correct areas of focus for future masterplanning? What are the reasons for your answer?

TQ16 - Should the national space standards be incorporated into the Local Plan Review? What are the reasons for your answer?

CHAPTER 5 - SCOPING THE STRATEGIC ISSUES

This chapter sets out the remaining strategic issues for consideration in the Local Plan Review. **ISSUE 1 - Meeting the borough's local housing need and helping to meet needs across the relevant Housing Market Area/s**

ISSUE 2 - Ensuring a sufficient supply of affordable housing

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objectives for this topic are:

- Health inequalities are addressed and reduced
- Deprivation is reduced and social mobility is improved

To help the Council take a lead role regarding housing challenges faced by the borough it has produced **Maidstone Housing Strategy (2016-20)**. This is an overarching plan that guides the Council and its partners in tackling the major housing challenges facing the borough. The strategy is cross-cutting; it promotes the delivery of new homes –both market and affordable – which gives it a strong inter-relationship with the adopted Local Plan and the forthcoming review. Amongst other things, the Strategy indicates that MBC will work with its partners to enable the delivery of new affordable housing and promote the uptake home ownership products such as Help to Buy, Starter Homes and Shared Ownership.

The Strategy also seeks to raise the quality of the borough's existing housing stock, in particular in the private rented sector, and it aims to provide for the homeless and vulnerable residents. The Strategy is due for a review, giving the opportunity to maintain the synergy between it and the Local Plan Review as the latter progresses.

The Strategic Plan confirms that MBC will seek to ensure that housing need is met and this includes affordable housing. It also commits the Council to expanding its role in the delivery of affordable and market rent housing. This may have a variety of benefits including helping reduce homelessness and rough-sleeping in a sustainable way.

Affordable housing

Affordable housing is provided at reduced cost to help those who cannot afford to buy or rent a property at market rates. Office of National Statistics data shows that the median (mid-point) house price in the borough is more than 11 times the median gross annual income of those who work in the borough. This 'affordability ratio' has been on a worsening trend since the beginning of the decade. In 2011 it stood at approximately 8:1.

The NPPF confirms that affordable housing should be part of the overall housing mix on sites of 10 dwellings and above and also confirms that the definition of 'affordable housing' includes;

- Affordable housing for rent;

- Starter homes;
- Discounted market sales housing; and
- “Other affordable routes to home ownership” such as shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent).

The overall need for affordable housing will be quantified through the forthcoming Strategic Housing Market Assessment. This assessment will also look at the relative contributions that the different affordable housing tenures can make to meeting local needs.

Specialist Housing.

In addition to affordable housing, we will also plan for the homes needed by specific groups as affirmed in the NPPF.

Homes for an ageing population. The number of over 65s in the borough is set to increase by more than 50% between 2019 and 2037¹⁶.

We will plan for these specialist needs, such homes with a greater element of care and, potentially, more smaller homes. This will in turn enable older people to “downsize”, freeing up existing family housing to meet the growing needs of young families in the borough. Additionally, building homes which can be easily adapted will mean older people can stay living in their own homes for longer.

The specific needs and opportunities for older persons’ housing will be identified through the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Custom and self-build housing. This is where an individual or group of individuals (or people working for them) build their own home/s to live in. The first owner of the home will have had primary input into its design and layout. At October 2018 there were 293 people registered on the Self-build Register for the borough. 41 of these pinpointed Maidstone as their first choice location. We will analyse this register information, supported as necessary by secondary sources, in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment to quantify the realistic demand for this type of housing over the timespan of the Local Plan Review.

TQ17 - How can the Local Plan Review best plan for the different types of housing which will be needed?

Gypsy & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Maidstone borough has a significant resident Gypsy & Traveller community. National planning policy recognises that Gypsies and Travellers have specific site needs. The

¹⁶ 2014-based sub-national population projections

Government’s overarching aim is “to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community”¹⁷.

In 2015 the Government revised the planning definition of Gypsies & Travellers to exclude those who have permanently stopped travelling. Additionally however, the 2016 Housing & Planning Act requires assessments to consider the needs of those generally who require caravan based accommodation and this would include those who are culturally Gypsies, whether or not they are actively travelling.

We will take a pro-active approach to assessing the community’s need for additional pitches through a forthcoming Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment. We will also seek to respond to the identified needs by making specific site allocations as part of the Local Plan Review, provided suitable sites can be identified. To this end, Gypsy & Traveller accommodation is one of the uses which was included in the recent MBC Call for Sites.

TQ18 – How can the Local Plan Review best plan for the accommodation needs of Gypsy & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople?

ISSUE 3 - Ensuring sufficient land and floorspace is provided to support economic growth in the borough and to contribute to the needs for the wider economic market area

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objective for this topic is:

- Deprivation is reduced and social mobility is improved
- Health inequalities are addressed and reduced

The ***Maidstone Economic Development Strategy (2015-2031)*** . The overall approach of this strategy is to make the most of the borough’s economic assets, while at the same time protecting the qualities which make it a special place. The council is keen to support businesses to grow, creating jobs for all of our residents and ensuring they are equipped with the skills to maximise their potential. Priorities in the strategy include ‘retaining and attracting investment’; ‘enhancing Maidstone town centre’ and ‘improving the infrastructure’. The adopted Local Plan, and the Local Plan Review, can respond to these priorities by anticipating business’ growth needs, identifying a sufficient supply of land and sites for commercial development, retaining existing, good quality business premises and sites and identifying the infrastructure improvements that new development generates.

The Economic Development Strategy is due to be reviewed and updated shortly.

¹⁷ Paragraph 3, Planning Policy for Traveller Sites

Home to more than 7,295 businesses, Maidstone borough continues to perform well economically despite the uncertain national and global economic climate, asserting itself as the powerhouse for growth and innovation in the heart of Kent.

Traditionally sectors such as finance and retail provided key sources of employment but this is changing. In terms of the types of jobs people do, a number of sectors have seen a large proportional increase over the last two decades including hospitality and recreation; administrative and support services; wholesale and transport; and social care. Meanwhile other sectors have recorded an overall decline in employment, namely finance and insurance; retail; manufacturing; other private services and utilities.

These changing trends in employment bring differing requirements in terms of the type of workplace required, the amount and location of floorspace and the supporting infrastructure needed.

The town centre is a major workplace. In addition to those employed in service sector roles, Maidstone borough is the largest office centre among the six neighbouring local authorities, with the stock of office floorspace predominantly focused within and around the periphery of Maidstone town centre. The Government's 2013 revision of Permitted Development Rights enables offices to be converted to homes without the need for planning permission. At 1st April 2019 approximately 26,668sqm of town centre office space has been converted of which 18,549sqm was poorer quality office stock. A further 13,518sqm is in the pipeline for conversion. We will be obtaining evidence for the Local Plan Review about the realistic demand for new office space.

There will also be implications for workforce productivity, with different types of employment generating differing Gross Value Added (GVA) per worker. Maidstone currently falls below the Kent, wider south east and UK averages on this measure. The Strategic Plan takes a proactive approach in response by seeking to ensure skills levels and earning potential of our residents are raised and local commercial and inward investment is increased. The Local Plan Review will play an important role in supporting the Strategic Plan alongside other strategies such as the Maidstone Economic Development Strategy.

The size of local businesses in Maidstone is comparable to both the regional and national averages, dominated by micro-firms (0-9 workers) and, to a lesser extent, small-sized firms (10 to 49 workers). A particular positive for the borough is the significant number of business start-ups, with a higher proportion of the resident population setting up new businesses in the borough than elsewhere across the south east and UK. Not only this but these start-up businesses have a healthy level of survival over the first few years of trading, exceeding the rates for Kent, the south east and the UK. There is clear evidence of an entrepreneurial culture in the borough which the Local Plan Review should seek to support and encourage.

Other key points to note;

- the borough has a business base greater than any other in the county
- employment is strong – unemployment rates have fallen since 2017, currently resting at 2.8%
- median earnings of Maidstone workers and residents have increased steadily since 2017 but are both below the equivalent Kent average.
- although approximately 60.3% of Maidstone’s employed residents work within the borough, it is also an attractive place to live for London commuters.
- the borough is a slight net exporter of labour overall; 30,000 workers commute into the borough each day compared with the 31,180 residents who commute out. The most popular destination is Tonbridge & Malling.

Existing business sites

The Strategic Plan takes a positive approach to ensuring key employment sites are delivered with the council intervening where necessary in the market. In addition ensuring that the borough’s portfolio of established business parks, estates and sites is suitably protected in planning terms will also be a crucial consideration. Developing and retaining the best commercial property is important for sustaining the borough’s businesses and enabling them to thrive and expand.

Brownfield land such as redundant employment sites may play a key role in helping to deliver other types of growth for example, housing, mixed uses and infrastructure. The approach is supported by the NPPF which signals that employment sites with no reasonable prospect of coming forward for their allocated use should be either reallocated through the process of plan-making or should be supported for alternative uses where the proposed use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area¹⁸.

The Rural Economy

Agriculture remains an important industry to the borough including the traditional production of soft fruits and associated haulage and storage facilities. Farming benefits from the borough’s high grade soil conditions and many businesses have begun to diversify away from traditional rural activities through the re-use of buildings for commercial non-agricultural purposes. There is also a trend in agriculture for produce to be available all year round to meet consumer demand.

Maidstone Strategic Plan supports the borough’s vibrant leisure and culture offer that can be enjoyed by residents and that is attractive to visitors. The importance of the tourism sector to the local economy is also increasing with independent research commissioned by Visit Kent – the Destination Management Organisation for Kent - showed that the value of Maidstone’s visitor economy shot up by 8.7% in 2017 and is now worth over £283 million.

¹⁸ NPPF paragraph 120

Visits to the borough increased by 7.9% in 2017 to 4.5 million trips with 4.1 million day trips and nearly half a million overnight stays. The total number of jobs supported by tourism grew by 8.3% to 5,909 with the industry accounting for 8% of total employment in the borough. The Local Plan Review could play a role in supporting this sector and approach.

The Strategic Plan also supports bringing forward community facilities and services in the right place at the right time to support communities and the Local Plan Review can also play a role.

The NPPF supports a positive approach to all these matters stating that local plans should support a prosperous rural economy through policies that enable:

- The development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- Sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside;
- The retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities; and
- The sustainable growth and expansion of rural businesses through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings.

TQ19 – How can the Local Plan Review help ensure that local economic growth benefits everyone?

ISSUE 4 - Ensuring that Maidstone has a vital and vibrant town centre which maintains its role in the sub-region and that a network of local centres continue to serve local retail and service needs.

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objectives for this topic are:

- Heritage is respected
 - Health inequalities are addressed and reduced
 - Deprivation is reduced and social mobility is improved
- Biodiversity and environmental sustainability is respected

Maidstone Town Centre

To sustain and flourish, and to insure against the systemic changes in retailing, Maidstone Town Centre is likely to need to become home to a greater diversity of uses – shopping, leisure, food and drink, cultural and community uses, workplaces and homes. Town centre visits in particular may become more focused on ‘experiential’ activities as well as shopping. These supporting activities can help lengthen the duration of peoples’ visits to the town centre, so called ‘dwell time’.

We are also actively involved in managing the town centre and improving its environment, working with partners to enhance its offer. For example, working with KCC, the council has recently invested in major environmental enhancements in the heart of the town centre. Raising the physical quality of the public realm is a key way to enhance people's experience of the town centre. It improves access and helps illuminate the quality of the town's historic core. Following the highly successful scheme for the High Street, work recently finished on the £3 million complementary scheme for Week Street and Gabriel's Hill.

Another example is the council's involvement with One Maidstone, a not-for-profit Community Interest Company dedicated to improving the trading environment in the town. In October 2018 Maidstone Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID) came into effect following a ballot of local businesses the preceding summer. The BID is projected to generate an income of approximately £2.15m over its initial five-year term which will be ring-fenced for initiatives around 'Manage, Promote and Discover' projects such as street ambassadors, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, events and promotions to promote trade and footfall in the town.

Other centres in the borough

The borough has a comprehensive network of district and local centres which complement Maidstone town centre and play an important role in serving the day-to-day needs in their local areas. One of the outcomes of the Strategic Plan is that 'our town and village centres are fit for the future'. This is not simply about retail and there is likely to be a need to focus on a greater diversity of uses, including community uses, in these areas. The Strategic Plan also commits to working with parishes and community groups on their neighbourhood plans which can also contribute to these areas becoming thriving places.

TQ20 – How can the Local Plan Review help sustain our town and local centres?

INFRASTRUCTURE – an introduction

MBC's Strategic Plan makes it clear that as part of embracing growth we will take a leading role in enabling infrastructure, matching the growing needs of our residents and local economy. The expected outcome expected is that sufficient infrastructure is planned to meet the demand of growth.

The council can't do this alone. To get infrastructure planned, funded and delivered we will be working proactively with partners and make clear our expectations of developers. Indeed many of the key types of infrastructure are not the direct responsibility of this council. Roads, public transport and walking/cycling routes; health care including GP surgeries; education such as primary and secondary schools; libraries, social care and community

facilities; emergency services; and flood prevention and mitigation measures are all services which fall to other organisations to deliver. So our collaboration with key infrastructure partners is crucial.

Central to our approach for the Local Plan Review will be identifying what, when and how the infrastructure needed to support the plan's growth will be delivered. We will start by understanding what pre-existing capacity there is and then what future plans and projects are in place that will extend infrastructure capacity before, crucially, identifying what additionally needs to be in place to match the growth coming forward through the Local Plan Review.

As with the other areas of growth discussed earlier in this document, we are able to benefit from work undertaken for the adopted Local Plan and from work undertaken since. A key document is the council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). This sets out the programme for delivering infrastructure of all types and it is updated annually. For each infrastructure project, the IDP provides information about who will deliver it, when it will be delivered, its estimated cost and its priority. Over time, the IDP will iterate to incorporate the infrastructure implications of the growth plans in the emerging Local Plan Review.

It is increasingly the case that the provision of infrastructure is funded in whole or part through new development. It is paramount that developers do their share to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is planned, bringing benefits to those same communities that are affected by new development. Again, the Strategic Plan is clear in its expectations that community facilities and services should be in the right places at the right time to support communities.

One way MBC can help ensure that infrastructure and services are delivered is through 'developer contributions' and the proactivity of the council has already put it in an excellent position in this regard. Not only do we ensure that developers provide site-specific mitigation through section 106 agreements but we have also introduced a local Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) that will help fund new, strategic-scale infrastructure.

What is the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)? CIL is a non-negotiable financial levy that councils can charge on new floor space. The money raised is used to help deliver the infrastructure needed to support the new development which is happening in the borough. Maidstone introduced its CIL in October 2018. It applies to residential development, 'convenience' retail and out of town centre 'comparison' retail developments where new floorspace is created. Legal agreements (section 106 agreements and/or section 278 agreements) are still used but in a more limited way to secure the on-site infrastructure specifically required by the development such as road access improvements, affordable housing and open space.

The money raised through the collection of CIL is intended to fill gaps in the funding of infrastructure in the borough and should be viewed as just one of many potential funding sources. It will not be able to cover the cost of all infrastructure provision. CIL money is collected by the council and then, after a fair and transparent bidding process, is released to the relevant infrastructure providers to deliver their schemes. A proportion of CIL receipts is also used for local, community projects.

TQ21 – How can the Local Plan Review best plan for the new infrastructure that will be needed to support growth?

We will now discuss the main types of infrastructure in turn.

ISSUE 5 – Ensuring sufficient transport infrastructure is provided to serve the new development that is planned

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objectives for this topic are:

- Health inequalities are addressed and reduced
- Deprivation is reduced and social mobility is improved

We recognise that better transport is one of the highest priorities for the borough's residents. Particular transport issues, some of which can be addressed through the Local Plan Review, include;

- Congestion hotspots on the borough's road network
- Poor air quality in the town which correlates with the main arterial roads. The NPPF underlines the link between better sustainable transport and improvements to air quality and public health¹⁹.
- Relatively high levels of car ownership whilst car occupancy levels are relatively low.
- Ensuring the appropriate level of provision of vehicle parking in new developments
- Future trends such as increased home/remote working, increased on-line shopping and home delivery of groceries and other goods
- The provision of realistic alternatives to the private car
- Changes to travel patterns and network capacity, including as a result of growth in surrounding districts and boroughs
- The impact of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing.

As noted previously, the Strategic Plan makes it clear that we will help enable infrastructure. We will fulfil this role whilst recognising that the provision, improvement and maintenance of the borough's public roads are the responsibility of others. Highways England is the Government agency responsible for the maintenance and management of England's motorways and major A roads, notably the M20 and M2 and the A249 from its junction with the M2 (Stockbury), north to Sheerness. The roads in the rest of the network are the responsibility of KCC as the highway authority.

Maidstone's rail connections are generally good. Maintaining a good rail network is the responsibility of Network Rail and the rail operators (e.g. South Eastern). The borough is

¹⁹ NPPF paragraph 103

served by the Ashford-Victoria line, the Hastings-Charing Cross line and the Medway Valley line. In December 2019, a new Thameslink rail service will connect Maidstone (East station) to Cambridge via London Bridge, Blackfriars and St Pancras.

The **Quality Bus Partnership (QBP)** is a good example of collaboration in action. The QBP was set up to improve and enable communication and decision making regarding bus service provision in the Maidstone area. Attendance by representatives from MBC, KCC, and multiple bus operators (Arriva and Nu Venture) at this quarterly meeting allows effective discussion of any bus related matters.

Some of the ways in which we may be able to work with our partners to ensure that transport infrastructure improvements are made could include the following:

<p>Increase road capacity by finding engineering solutions to improve 'pinch point' junctions</p>	<p>Junction improvements have already been identified and funded in connection with the developments coming forward from the current, adopted Local Plan. Some schemes still need to progress. A good example is the forthcoming improvements to A249 Bearsted Road. This scheme is being funded by a package of central government funding, developer contributions and money from MBC.</p>
<p>Design healthy places</p>	<p>Vital to the masterplanning of any new communities, is that opportunities for healthy lifestyle choices such as active travel options are integrated into the overall design, thereby reducing the preference for private car use.</p>
<p>Build new roads</p>	<p>This is a way of increasing capacity by adding additional routes, including routes to bypass an existing pinch point. Government funding for new road building is highly limited and generally new roads will only be delivered in connection with development as the means to cross subsidise the costs of the road.</p>
<p>Facilitate and promote active travel e.g. – walking, cycling and the use of public transport.</p>	<p>These need to be direct, coherent, attractive alternatives e.g. safe walking route, direct safe cycle route and convenient cycle parking or through-ticketing on public transport e.g. PlusBus tickets. This is frequently presented as an all or nothing alternative but even the partial uptake of these options (e.g. cycling to work one day a week) helps reduce overall pressure on the road network. Additional walking and cycling</p>

	connections can be achieved in concert with new developments.
'Smart city' technology	This approach helps to make travel across the borough easier. The availability of real time information on things such as road traffic flows and public transport times helps people to make smart travel choices e.g. avoid congestion and/or give them certainty when using public transport. The Kent Connected website and associated App is a journey planer aimed at saving people money, improving the quality of each journey and peoples' health, whilst easing congestion in Kent. Also, measures such as using contactless payments on buses encourage users onto buses, removing the need to pre-purchase tickets or have cash.
Public transport e.g. buses and trains	This could include, for example, bus priority measures or the provision of revenue funds to support new bus routes until they become commercially viable. Measures which prioritise buses over private cars have, to date, not always proved acceptable to key decision makers.
Parking control	This can encompass 'stick' measures such as increased parking charges in the town centre and/or restricting the number of car parking spaces in new developments to compel people to use alternative means of transport. This is quite an extreme approach (potentially suited to larger cities where there are more comprehensive alternatives) and can result in unintended consequences such as negatively impacting the viability of the town centre and introducing parking blight if not carefully managed.

TQ22 – Have we identified all the types of transport measures? Which measures do you think we should prioritise?

The proactive stance which the council intends to take is supported by national planning guidance which underlines that development should be planned in a way which limits people's overall need to travel and which gives people a genuine choice of transport modes²⁰. Increased levels of walking, cycling and public transport use has cross-cutting

²⁰ NPPF paragraph 103

benefits for congestion, emissions, air quality and public health. We will also need to have regard to the NPPF's direction that the residual cumulative highway impacts associated with new development would need to be 'severe' before development could be refused or prevented²¹.

The council has a number of avenues available to it to identify and specify the transport infrastructure requirements generated by the proposed growth. These are;

- Working in collaboration with KCC and Highways England, we will review and update our Integrated Transport Strategy with an updated list of requirements, schemes and actions to support the growth in the Local Plan Review.
- Highway modelling jointly commissioned by KCC and MBC will test the effects of the planned levels and locations of growth on the highway network. A second stage will be to identify the measures that can be implemented in conjunction with development to address the additional pressure on the network.
- Alongside a review of the Integrated Transport Strategy, it is envisaged that the interrelated Walking and Cycling Strategy will also be reviewed. Such a review would bring it in to alignment with the recent Government guidance regarding Local Cycling and Walking Plans.

Leeds-Langley Relief Road

We are working positively with Kent County Council as it explores;

- a) the case for a Leeds Langley Relief Road and alternatives to it;
- b) how it could be funded; and
- c) whether additional development would be associated with such a relief road²².

Initial investigations by KCC's consultants will determine, in outline, the effect that a new road in this location could have on traffic movements in and through the town. The work should seek to determine whether a relief road is needed and justified to deal with the additional traffic generated by the new developments. This work stream will also need to identify and assess on an equivalent basis alternatives to a relief road as signalled by Policy LPR1.

We recognise that there will be environmental impacts of a new road in this location including landscape and biodiversity impacts and potentially these could be significant. The case would also need to be made for funding (if the scheme proves to be justified). Funding for the road could potentially come from public sources, such as central government, and/or be enabled by new development.

²¹ NPPF paragraph 109

²² Policy LPR1 of the adopted Local Plan

ISSUE 6 – Ensuring sufficient utilities infrastructure is provided to serve the new development that is planned

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objective for this topic is:

- Deprivation is reduced and social mobility is improved

Utility providers play a key role in planning for and delivering the infrastructure necessary to support the growth advanced in the Local Plan Review. The Strategic Plan seeks to ensure that all services are in place at the right time to support communities and this is not limited to traditional utilities such as water, electricity and gas supplies. Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure such as broadband is essential for economic growth and social well-being²³.

Moving forward with the Local Plan Review, it is important that superfast broadband roll out continues to those existing properties currently without it, as well as providing connections for planned new development. We will seek to set out how high-quality digital infrastructure is expected to be delivered and upgraded over the lifetime of the Plan and aim to prioritise full fibre connections to existing and new developments (as these connections will, in almost all cases, provide the optimum solution)²⁴. To this end, continued close liaison with broadband providers is crucial.

KCC is working with the Government’s broadband agency, Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) to improve access to superfast services under the ‘Making Kent Quicker’ scheme. 95% of properties across Kent and Medway can now access to superfast broadband service of at least 24mbps. Also available is the Government’s Better Broadband Scheme which provides subsidised installation of fixed wireless satellite broadband connectivity to properties that cannot currently access a broadband speed of at least 2mbps.

The supply of clean water to premises in the borough is the responsibility of South East Water whilst the removal of waste water is the responsibility of Southern Water. Both companies have produced draft five-year business plans for 2020-2025, setting out how they will fulfil their statutory obligations to provide and remove water at properties – both residential and commercial. Both plans have been initially assessed by OFWAT and neither are yet ready to implement. We will liaise with both organisations to confirm what capacity improvements will be needed and for them to programme them into their capital works programme accordingly.

The key stakeholders for the provision of gas and electricity infrastructure are UK Power Networks (UKPN) and Southern Gas Network (SGN). UKPN own and maintain the electricity

²³ NPPF paragraph 112

²⁴ NPPF paragraph 112

cables across the whole of the south east, whilst SGN manage the network of pipes that supply gas across the same area. We will continue to work with these partners to get the energy related infrastructure planned, funded and delivered including ensuring that the capacity improvements needed are factored into their capital works programmes.

ISSUE 7 – Ensuring sufficient provision is made for health and education

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objectives for this topic are:

- Health inequalities are addressed and reduced
- Deprivation is reduced and social mobility is improved

We will be working closely with partners around health and education provision so that these forms of infrastructure are planned, funded and delivered.

The Strategic Plan seeks to support the health service to improve access to primary care such as clinics and GP surgeries and including care hubs. Fundamentally, we will continue to work with health providers to get infrastructure planned, funded and delivered and this includes Maidstone & Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust which is responsible for acute care and the operation of Maidstone Hospital. In terms of primary care, it is the NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) which is responsible for commissioning healthcare services across West Kent. It co-ordinates GP provision through its Estates Strategy (2018) which anticipates future demand and programmes where additional GP capacity is needed taking account of existing facilities and capacity and the scope to consolidate and co-locate services.

Responsibility for **public health** rests with KCC. The County Council collaborates with MBC on a number of projects to improve the health and wellbeing of its residents including delivery of health improvement services known as One You Kent.

It is recognised however that many of the functions delivered by Maidstone Borough Council have an impact on the health and wellbeing of the population including provision of green spaces and leisure facilities, housing, environmental health, economic development and planning.

The Local Plan Review can also play an important role in enabling communities to take control and improve their health and wellbeing with a number of direct and indirect interventions including:

- Providing for formal recreational and sports facilities as part of planned growth;
- Providing for informal recreation e.g. green spaces, walking routes where people can exercise and also socialise which can help overall mental wellbeing as part of planned growth;
- Helping people to make active travel choices i.e. to walk or cycle to a destination rather than use the car;
- Provide for health service facilities such as clinics or GP surgeries, in association with planned growth;
- Supporting communities to have access to a wide range of healthier food production and consumption choices;
- Working with developers to promote social interaction through the provision of shared spaces and multi-purpose community facilities which helps to enhance the sustainability of communities. Wherever possible we will seek to ensure that places are safe and accessible so that crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion.

TQ23 – How can the Local Plan Review best integrate health and wellbeing into the planning of new development?

Education

There are 48 primary/infant schools in the borough and 11 secondary-tier schools. KCC is responsible for ensuring that every child in the borough has a school place, at primary and secondary level. Future planning for primary and secondary school places is covered by KCC's Schools Commissioning Plan which is reviewed and updated annually. Additional places are created through the expansion of existing schools and the provision of new schools.

We continue to work with KCC in a positive, proactive and collaborative way to ensure that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet the needs of existing and new communities²⁵ and this is highlighted in national guidance.

The majority of schools in the borough are run by KCC as the education authority. However, there are also publicly funded academy schools that receive funding directly from central government and operate outside of local authority control and free schools which are set up

²⁵ NPPF paragraph 94

by local groups e.g. parents, teachers, charities, trusts etc. and are also funded directly from central government.

Libraries

Again, KCC is responsible for the provision of public libraries. Libraries play an important role in supporting our local communities, bringing people together in a safe, trusted and welcoming environment, as well as supporting people to find the information they need to help them live independently and well.

The recently published KCC Libraries, Registrations and Archives Strategy 2019-22 sets out how KCC will continue to provide a sustainable libraries, registration and archives service to meet the needs and choices of the community. The Strategy recognises the need to support Kent's growing population and changing community needs as well as acknowledging the need to be flexible and adaptable to rapid technological change in order to provide optimal user choice. Key features of the Strategy include: retaining the network of libraries, archive and register offices; maximising the use of community buildings; promoting the services offered through new marketing; and widening access to archive collections through digitisation.

The Council wishes to support KCC in delivering its statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for those working, living or studying in the borough. Throughout the Local Plan Review process, MBC will engage with KCC to ensure that access to library services is well-integrated into planned development. This could, for example, be through physical access e.g. providing safe walking/cycling routes or digital access e.g. ensuring provision of broadband connectivity in new developments.

ISSUE 8 - Managing the risk of flooding from all sources.

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objective for this topic is:

- Biodiversity and environmental sustainability is respected

Flooding and flood risk are key issues for new development in parts of our borough. Maidstone is a key bridging point on the river Medway and as such it is likely that sites will be promoted for development which carry some risk of flooding. Where sites can be demonstrated to deliver significant benefits, developers should investigate the cost of managing and/or mitigating the risk of flooding. Parts of the borough are also subject to flooding because of local surface water drainage issues

The Strategic Plan seeks to achieve an environmentally attractive and sustainable borough. At the same time development must be planned in a way that people feel safe and are safe, in this case from the risk of flooding. We are not starting afresh in this regard. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was completed in 2016 which identifies all sources of flood risk in the

borough. The Environment Agency will be updating their flood modelling later in 2019 and it is intended that a revised assessment will be prepared to take account of this latest data.

The Council, working with the Environment Agency, will use the information from the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to help locate appropriate uses to appropriate areas having regard to the vulnerability of the proposed use and the degree of flood risk. The approach to assessing and managing flood risk is confirmed by the NPPF which states that we should apply a sequential, risk based approach to the location of development so as to avoid, where possible risk to people and property²⁶.

As part of its proactive approach to embracing growth, MBC will work to identify how sites could be developed in such a way that ensure they appropriately manage overall flood risk (including ensuring that the development does not increase flood risk elsewhere) prior to the allocation of sites in the Local Plan Review. Once the results are known there may be various ways that flood risk could be mitigated and we will look into this on a site-specific or area-wide basis. The former Syngenta works at Yalding is an example of a site where the risk of flooding must be addressed comprehensively if development is to progress.

TQ24 – How can the Local Plan Review best manage flood risk whilst still achieving the growth that is needed?

ISSUE 9 – Ensuring that the borough’s environmental assets such as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Landscapes of Local Value, the countryside and Green Belt are suitably protected

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objective for this topic is:

- Biodiversity and environmental sustainability is respected

A key strategic issue for the Local Plan Review will be to embrace growth in a way which supports the protection of nationally and locally important landscapes and the countryside. The Strategic Plan promotes an environmentally attractive and sustainable borough as an integral part its ‘safe, clean and green’ priority.

Considering key aspects in turn:

Countryside - This comprises all parts of the borough that lie outside the defined settlement boundaries of Maidstone’s urban area, the Rural Service Centres, and Larger Villages and includes some area of higher quality agricultural land. The intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside is of significant value and should be respected²⁷. The overall settlement pattern within the countryside is characterised by a great number of small villages and hamlets that rely on Maidstone, the ten Rural Service Centres and Larger Villages and

²⁶ NPPF paragraph 157

²⁷ NPPF paragraph 170

settlements outside the borough for a range of services. These services include shops, post offices, health care, education and nursery facilities, banking, communal spaces, places of worship and public houses. These are vital to support rural communities. The importance of such facilities is emphasised in the Strategic Plan which seeks the provision of community facilities and services in the right places at the right time to support communities.

The Plan will also recognise that some forms of development will support the rural economy including utilising the best and most versatile agricultural land, tourism, leisure and culture. It will be important to balance these (at times) competing objectives.

Where proposals can be identified as having a potentially negative impact on the countryside, measures should be put in place to mitigate the impact. These measures might take the form of planting new landscape screening or directing development to less prominent parts of the site.

Green Belt - This national policy designation has the fundamental purpose of preventing urban sprawl, ensuring that settlements remain distinct from one another by ensuring that land is kept permanently open. The NPPF confirms the considerable restrictions on new development in the Green Belt and Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances. The Metropolitan Green Belt surrounds London and extends into a small part of the borough in the vicinity of Nettlestead. Our starting point is that we do not intend to revise the Green Belt boundary in our borough as part of the Local Plan Review.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – Just over 27% of the borough is within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. AONBs are nationally important areas which are of special landscape quality, scenic quality, wildness or tranquillity and/or have particular natural or cultural heritage features. The south-facing steep slopes (scarps) of chalk and greensand are a prominent feature of the Kent Downs AONB. Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), the council must make sure that decisions have regard for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. This duty is also relevant for proposals which are outside the AONB which nonetheless may have an impact on the AONB's statutory purpose. Setting impacts are also pertinent in the south of the borough in parts of Marden and Staplehurst parishes which lie close to the High Weald AONB.

The NPPF is clear that major development within an AONB is not appropriate unless exceptional circumstances exist.

Landscapes of Local Value (LLV) is a local landscape designation, comprising significant tracts of landscape that are valuable and more sensitive to change. The LLVs were highlighted as areas of local value by local communities through previous local plan consultations and were assessed against specific criteria according to their distinct landscape character and sensitivity to change. There are five LLVs: the Greensand Ridge,

the Medway Valley, the Len Valley, the Loose Valley and the Low Weald. These landscapes cover more than 19% of the borough's total area. Any development within these protected landscape areas should contribute positively to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape through their siting, scale, mass, materials and design.

In designating the LLVs, consideration was given to the evidence in the Landscape Character Assessment (LCA). The LCA provided an up-to-date assessment of landscape character. Whilst over time there may be some localised changes within a landscape character area as a result of development, the overall and substantive character of the areas is likely to sustain. This being the case, we do not propose to alter the LLVs as part of this review.

TQ25 – How can the Local Plan Review best plan for the protection of the borough's environmental assets whilst still achieving the growth that is needed?

ISSUE 10 – Ensuring that the borough's historic assets are conserved and managed

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objective for this topic is:

- Heritage is respected

Maidstone has a wide-ranging heritage with tangible examples of buildings and monuments dating from the Iron Age right the way through to the post Second World War era. These make a vital contribution to the character and economic health of the borough and do much to ensure local distinctiveness. This legacy is recognised through the Strategic Plan which requires heritage to be respected.

The borough is particularly rich in timber-framed houses dating from the 14th to the 17th Centuries and contains many fine Georgian buildings. There are also widespread examples of traditional farm buildings, including some magnificent barns and oast houses. There are many fine medieval churches as well as castles and country houses. There are monuments to industries past which have played an important part in the area's history.

The NPPF recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource to be conserved and the significance of much of the borough's built heritage has been formally recognised. There are 43 Grade I listed buildings in the borough²⁸, a further 104 Grade II* and 1,876 Grade II. There is a particular concentration of listed buildings in the town centre. Groups of historically important buildings and features are recognised through the designation of 41 conservation areas. The heritage list also provides information on scheduled ancient monuments of which there are 26 across the borough with a particularly high concentration in the north west of the borough. There are five historic parks and gardens of special

²⁸ National Heritage List for England <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list>

interest at Boughton Monchelsea Place; Leeds Castle; Mote Park; Chilston Park and Linton Park.

A small portion of the designated heritage assets in the borough are at risk. The Heritage at Risk Register indicates that there are 14 designated heritage assets considered to be at risk²⁹ comprising two conservation areas, seven listed buildings and five scheduled ancient monuments.

Furthermore the NPPF emphasises that Local Plans should set a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment underlining, amongst other things, “the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness”³⁰.

TQ26 – How can the Local Plan Review best plan for the conservation of the borough’s heritage assets whilst still achieving the growth that is needed?

ISSUE 11 – Ensuring that the borough’s biodiversity and wildlife habitats are suitably protected and managed

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objective for this topic is:

- Biodiversity and environmental sustainability is respected

Kent Biodiversity Strategy (August 2015) prepared by the Kent Nature Partnership identifies 35 habitat types across Kent that are in urgent need of conservation, all of which are nationally important and some of which are rare and threatened on a global scale. The ***Kent Biodiversity Opportunity Areas*** (BOAs) also identified by Kent Nature Partnership are a spatial reflection of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy and identify the areas where activity should be focused for maximum biodiversity benefits. There are five BOAs which affect Maidstone.

A ***Maidstone Biodiversity Strategy*** is being prepared. MBC is taking a leading role in developing a new biodiversity strategy for the borough and most importantly involving residents and wildlife groups in the process and support people in taking practical action whether large or small.

Green (vegetation) and blue (water) assets together form a network which brings a wide range of benefits in addition to the habitats they provide. The borough has large and important ecological sites, protected through local, national, and European level designations. The matter is given high priority within the Strategic Plan which seeks to respect biodiversity and environmental sustainability. In other words, whilst embracing

²⁹ Heritage at Risk Register <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/>

³⁰ NPPF paragraph 185

growth the Local Plan Review will act to ensure that development does not threaten these habitats and to create new open spaces and/or improve the quality of existing open spaces to meet local recreation and ecology needs more effectively.

In addition, there is a specific process – Habitat Regulations Assessment – for testing the impacts of the proposed Local Plan Review strategy on the integrity of the European nature conservation sites in and close to the borough. This process requires cumulative impacts to be assessed which take account of development in other boroughs and districts. The council has appointed expert consultants to undertake this technical assessment.

The key designations and assets relating to biodiversity and wildlife habitats are introduced below.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) – These are ecological sites which have a European level of importance because of the habitats and/or species they contain. The North Downs Woodland SAC is characterised by woodland and dry grassland on steep slopes. The impact of the Local Plan Review’s proposals on this SAC and those with the potential to be impacted beyond the borough boundaries will be specifically assessed through a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) – These are sites which are nationally important because of their wildlife, geology or landform. Development which will adversely affect a SSSI should not normally be permitted unless the benefits of the proposal ‘clearly outweigh’ these effects, according to the National Planning Policy Framework.

Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) – The borough’s Local Wildlife Sites and Local Nature Reserves are designated by Kent Wildlife Trust for their value for natural habitat and conservation. The National Planning Policy Framework confirms that local plans should safeguard local biodiversity sites such as these.

Ancient woodland, veteran trees and Tree Preservation Orders – Designated ancient woodland is woodland which has been continuously planted since 1600 or earlier. A veteran tree is one which ‘is of interest biologically, culturally or aesthetically because of its age, size or condition’³¹. Both are categorised as ‘irreplaceable habitats’ and development that would lead to their loss should be refused planning permission unless there are wholly exceptional reasons to do otherwise and compensation arrangements are in place. There are pockets of designated Ancient Woodland and specimen veteran trees across the borough. Tree Preservation Orders are used to protect trees (not necessarily ancient woodland or veteran trees) which are of particular amenity value.

³¹ Veteran Trees – a guide to good management (Natural England)

Green infrastructure – Many of the above designations contribute to the Borough’s green infrastructure and biodiversity value. However, green infrastructure extends beyond those designations. For example, the provision of green spaces within urban areas is essential to local residents being able to lead healthy lifestyles and enjoying leisure and cultural activities. An example of this is the legacy of green tracts between neighbourhoods and along rivers in the town which provide a structure to, and a break between, the built up urban area. This green infrastructure also brings environmental benefits by capturing carbon and air particles, mitigating flood risk, and as wildlife habitats.

Blue infrastructure - Rivers have shaped how the borough has developed and provide a structure for open spaces and urban development. Rivers act like corridors and their banks are often protected for flood inundation whilst the amenity of rivers is highly sought after by humans and wildlife alike. These functions need to be protected and enhanced.

Ecological networks - In addition to the designated areas above, there are numerous rivers, woods, heaths, grasslands, meadows, hedgerows and even buildings which provide a stock of spaces which sustain local ecology. We will expect the full potential impact of a development on local ecology to be identified and opportunities to achieve biodiversity net gain actively implemented.

An example of practical action on this front, supported by the Strategic Plan, is the ‘Go Green Go Wild’ initiative which encourages residents to help look after the nature on their doorstep, be it an open meadow, a grass verge, back garden or even a window box. This could help create wildlife corridors, encourage native species and provide new wildlife habitats throughout the borough.

TQ27 – How can the Local Plan Review best plan for the protection of the borough’s biodiversity whilst still achieving the growth that is needed?

ISSUE 12 – Contributing to an overall improvement in air quality, in particular in the Maidstone Air Quality Management Area.

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objectives for this topic are:

- Health inequalities are addressed and reduced
- Biodiversity and environmental sustainability is respected

The council’s **Low Emissions Strategy** sets out how to achieve a higher standard of air quality across Maidstone. It seeks to assist MBC in complying with relevant air quality legislation, embedding an innovative approach to vehicle emission reduction through integrated policy development and implementation. This includes improving the emissions of the vehicle fleet beyond the ‘business as usual’ projection and promoting the uptake of low and ultra low emission vehicles.

Poor air quality has a direct impact on people’s health, in particular those with respiratory conditions, older people and children. The combustion of fossil fuels for power generation, industrial processes, domestic heating and transport gives rise to air pollutants including ozone, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, particulate matter and sulphur dioxide. Congestion, increased volumes of traffic and an increased proportion of HGVs on our roads can all worsen air quality. Poor air quality can also impact on biodiversity; nitrogen oxides contribute to the acidification of soil and watercourses which impacts on animal and plant life.

The Maidstone Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) is shown on the map below³². It encompasses areas in the town close to the main arterial roads and junctions, including along the M20 corridor where statutory limits for nitrogen dioxide are exceeded. Fine particulate concentrations are also of concern, although levels fall below EU thresholds.



Maidstone is taking a proactive approach to dealing with air quality in the borough. The Strategic Plan aspires to a borough that is recognised as clean and well cared for by everyone and which is environmentally attractive and sustainable. Improving air quality is one of the matters which the plan places particular emphasis on.

³² Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. The Maidstone Borough Council Licence No 100019636 , 2018 Scale 1:40,000. Produced by GIS MidKent Services.

MBC has agreed planning guidance identifying how the potential impact on air quality of new development should be identified and a cost for mitigating the impact calculated.

As we embrace growth, new development does not have to be inherently negative for air quality. Whilst a new development at a particular site may generate its own emissions, it may also bring an opportunity to reduce overall emissions in an area over time through the installation of new, cleaner technologies and applying policies that promote sustainability, including improved cycling and walking infrastructure and increased use of public transport.

As part of the evidential work for the Local Plan Review, we will commission air quality modelling which will predict the air quality effects of the preferred development strategy which in turn will help decide the type and location of the specific mitigation measures which will be required. This modelling exercise is directly linked with the transport modelling which the review will also require. Reducing the need to travel and providing for improved public transport and increased walking and cycling are key ways to tackle poor air quality.

This ability to take a comprehensive approach to air quality issues that the Local Plan Review brings was a particular influence on the council's decision made in July 2018 not to progress an early, single subject Air Quality Development Plan Document (i.e. an Air Quality Local Plan) which had been a commitment in the adopted Local Plan.

Actions could include measures to encourage reductions in the individual use of private cars such as car clubs, reduced car parking levels and increased cycle parking, as well as facilitating the use of low emission vehicles such as electric vehicles through the installation of charging points. Research has shown that travel habits develop very quickly in new developments and once people have chosen their travel mode, they tend to stick to it. This means that it is important to ensure that sustainable transport options such as improved bus routes, bike hire, EV charging points and car clubs are available from the outset on a new development.

Design measures can also be incorporated into new developments such as landscaping and the setting back of development to help to reduce people's direct exposure to poor quality air.

The NPPF supports action on this front. It underlines that opportunities to improve or mitigate air quality should be identified, preferably as part of the plan-making process.

TQ28 – How can the Local Plan Review best plan for an overall improvement in air quality in the Maidstone Air Quality Management Area, and manage air quality elsewhere, whilst still achieving the growth that is needed?

The maps below illustrate the key national and local environmental assets and designations which are material to the Local Plan Review and which may impact on future decisions about the selection of sites.

Figure 1 - Nationally-significant environmental assets and designations.

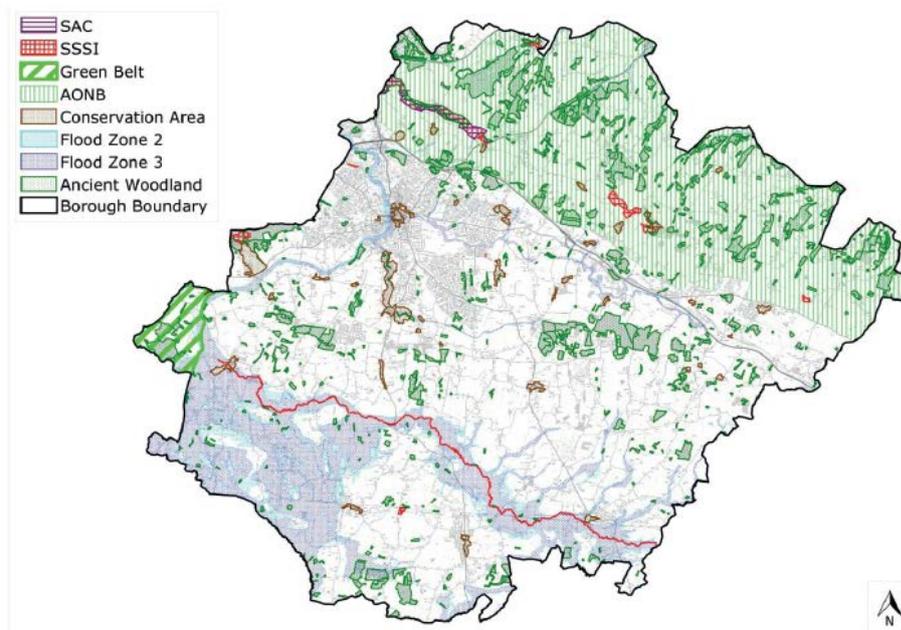
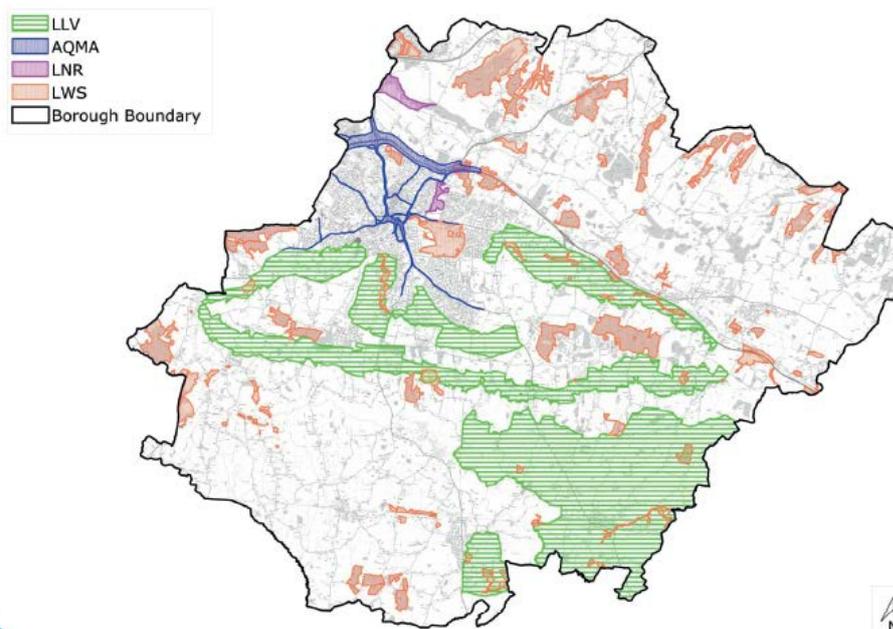


Figure 2 - Locally significant environmental assets and designations.



ISSUE 13 – Addressing climate change

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objectives for this topic are:

- Biodiversity and environmental sustainability is respected

There is scientific consensus that our climate is changing due to the sustained global emission of greenhouse gases. The Climate Change Act (2008) established a long term and legally binding framework for tackling carbon emissions; it includes a target to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050.

Transport is now the largest emitter of carbon in the UK, with the main source being from cars and other road vehicles. Maidstone borough has above average car use³³ and consequentially a higher than average carbon emission per capita than the UK generally.

Despite the ongoing decreases in carbon emissions, it is forecast that there will be impacts on our climate in the form of more extreme weather events, specifically a warmer climate and more severe storm events. In Maidstone this will present challenges for the cooling of properties, particularly in summer, and a need to manage increased flood risk.

Maidstone is taking a proactive approach to addressing climate change and recently resolved to consider a target date of 2030 for the whole borough to become carbon neutral. The Strategic Plan seeks an environmentally attractive and sustainable borough where environmental sustainability is respected. The Local Plan Review can also make a contribution; Government legislation places a statutory duty on councils to include in their Local Plans “policies designed to secure that the development and use of land in the local planning authority’s area contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change”³⁴. The NPPF affirms that the planning system should support our transition to a low carbon future. Broadly the system should act in two ways; to reduce the generation of carbon emissions, and to address the impacts of climate-change through mitigation.

National energy efficiency standards for new buildings are set out through Building Regulations. The setting of more stringent local standards for energy and/or water efficiency must be justified with significant evidence and tested for viability as they could impact on overall development costs. This in turn could impact on overall delivery and other developer contributions, notably affordable housing.

As part of embracing growth the council could help secure an transition to electric vehicle use by requiring charging points to be built into new, and potentially existing, built up areas (subject to viability) . Short-term reductions are likely to be driven by increasing walking,

³³ Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy

³⁴ Section 19(1A) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 .

cycling, shared vehicle use and public transport. Again MBC could work with developers to set out its expectations in this regard.

Renewable energy generation schemes such as solar farms will have benefits for sustainable energy production which will need to be balanced against the costs of installing equipment as well as impacts on matters such as local landscape character and built form. The council has already prepared planning guidance for both domestic and larger scale solar installations.

TQ29 – How can the Local Plan Review best reduce the generation of carbon emissions and mitigate for the effects of climate change whilst still achieving the growth that is needed?

ISSUE 14 – Ensuring a sufficiency of parks and open spaces

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objectives for this topic are:

- Health inequalities are addressed and reduced
- Biodiversity and environmental sustainability is respected

‘Open space’ is an umbrella term; the adopted Local Plan sets targets for quantum, access to, and minimum sizes of five types of open spaces: amenity, play, sports pitches, allotments, and natural/semi-natural green space. Each of these types plays a role in meeting local needs.

The borough will embrace growth and proactive planning is needed to ensure the borough’s land is used effectively. The Strategic Plan seeks to ensure that everyone has access to high quality parks and green spaces. This includes accessible play and sports pitches and the Strategic Plan seeks to provide a vibrant leisure and culture offer to be enjoyed by residents and attractive to visitors.

Opportunities for creating new open spaces and facilities and/or improving the quality of spaces and facilities will also be a key consideration for the Local Plan Review and a clear expectation in discussions with developers.

As part of its proactive approach MBC has recently completed a Sports Facilities Strategy and a Playing Pitch Strategy (2019) which assess the current supply and future demand for sports facilities in the borough. The Sports Facilities Strategy recommends safeguarding existing provision, improving capacity through both new and enhanced facilities and giving consideration to the replacement or refurbishment of Maidstone Leisure Centre. The Playing Pitch Strategy makes recommendations for specific pitch uses, generally by type of sport. It principally seeks existing capacity to be safeguarded and new capacity to be created to meet the growth expected in the population. It makes reference to the benefit that 3G surface pitches can have to increased capacity of pitches in the borough.

MBC also recognises that where new open space and facilities are in place, provision and access should continue through proper maintenance. MBC manages many of the existing parks and play spaces in the borough. Local trusts run by community groups and parish councils also take on the management of local areas. Commitment to ongoing maintenance is an important consideration in the design and development of new and improved open spaces.

The Local Plan Review can also influence the way we calculate open space requirements. Currently the provision of new open space in connection with new homes is calculated based on standards in the adopted Local Plan, taking into account whether there is an overall under- or over-provision of green space in the area. Where the prescribed quantum of new open space can't be incorporated onto a site, financial contributions are taken to be spent on improving existing facilities in the locality or creating new green space elsewhere in the locality. We could potentially refocus this approach to ensure that key local amenity, play, allotment and sports provisions are located on-site, in close proximity to local populations.

The current natural/semi natural requirement is not deliverable on-site in virtually every circumstance and an option is that this be re-cast as a borough-wide target that new development should contribute towards, rather than an on-site requirement.

TQ30 - How can the Local Plan Review best provide for open space in new development?

ISSUE 15 – Ensuring that sufficient provision is made for community infrastructure

The relevant Strategic Plan cross-cutting objectives for this topic are:

- Health inequalities are addressed and reduced
- Deprivation is reduced and social mobility is improved

Community Safety Plan (2019-22) The Safer Maidstone Partnership is collaboration between the police, MBC and KCC and the health, probation and fire services and with the purpose of improving community safety in the borough. The work of the Partnership is guided by the Community Safety Plan which was recently updated. The priority themes for 2019-22 are;

- Protecting our communities against Organised Crime Groups (including modern slavery)
- Reducing the harm caused by Domestic Abuse (including stalking)
- Keeping Children and Young People Safe
- Reducing the impact of Substance Misuse on our community
- Safeguard people whose Mental Health makes them vulnerable to becoming a victim or where it leads to an impact on the wider community

The borough's community centres and church and village halls play an important role, providing venues for community events and activities and support services. This is recognised by the Strategic Plan which encourages a diverse range of community activities.

Embracing growth could be linked to maintaining and improving these meeting places to help sustain a sense of community within a neighbourhood, village or parish. Local shops, cafes and pubs as well as cultural venues and places of worship all help to sustain local communities and make a local area a good one to live and work in. Conversely the unnecessary loss of such facilities is to be avoided.

Well planned places also help engender more informal social contact. Attractive streets and paths that link public spaces and facilities encourage more of us to make journeys on foot, or to walk for pleasure. We will work with developers to plan new developments accordingly.

As well as encouraging activity, such measures can also help to make places feel safer as the presence of other people can help to both deter crime and suppress the fear of crime. The Strategic Plan is clear that people should feel safe and be safe. In addition, the NPPF advocates a proportional approach to public security in the design and planning of new development, applying realism about the nature of possible threats and the number of people that could be affected.

TQ31 – What community facilities do you consider are the most important to a successful new development?

CHAPTER 6 – NEXT STEPS

The preparation of this Local Plan Review is an iterative process. Options will narrow down as we gather more information over the coming months. Specifically we will consider the comments made on this consultation document, continue to prepare background evidence and work with our key partners to help identify and refine policy choices.

In due course we will test the cumulative impacts of the favoured future pattern of development on matters such as air quality, road capacity and local services and then pinpoint what measures can be put in place to overcome any identified limitations. There is a requirement to test the plan for overall viability in accordance with Government guidance.

We intend to produce a ‘preferred approaches’ style consultation document early next year with a full draft Local Plan Review for public consultation to follow and then submit the plan to the Government for Examination. The Local Development Scheme [\(add link\)](#) contains the current timetable in full and this is reproduced below;

- Preferred Approaches consultation (Regulation 18) – February/March 2020
- Pre-submission consultation (Regulation 19) – October/December 2020
- Submission – March 2021
- Examination – July-September 2021
- Adoption – April 2022

TQ32 – Are there any other themes, issues and considerations that you believe we should address as part of this Local Plan Review?

APPENDICES

A - List of consultation questions

B - List of MBLP policies and assessment of need to review (to follow)

APPENDIX B Consultation TQ33 – Have we identified the extent of potential changes to the adopted Local Plan correctly? What alternative or additional ones do you suggest and why?

Appendix A – List of consultation questions

Overarching Questions (7)

OQ1 – What can the Local Plan Review do to make the growth we need ‘good growth’?

OQ2 – What could the Local Plan Review do to help make our town and village centres fit for the future?

OQ3 – How can the Local Plan Review ensure community facilities and services are brought forward in the right place and at the right time to support communities?

OQ4 – What overall benefits would you want to see as a result of growth?

OQ5 - What infrastructure and services, including community services and facilities, do you think are the most important for a successful new development?

OQ6 – How can the Local Plan Review help support a thriving local economy, including the rural economy?

OQ7 – How can the Local Plan Review ensure we have an environmentally attractive and sustainable borough?

Technical questions (33)

TQ1 – What do you think should be the end date for the Local Plan Review? Why?

TQ2 – Have we identified the correct cross boundary issues? Please give reasons for your answer.

TQ3 – Do you agree with our housing land supply calculation at this stage?

TQ4 - How do you think the council can achieve a consistent annual rate of housebuilding throughout the Local Plan Review period?

TQ5 – Have we identified all the possible types of housing sites?

TQ6 – What approaches could we use to identify more small sites suitable for allocation in the Local Plan Review?

TQ7 – What approaches could we use to increase the number of new homes being built on brownfield sites and to make brownfield development more viable and attractive to developers?

TQ8 – What factors should we take into account when considering minimum density standards elsewhere in the borough, beyond the town centre?

TQ9 – Have we identified all the possible types of employment sites?

TQ10 - What approaches could we use to identify sites in and at the edge of the town centre for future shopping and leisure needs?

TQ11 – Do you think there should be changes to the current settlement hierarchy? If yes, what evidence do you have for your answer?

TQ12 - Which is your preferred option for the future pattern of growth (A, B, Bi or C) and why?

TQ13 – For your preferred option, what infrastructure would you want to see brought forward as a priority?

TQ14 – If your favoured option won't achieve the number of new homes needed, at the rate they are needed, what combination of options do you think would be best?

TQ15 – Have we identified the correct areas of focus for future masterplanning? What are the reasons for your answer?

TQ16 - Should the national space standards be incorporated into the Local Plan Review? What are the reasons for your answer?

TQ17 - How can the Local Plan Review best plan for the different types of housing which will be needed?

TQ18 – How can the Local Plan Review best plan for the accommodation needs of Gypsy & Travellers and Travelling Showpeople?

TQ19 – How can the Local Plan Review help ensure that local economic growth benefits everyone?

TQ20 – How can the Local Plan Review help sustain our town and local centres?

TQ21 – How can the Local Plan Review best plan for the new infrastructure that will be needed to support growth?

TQ22 – Have we identified all the types of transport measures? Which measures do you think we should prioritise?

TQ23 – How can the Local Plan Review best integrate health and wellbeing into the planning of new development?

TQ24 – How can the Local Plan Review best manage flood risk whilst still achieving the growth that is needed?

TQ25 – How can the Local Plan Review best plan for the protection of the borough's environmental assets whilst still achieving the growth that is needed?

TQ26 – How can the Local Plan Review best plan for the conservation of the borough’s heritage assets whilst still achieving the growth that is needed?

TQ27 – How can the Local Plan Review best plan for the protection of the borough’s biodiversity whilst still achieving the growth that is needed?

TQ28 – How can the Local Plan Review best plan for an overall improvement in air quality in the Maidstone Air Quality Management Area, and manage air quality elsewhere, whilst still achieving the growth that is needed?

TQ29 – How can the Local Plan Review best reduce the generation of carbon emissions and mitigate for the effects of climate change whilst still achieving the growth that is needed?

TQ30- How can the Local Plan Review best provide for open space in new development?

TQ31 – What community facilities do you consider are the most important to a successful new development?

TQ32 – Are there any other themes, issues and choices that you believe we should address as part of this Local Plan Review?

TQ33 – (Appendix B) Have we identified the extent of potential changes to the adopted Local Plan correctly? What alternative or additional ones do you suggest and why?

Appendix B – Adopted Local Plan Policy-by-Policy Review

The following tables provide an initial assessment of the extent to which policies in the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan may need to be altered as part of the Local Plan Review process. The matters highlighted such as the revisions to the NPPF and changes of circumstances could result in the need to change the policies. The actual extent and nature of the changes will become more apparent as work on the plan progresses.

Strategic Policies

The strategic policies are all likely to change to some degree to reflect the preferred spatial strategy for the distribution of new development as well as NPPF changes and updated evidence.

Policy	Scope/ Trigger for potential change
<p>SS1 – Maidstone Borough Spatial Strategy SP1 – Maidstone Urban Area SP2 – Maidstone Urban Area: North West Strategic Development location SP3 – Maidstone Urban Area: South East Strategic Development Location SP4 – Maidstone Town Centre SP5 – Rural Service Centres SP6 – Harriestsham Rural Service Centre SP7 – Headcorn Rural Service Centre SP8 – Lenham Rural Service Centre SP9 – Marden Rural Service Centre SP10 – Staplehurst Rural Service Centre SP11 – Larger Villages SP12 – Broughton Monchelsea Larger Village SP13 – Coxheath Larger Village SP14 – Eyhorne Street (Hollingbourne) Larger Village SP15 – Sutton Valence Larger Village SP16 – Yalding Larger Village</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Plan Review will need to specify the spatial distribution for the additional development needed. Factors which will influence the selection of the spatial strategy include the up to date evidence base (in particular the Strategic Land Availability Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment), national policy and consultation feedback. • An updated suite of policies like these will be required to show where development is broadly anticipated to go over the extended plan period. • For Policies SP1-SP16, the content of each policy will depend upon the amount and locations of development expected to be delivered in each area. • Where development has already happened in any of these locations, and if there are no further development is proposed, an area could be removed from this section. Conversely any new development locations would require additional policy coverage. • The settlement hierarchy will be reviewed as part of the Local Plan Review. • Settlement boundaries will be updated where necessary. • References to sites which are now complete can be removed from Policies SP1-16. • Any new infrastructure requirements arising from planned growth will need to be identified.
<p>SP17 - Countryside</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy follows national policy for AONB and Green Belt and should be retained. • LLV is a locally set landscape protection policy and is expected to be retained. • NPPF changes give an increasing role for small-medium housing sites (<1ha) and this could include those which will help to meet rural housing needs. • The Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy identifies linking

Policy	Scope/ Trigger for potential change
	assets in the countryside with urban areas will be a beneficial way of improving access to nature.
SP18 – Historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SP18 offers a generally positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment required by NPPF
SP19 – Housing Mix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPPF paragraph 61 requires LPAs to consider the needs of different groups in the community when planning for a mix of housing (including families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their home and those wishing to custom/self-build) and also size/ type/ tenure/ range. Policy SP19 or its successor/s will need to be considerably more detailed. An updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) will identify this increased range of needs.
SP20 – Affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPPF contains a widened definition of affordable housing which needs to be incorporated into the LPR. An updated SHMA will identify this increased range of needs. SHMA evidence will reveal if there is a need for rural or entry-level exceptions sites. Policy needs to confirm how it applies (or not) to Use class C2 (nursing/care homes and some forms of extra-care housing) % requirements and tenure breakdown will need to be revisited based on updated SHMA and viability evidence. Local Plan Inspector’s Report identified a reduction in affordable housing supply towards the end of the plan period which should be addressed through the Local Plan Review. NPPF requires all major developments to provide at least 10% of homes to be available for affordable home ownership.
SP21 – Economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Plan Review’s approach to employment land provision and supporting the local economy more widely will be revisited using the updated understanding of needs in the forthcoming Economic Needs Study.
SP22 – Retention of employment sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the sites, and the justification for their protection for employment purposes, will be part of the Economic Needs Study. The town centre office market will be reviewed through the same work.
SP23 – Sustainable transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full review of Policy SP23 will be required in the light of the updated transport evidence and spatial strategy. Transport modelling of a future preferred spatial strategy will be undertaken. Latest position and implications of major transport projects in and around the borough will need to be considered, as will an update of progress with the delivery of MBLP-identified transport improvements.
H1 – Housing site allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress with the current allocated sites and the future selection of new sites will inform the changes to this policy.

Policy	Scope/ Trigger for potential change
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPPF requirement for 10% of housing requirement to be on small-medium sized sites (<1Ha) will need to be addressed.
H2 – Broad locations for housing growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress with 3 x broad locations will be assessed; the Local Plan Review may include specific site allocations in one or more of the broad locations. Review of potential housing sites and the future preferred spatial strategy will inform this Policy; it may be appropriate to identify further broad locations.
OS1 – Open space allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress with the current allocated sites and the future selection of new sites will inform the changes to this policy. The policy approach to securing new open space in connection with development will be reviewed, taking account of experience delivering this policy and evidence of open space requirements.
GT1 – Gypsy and Traveller site allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress with the current allocated sites and the future selection of new sites will inform the changes to this policy. The forthcoming Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment will provide evidence to update pitch requirements.
RX1 – Retail and mixed use allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress with the current allocated sites and the future selection of new sites will inform the changes to this policy. The forthcoming Economic Needs Assessment, which covers retail and leisure, will provide evidence of needs.
EMP1 – Employment Allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress with the current allocated sites and the future selection of new sites will inform the changes to this policy. The forthcoming Economic Needs Assessment will provide evidence of needs.
ID1 – Infrastructure Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the policy, and the associated Infrastructure Delivery Plan, to reflect the latest position on infrastructure delivery and the additional infrastructure requirements associated with the future preferred spatial strategy.

Site Allocations – Housing Sites

Policy H(x)	Site name/address	Update
1	Bridge Nursery London Rd Maidstone	Complete, remove from Plan
2	East of Hermitage Lane	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
3	West of Hermitage Lane	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
4	Oakapple Lane Barming	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain

5	Langley Park Sutton Road B. Monchelsea	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
6	North of Sutton Road Otham	Complete, remove from Plan
7	North of Bicknor Wood Gore Court Road Otham	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
8	West of Church Road Otham	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
9	Bicknor Farm Sutton Road Otham	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
10	South of Sutton Road, Langley	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
11	Springfield, Royal Engineers Road and Mill Lane Maidstone	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
12	180-188 Union Street Maidstone	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
13	Medway Street Maidstone	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
14	American Golf, Tonbridge Rd Maidstone	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
15	6 Tonbridge Road, Maidstone	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
16	Slencrest House 3 Tonbridge Road Maidstone	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
17	Laguna Hart Street Maidstone	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
18	Dunning Hall (Fremlin Walk) Week Street Maidstone	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
19	18-21 Foster Street Maidstone	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
20	Wren's Cross Upper Stone Street Maidstone	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
21	Barty Farm, Roundwell, Thurnham	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
22	Whitmore Street, Maidstone	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
23	Bell Farm, North Street, Barming	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
24	Postley Road, Tovil	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
25	Bridge Industrial Centre Wharf Road Tovil	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain

26	Tovil Working Men's Club Tovil Hill	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
27	Kent Police HQ, Sutton Road, Maidstone	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
28	Kent Police training school, Sutton Road, Maidstone	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
29	West of Eclipse, Sittingbourne Road	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
30	Bearsted Station, Goods Yard, Bearsted	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
31	Cross Keys Bearsted	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
32	South of Ashford Road Harrietsham	Complete, remove from Plan
33	Mayfield Nursery Ashford Road Harrietsham	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
34	Church Road Harrietsham	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
35	Old School Nursery Station Rd Headcorn	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
36	Ulcombe Road and Mill Bank Headcorn	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
37	Grigg Lane and Lenham Rd Headcorn	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
38	(Gibbs Hill Farm) South of Grigg Lane Headcorn	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
39	Knaves Acre Headcorn	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
40	Land at Lenham Road Headcorn	Complete, remove from Plan
41	Tanyard Farm, Old Ashford Rd Lenham	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
42	Glebe Gardens Lenham	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
43	Howland Road Marden	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
44	Stanley Farm Plain Road Marden	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
45	The Parsonage Goudhurst Rd Marden	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
46	Marden Cricket & Hockey Club Marden	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain

47	Land South of The Parsonage Goudhurst Road Marden	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
48	Hen & Duckhurst Farm Marden Road Staplehurst	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
49	Fishers Farm Fishers Road Staplehurst	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
50	Land to the North of Henhurst Farm, Pinnock Lane, Staplehurst	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
51	Hubbards Lane and Haste Hill Rd B. Monchelsea	Complete, remove from Plan
52	Land at Boughton Mount Boughton Lane	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
53	Land at Church St./Heath Rd B. Monchelsea	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
54	Lyewood Farm, Green Lane. B. Monchelsea	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
55	Hubbards Lane Loose	Complete, remove from Plan
56	Linden Farm Stockett Lane Coxheath	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
57	Heathfield Heath Rd Coxheath	Complete, remove from Plan
58	Forstal Lane Coxheath	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
59	Land North Of, Heath Road (Older's Field), Coxheath, Maidstone, Kent, ME17 4TB	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
60	Clockhouse Farm Heath Road Coxheath	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
61	East of Eyhorne Street Hollingbourne	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
62	W of Eyhorne Street Hollingbourne	Complete, remove from Plan
63	Land adj The Windmill Eyhorne Street Hollingbourne	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
64	Brandy's Bay South Lane Sutton Valence	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
65	Vicarage Road Yalding	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
66	Bentletts Yard Claygate Road Laddingford	Planning permission granted. – Reconfirm deliverability and retain

Site Allocations – Gypsies, Mixed Use and Employment

Policy & Site name/address	Update
Policy GT1(1) The Kays, Heath Road, Linton	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
Policy GT1(2) Greenacres (Plot 5), Church Lane, Boughton Monchelsea	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
Policy GT1(3) Chart View, Chart Hill Road, Chart Sutton	Complete – remove from Plan
Policy GT1(4) Land at Blossom Lodge, Stockett Lane, Coxheath	Partially Implemented – Monitor
Policy GT1(5) Little Boarden, Boarden Lane, Headcorn	Complete – remove from Plan
Policy GT1(6) Rear of Granada, Lenham Road, Headcorn	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
Policy GT1(7) The Chances, Lughorse Lane, Hunton	Complete – remove from Plan
Policy GT1(8) Kilwood Farm, Old Ham Lane, Lenham	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
Policy GT1(9) 1 Oak Lodge, Tilden Lane, Marden	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
Policy GT1(10) The Paddocks, George Street, Staplehurst	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
Policy GT1(11) Bluebell Farm, George Street, Staplehurst	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
Policy GT1(12) Cherry Tree Farm, West Wood Road, Stockbury	Partially Implemented – Monitor
Policy GT1(13) Flips Hole, South Street Roadm Stockbury	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
Policy GT1(14) The Ash, Yelsted Road, Stockbury	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
Policy GT1(15) Hawthorn Farm, Pye Corner, Ulcombe	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
Policy GT1(16) Neverend Lodge, Pye Corner, Ulcombe	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
Policy RMX1(1) Newnham Park, Bearsted Road, Maidstone	Partially Implemented – Monitor
Policy RMX1(2) Maidstone East and former Royal Mail sorting office, Sandling Road, Maidstone	Not implemented. Review policy through the Local Plan Review process.
Policy RMX1(3) King Street car park and former AMF Bowling Site, Maidstone	Partially completed, amend Plan.
Policy RMX1(4) Former Syngenta Works, Hampstead Lane, Yalding	Not implemented. Review policy through the Local Plan Review process.
Policy RMX1 (5) Powerhub building and Baltic Wharf, St Peter's Street Maidstone	Not implemented. Review policy through the Local Plan Review process.
Policy RMX1(6) Mote Road, Maidstone	Not implemented. Review policy through the Local Plan Review process.
Policy EMP1(1) West of Barradale Farm, Maidstone Road, Headcorn	Partially completed, amend Plan.
Policy EMP1(2) South of Claygate, Pattenden Lane, Marden	Not implemented – Reconfirm deliverability and retain
Policy EMP1(3) West of Wheelbarrow Industrial Estate, Pattenden Lane, Marden	Partially completed, amend Plan.
Policy EMP1(4) Woodcut Farm, Ashford Road, Bearsted	Outline permission approved, retain in Plan.

Development Management Policies

Each development management policy tends to deal with a discrete subject area. This means that the extent of change needed will vary from policy to policy. To signal the scale of the change which may be necessary, based on our initial assessment, we have used a RAG rating, shown below.

Key

	Replacement/removal likely
	Significant change likely
	Minor/no change likely

Policy	Scope/Trigger for potential change	
DM1 – Principles of good design		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified.
DM2 – Sustainable Design		Policy requires review in the context of any subsequent changes to BREEAM and Building Regulation standards. We could chose to rely solely on Building Regulations and omit the policy altogether. Alternatively the policy could require standards above existing Building Regulations but this would need to be a) justified and b) viable.
DM3 – Natural Environment		Policy is lengthy and wide-ranging and includes content which could be considered as ‘strategic’, pointing to the potential for some of the content to migrate into an earlier chapter. For ease of use it could be beneficial to separate the remaining policy content into more specialised DM policies.
DM4 – Development affecting designated and non-designated heritage assets		Principle of policy unlikely to change but it could be amended to make reference to the NPPF’s requirement for planning authorities to maintain or have access to a historical environment record.
DM5 – Development on brownfield land		This policy is partially repetitive of other policies in the Plan and it may be possible to simplify although setting out the policy approach for brownfield development in the countryside is likely to continue to be needed.
DM6 – Air Quality		MBC is committed to updating and strengthening its approach to air quality to reflect the significance of the issue locally, the AQMA and latest local and national guidance.
DM7 – Non-conforming uses		This policy is repetitive of other policies in the Plan and could be adapted to include the “agent of change” principle included in the latest version of the NPPF.
DM8 – External lighting		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified.
DM9 – Residential extensions, conversions and redevelopment within the built up area		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified.
DM10 – Residential premises above shops and businesses		Policy may need to be amended to reflect changes to permitted development rights. Part 2 of this Policy may not be necessary, depending on the need to promote increases in town centre retail and/ or employment space.
DM11 – Residential		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified.

Policy	Scope/Trigger for potential change	
garden land		
DM12 – Density of housing development		NPPF requires minimum densities. The policy is likely to need be reviewed to include minimum densities for different locations/types of sites based on the future preferred spatial approach.
DM13 – Affordable local needs housing on rural exception sites		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified.
DM14 – Nursing and care homes		Emerging SHMA evidence will identify the local need for this use and this may inform a change to this policy.
DM15 – Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople accommodation		This policy will be reviewed in the light of changed national guidance and to take account of relevant findings in the forthcoming Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
DM16 – Town centre uses		This policy largely reflects the approach in the NPPF. Details may need to be amended in light of evidence coming forward in the Economic Needs Assessment.
DM17 – District centres, local centres and local shops and facilities		Details may need to be amended in light of evidence coming forward in the Economic Needs Assessment. The policy allocates town/ local centres and this could be moved to the allocations section of the reviewed Plan
DM18 – Signage and shop fronts		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified
DM19 – Open space and recreation		This policy may need to be revised to reflect updated open space requirements and to improve the delivery of open spaces across the borough.
DM20 – Community facilities		This policy may need to be revised based on an updated understanding of community infrastructure needs.
DM21 - Assessing the transport impacts of development		The principles of this policy are unlikely to change but detailed content may need to be reviewed, particularly as the transport impacts of a new spatial distribution of development are likely to be important in determining the preferred spatial strategy.
Policy DM22 - Park and ride sites		The Park & Ride service is being delivered from the two named sites on a commercial basis and this policy may need to be updated in response.
Policy DM23 - Parking standards		KCC is updating its parking standards. Changes to this policy (including Appendix B) are likely to be needed.
Policy DM24 - Renewable and low carbon energy schemes		Policy may need to change to focus more on how renewable and low carbon energy can be produced in the borough.
Policy DM25 - Electronic communications		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified
Policy DM26 - Mooring facilities and boat yards		Emerging SHMA evidence will identify the local need for residential moorings and this could inform changes to this policy.
Policy DM27 - Primary shopping frontages		NPPF no longer requires retail frontages to be identified.
Policy DM28 - Secondary shopping frontages		NPPF no longer requires retail frontages to be identified.
Policy DM29 - Leisure and community uses in the town centre		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified.
Policy DM30 - Design		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified

Policy	Scope/Trigger for potential change	
principles in the countryside		
Policy DM31 - Conversion of rural buildings		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified
Policy DM32 - Rebuilding and extending dwellings in the countryside		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified
Policy DM33 - Change of use of agricultural land to domestic garden land		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified
Policy DM34 - Accommodation for agricultural and forestry workers		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified
Policy DM35 - Live-work units		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified
Policy DM36 - New agricultural buildings and structures		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified
Policy DM37 - Expansion of existing businesses in rural areas		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified
Policy DM38 - Holiday caravan and camp sites		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified
Policy DM39 - Caravan storage in the countryside		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified
Policy DM40 - Retail units in the countryside		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified
Policy DM41 - Equestrian development		Principle of policy unlikely to change, minor amendments may be justified

Review of the Local Plan

Policy	Scope/Trigger for potential change	
Policy LPR1 – Review of the Local Plan		Completion of the Local Plan Review will achieve this policy. Omit.

W:\LOCAL PLAN REVIEW\Scoping of Matters Reg 18(a)\SPI 25june19 documents\Appendix 1 - Scoping Themes & Issues main document.docx

This document provides a bitesize introduction to the Local Plan Review. If you want more detail, please refer to the 'Scoping, Themes & Issues' document which provides more background on the key issues and the detailed consultation questions.

Maidstone Borough Council's (MBC's) work impacts on the lives of people living and working in the borough. From collecting waste from homes and businesses and keeping our public spaces clean and tidy to finding safe places to live for those in greatest need, our activities are diverse.

Our work is reflected in MBC's brand-new Strategic Plan which highlights our responsibility "to make every effort to deliver its services and produce cohesive plans for – economic, environmental, social and cultural prosperity. We have stewardship for our future and it is important that we get it right."

We are also a 'local planning authority.' This means the council makes the decisions on planning applications and is responsible for preparing a 'Local Plan' for the borough.

What is a Local Plan and what does it do? A Local Plan guides the way new development will happen, including on planning applications. It explains what supporting infrastructure such as roads, schools and health centres will be needed, and it also guides the quality of development. Like the Strategic Plan, the Local Plan looks to the future. The Local Plan also helps to protect what is most valued in the borough – landscapes, historic buildings, wildlife habitats.

There is already a Local Plan in place: the Maidstone Borough Local Plan was 'adopted' (finished) in October 2017 and it looks ahead up to 2031.

What is the Maidstone Local Plan Review?

Whilst it might seem early to start a review of the adopted Local Plan, there are some key reasons why it needs to be done:

1. The new Strategic Plan sets the aspiration for the borough through to 2045 and the Local Plan Review will have an important role in achieving it.
2. The independent Planning Inspector who examined Maidstone's adopted Local Plan decided that an early review of the plan would be needed
3. The Government requirements for Local Plans have been updated, including requiring plans to be reviewed every five years.

What are some other considerations for the Local Plan Review? The Local Plan Review will look ahead, as a minimum to 2037 and may look even further ahead. We will also need to work effectively with neighbouring councils and KCC on key, 'strategic' matters.

Neighbourhood planning is very active in Maidstone and we will take into account the policies of 'made' neighbourhood plans.

What is the purpose of this stage? This document is the first stage of public consultation on the Local Plan Review; its purpose is to set out – and get views on – the key issues that the Local Plan Review will need to address.

How can you respond to this consultation? We are seeking your views. Questions have been included throughout the technical document which you can read here ([add link](#)). You do not need to answer all the consultation questions, just focus on the ones of most interest to you.

We are particularly interested in your views on how we can best embrace growth so we have also produced a series of overarching questions. These are set out below:

- OO1 – What can the Local Plan Review do to make the growth we need 'good growth'?
- OO2 – What could the Local Plan Review do to help make our town and village centres fit for the future?
- OO3 – How can the Local Plan Review ensure community facilities and services are brought forward in the right place and at the right time to support communities?
- OO4 – What overall benefits would you want to see as a result of growth?
- OO5 - What infrastructure and services, including community services and facilities, do you think are the most important for a successful new development?
- OO6 – How can the Local Plan Review help support a thriving local economy, including the rural economy?
- OO7 – How can the Local Plan Review ensure we have an environmentally attractive and sustainable borough?

Please submit your responses online here ([add link](#)) or use the dedicated response form available here ([add link](#)).

The deadline for your response is **5pm on Friday 27th September 2019**.

Next steps: The Local Plan Review is at an early stage and subsequent stages will become more detailed. Options and choices will narrow down and become more specific; the next consultation stage will be on a 'preferred approaches' style document.

Maidstone Strategic Plan: MBC deliberately prepared its Strategic Plan before starting the Local Plan Review and the Local Plan Review will have an important role in delivering it. As

the Strategic Plan states: “the choices we make today will impact on the state of our environment and the quality of life enjoyed by our residents decades from now.”

The Strategic Plan has a number of priorities which emphasise MBC’s role in directing and delivering positive growth with its partners.



Each of the priorities in the Strategic Plan has a specific reference colour and this same colour coding has been used in this document and in the technical document to show how the Strategic Plan and the Local Plan Review inter-relate.

A Strategy for Growth

Housing Growth

The Strategic Plan is clear that embracing growth includes ensuring that housing needs are met. So, how many homes must we plan for? The Government requires us to have **1,236 homes** built in the borough each year. This working figure may change and will apply from 2022 onwards.

Because we have an adopted Local Plan, we will only need to ‘top up’ our housing supply from 883 dwelling/year to approximately 1,236 dwellings/year for the period between 2022 to 2031. However, we will need achieve the full 1,236 figure from 2031 onwards and we will need to identify sufficient new sites and locations to achieve this. We will need to consider various locations and types of sites in the borough.

Economic Growth

As with housing growth, the adopted Local Plan provides a firm foundation for meeting our future employment needs for the period up to 2031. To ensure the local economy grows successfully, we will develop a greater understanding of different areas of the economy and also consider the different types of employment locations.

We will also consider the connections between employment and housing sites. We are clear that sufficient infrastructure should be in place - or planned - to meet the future demands of the economy.

Retail & Leisure Growth

The Local Plan Review is an opportunity to embrace retail and leisure growth. The country's retail market is in a highly dynamic phase and we will undertake work to understand the implications of these changes locally.

We will also investigate which future sites can help the town centre's retail and leisure offer. As with employment and housing, the adopted Local Plan provides a firm footing.

Locating Growth - Initial Options

A key issue for the Local Plan Review is deciding where new development will be located. There are a number of things to consider, including making sure infrastructure is planned to match the growth and compliance with Government requirements.

As part of our pro-active approach to embracing growth, we have identified some initial options. These options are presented in no order of importance and each option on its own may not be sufficient to meet the full housing need.

- A. **Maidstone focus:** The ways which this could be achieved include building at higher densities in the town, renewing existing housing areas, reusing commercial and other brownfield sites in the town and allocating greenfield sites at the edge of Maidstone.
- B. **Dispersal:** This approach would spread growth and its benefits into key locations across the borough. It is worth noting that the adopted Local Plan's approach has seen the majority of growth directed towards Maidstone (67%) with a lesser amount (24%) to the borough's main villages and the balance (8%) on sites in the countryside.
- C. **New settlements and major extensions to existing settlements ('garden suburbs'):** Maidstone is committed to embracing all forms of future growth. This option would place emphasis on new settlements and major extensions to achieve the right types of growth for the borough.

Quality of New Development

The quality of future development is crucial to us. We will seek to take a lead role in the master-planning of, and investment in future growth. Quality in this respect can be judged in various ways, including:

- a neighbourhood's character and heritage;
- the creation of a mixture of communities;
- the provision of a mixture of facilities and infrastructure including transport;
- the protection of significant biodiversity and landscape assets;

Other Key Strategic Issues

We have identified fifteen other key issues for the Local Plan Review:

ISSUE 1 - Meeting the borough's local housing need and helping to meet needs across the relevant Housing Market Area/s

ISSUE 2 - Ensuring a sufficient supply of affordable housing

Affordable housing is provided at a reduced cost to help those who cannot afford to buy or rent a property at market rates. On average, house prices in the borough are more than 11 times the annual income of the borough's workers.

As well as affordable housing, we will also gather evidence and plan for homes needed by specific groups including housing for the elderly, custom and self-build housing and travellers' accommodation.

ISSUE 3 - Ensuring sufficient land and floorspace is provided to support economic growth in the borough and to contribute to the needs for the wider economic market area

Home to more than 7,295 businesses, Maidstone borough is asserting itself as the powerhouse for growth and innovation – the heart of Kent. We recognise that changes in employment bring changes to the type of workplace required, the location and amount of floorspace needed, and supporting infrastructure.

The MBC Strategic Plan takes a positive approach to ensuring key employment sites are delivered with the council intervening where necessary in the market. Ensuring that the borough's established business parks, estates and sites is suitably protected will also be a crucial consideration for the Local Plan Review.

ISSUE 4 - Ensuring that Maidstone has a vital and vibrant town centre which maintains its role in the sub-region and that a network of local centres continue to serve local retail and service needs.

The Strategic Plan includes an outcome that ‘our town and village centres are fit for the future.’ Given the changes in retailing, Maidstone Town Centre is likely to need to become home to a greater diversity of uses – shopping, leisure, food and drink, cultural and community uses, workplaces and homes.

We are actively involved in managing the Town Centre and improving its environment, working with partners to enhance its offer.

The Local Plan Review will also consider the borough’s comprehensive network of district and local centres which complement the County Town and have an important future role in serving the day-to-day needs.

Infrastructure – an introduction

MBC’s Strategic Plan makes it clear that as part of embracing growth we will enable infrastructure matching the demands of growth. Most infrastructure is not the direct responsibility of the Council and we will work proactively with partners to bring forward the new infrastructure which is needed. We will also make clear our expectations of developers.

ISSUE 5 – Ensuring sufficient transport infrastructure is provided to serve the new development that is planned

We recognise that better transport is a high priority in the borough. The proactive stance which the Council intends to take is supported by Government guidance which underlines that development should be planned in a way which limits people’s overall need to travel and gives people a genuine choice of transport.

Our partners include Highways England, KCC and bus and rail operators. Transport improvements could include finding engineering solutions to improve ‘pinch point’ junctions; facilitating and promoting walking and cycling; smart city’ technology; and the use of public transport.

We are also working positively with KCC as it explores the potential for a Leeds-Langley Relief Road.

ISSUE 6 – Ensuring sufficient utilities infrastructure is provided to serve the new development that is planned

Utility providers - water, electricity, gas and telecommunications companies - play a key role in helping support growth and MBC’s Strategic Plan also seeks to ensure that all services, including broadband, are in place at the right time to support communities.

As part of the Local Plan Review, we will continue to collaborate with these providers to confirm what improvements will be needed.

ISSUE 7 – Ensuring sufficient provision is made for health and education

The Local Plan Review will play an important role in terms of good health. This may include providing recreational and sports facilities as well as new health services. We work with health service providers such as the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group to get infrastructure planned, funded and delivered.

KCC is responsible for ensuring that every child in the borough has a school place at primary and secondary level. We continue to work with KCC to ensure that a sufficient choice of school places is available to meet future growth.

Again, KCC is responsible for the provision of public libraries. Throughout the Local Plan Review process, MBC will engage with KCC to ensure that access to library services is well-integrated into planned development.

ISSUE 8 - Managing the risk of flooding from all sources.

Flooding and flood risk are key issues for new development in parts of our borough. The Environment Agency will be updating their flood modelling later in 2019. Working with the agency, we will use the information to locate future growth, taking account of the vulnerability of the proposed use and the flood risk.

ISSUE 9 – Ensuring that the borough’s environmental assets such as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Landscapes of Local Value, the countryside and Green Belt are suitably protected

A key issue for the Local Plan Review will be how best to embrace growth in a way which respects the borough’s important landscapes and countryside. Protecting key national designations such as the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be crucial. Landscapes of Local Value is a local landscape designation that will require special consideration when new development is planned.

The Plan will also recognise that some forms of development will support the rural economy, including tourism, leisure and culture.

ISSUE 10 – Ensuring that the borough’s historic assets are conserved and managed

Maidstone borough benefits from a rich heritage, much of which has been formally recognised by listing or scheduling and through the designation of conservation areas.

The Local Plan Review will set a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, recognising that heritage is irreplaceable.

ISSUE 11 – Ensuring that the borough’s biodiversity and wildlife habitats are suitably protected and managed

The Local Plan Review can play a key role in helping ecology by creating new open spaces and/or improving the quality of existing areas. It will also seek to respect the various important nature conservation designations in the borough including the North Downs Woodland Special Area of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves and designated ancient woodland.

ISSUE 12 – Contributing to an overall improvement in air quality, in particular in the Maidstone Air Quality Management Area.

New development does not have to be inherently negative for air quality, including for the Maidstone Air Quality Management Area. MBC is taking a proactive approach to dealing with air quality. We have already put planning guidance in place, so developers know how to measure and mitigate the air quality impacts of their developments.

As part of the work for the Local Plan Review, we will commission specialist modelling which will predict the air quality effects of future growth. Actions we could institute include measures to encourage a reduction private car use and design measures in new development such as landscaping.

ISSUE 13 – Addressing climate change

There is scientific consensus that our climate is changing due to the sustained emission of greenhouse gases and transport is now the largest emitter of carbon in the UK.

The Local Plan Review can help, for example by requiring electric vehicle charging points to be incorporated into new development, increasing walking, cycling, shared vehicle use and improving public transport. Renewable energy generation schemes such as solar farms may also play a part.

ISSUE 14 – Ensuring a sufficiency of parks and open spaces

MBC's Strategic Plan seeks to ensure that everyone has access to high quality parks and green spaces and the Local Plan Review can help, including through the recently completed Sports Facilities Strategy and a Playing Pitch Strategy. These strategies assess the current supply and future demand for sports facilities in the borough.

The Local Plan Review can also influence the way we calculate future open space that is required with new housing developments. We could investigate whether the current approach is the most effective.

ISSUE 15 – Ensuring that sufficient provision is made for community infrastructure

The borough's community centres, churches and village halls play an important role as venues for community events and activities. Embracing growth is a way we can help maintain and improve these meeting places to sustain a sense of community within a

neighbourhood, village or parish. Conversely the unnecessary loss of such facilities should be avoided.

Well planned places can help bring about more informal social contact. They can help to make places feel safer as the presence of other people both deters crime and suppresses the fear of crime.

LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

SCOPING THEMES & ISSUES
JULY 2019



LOCAL PLAN SUMMARY

This document provides a bitesize introduction to the Local Plan Review. If you want more detail, please refer to the 'Scoping – Themes, Issues and Initial Choices' document which provides more background on the key issues and the detailed consultation questions.

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What is the Maidstone Local Plan Review?

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Other considerations for the Local Plan Review

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What is the purpose of this stage?

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How you can respond to this consultation

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As the council is particularly interested in your views as to how we can best embrace growth, we have produced a series of overarching questions. These are set out below.

- Q** What can the Local Plan Review do to make the growth 'good growth'?
- Q** What could the Local Plan Review do to help make our town and village centres fit for the future?
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- Q** How can the Local Plan Review help support a thriving local economy, including the rural economy?
- Q** How can the Local Plan Review ensure we have an environmentally attractive and sustainable borough?

Please submit your comments online here [\[add link\]](#) or use the dedicated response form.

The deadline for your response is xxxx date.





Housing

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A STRATEGY FOR THE COMMUNITY



Housing

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Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

25th June 2019

Loose Neighbourhood Plan

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Anna Houghton, Planning Officer – Strategic Planning
Classification	Public
Wards affected	South, Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton, Coxheath and Hunton, and Loose

Executive Summary

The Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan was examined by an independent Examiner, who recommended that, subject to modifications, the Neighbourhood Plan proceed to referendum (Background Document 1). Under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), the planning authority is required to make a decision on what action to take in response to the examiner’s recommendation. Therefore, this report is required to approve the Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan for referendum (Appendix 1). This is the final stage of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process before, following a successful referendum, the Plan is made (adopted) and forms part of the Development Plan.

This report makes the following recommendations to Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

That:

1. The modifications to the Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan as set out in the Examiner’s report be agreed.
2. The minor modifications agreed with Loose Parish Council, as set out in paragraph 1.14 of this report, be agreed.
3. The Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan proceeds to referendum.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning and Infrastructure	25 June 2019

Loose Neighbourhood Plan

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Neighbourhood Planning Protocol was approved by the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 10 July 2018 (Background Document 2). The protocol sets out the various tasks to be undertaken at each neighbourhood plan making stage, identifies who is responsible for completing the tasks, and delegates authority to the Head of Planning and Development for decision making at certain regulatory stages. For the most part, decision making responsibilities set out in the protocol align with the Council's Constitution. However, the Constitution gives the Head of Planning and Development delegated authority to approve the Council's response to a Regulation 16 consultation on a neighbourhood plan, and to make the decision to move (or otherwise) a neighbourhood plan to referendum (Regulation 17A). In both cases the protocol seeks a Committee decision. The Head of Planning and Development has considered the agreed protocol in the context of the Constitution, and he elected not to use his delegated authority at Regulations 16/17A because it is important that the Committee the opportunity to have input into a document that becomes part of the Maidstone Development Plan.
- 1.2 Following designation as a Neighbourhood Plan Area in 2013, Loose Parish Council have prepared a neighbourhood plan. There are various stages in the neighbourhood planning process as outlined by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Neighbourhood plans are subject to two rounds of mandatory public consultation, independent examination, and local referendum before being 'made' (adopted) by the local authority.
- 1.3 The Loose Neighbourhood Plan was subject to public consultation on the pre-submission version (Regulation 14) in 2016. Following the consultation and consideration of submitted representations, including a representation from the Council, the Neighbourhood Plan was amended before submission in July 2018. The Neighbourhood Plan was subject to further consultation on the submission version (Regulation 16) from 2nd November 2018 to 14th December 2018.
- 1.4 A report was presented to Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee in December 2018 to agree the Council's response to the Submission Regulation 16 Consultation. The response was split into two parts, firstly considering the Council's role as the local planning authority and secondly as a landowner. As the local planning authority, the Council supported the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 1.5 The submission version Neighbourhood Plan designated areas of land as Local Green Space (LGS). Local Green Space designation within a neighbourhood plan allows communities to protect green space of importance. The designation of LGS must meet the following NPPF criteria:
- a. "In reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
 - b. Demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
 - c. Local in character and is not an extensive track of land."
- 1.6 Policies for managing developments within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts (NPPF, paragraph 101). Among the designated LGS was Council owned land known as Field to the rear of Herts Crescent and McAlpine Close (policy LP5). As a landowner, the Council objected to the designation of the site in such a way. It was considered that the designation was too inflexible, with the designation of the land as LGS preventing the land from being used for the benefit of the whole Borough's residents.
- 1.7 The Neighbourhood Plan has met the prescribed requirements of Regulation 14, Regulation 15 and Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The Loose Neighbourhood Plan has now reached the referendum stage, following examination by an independent examiner in March 2019. Mr Derek Stebbing was appointed by the Borough Council, with the agreement of the Parish Council, to undertake the examination of the Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan. On 25th March 2019, the Borough Council received the examiner's report in which he recommended that, subject to modifications, the Neighbourhood Plan proceed to referendum (Background Document 1).

Examination

- 1.8 When examining the Neighbourhood Plan the Examiner's role is to determine:
- Whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions;
 - Whether the Plan complies with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended);
 - Whether the Plan complies with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

1.9 The role of the local authority under Regulation 24A¹ is to decide what action to take in response to each recommendation made by the Examiner's report. Regulation 25² requires that the local authority must publish their decision on what action they are to take in relation to the Examiner's recommendations along with a copy of his report. This includes any modifications it believes should be made to the Neighbourhood Plan which may or may not have been recommended by the Examiner.

1.10 To proceed to referendum, a local planning authority must be satisfied that a neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions outlined in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Planning Act (1990). The basic conditions are met if:

- The neighbourhood plan has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority;
- The making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, EU obligations; and
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plans.
- Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017³.

1.11 The Loose Neighbourhood Plan has been assessed against the basic conditions, and it is considered that they have been met.

Proposed Modifications and Conclusions

1.12 The Examiner considered that, subject to modifications, the Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum. In making his recommendations, the Examiner had given consideration to the NPPF; PPG; the consultation statement; the basic conditions statement; the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report; and representations made.

¹ The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

² The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

³ This revised Basic Condition came into force on 28 December 2018 through the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018.

1.13 The Examiner has proposed 14 modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure the Plan meets the Basic Conditions which are outlined in the Examiner's report (Background Document 1). In summary the modifications do not alter the direction of the Neighbourhood Plan, and provide clarity, ensure policies and text are compliant with relevant legislation, the Maidstone Borough Local Plan and the NPPF, and provide factual amendments. It is worth noting that proposed modification PM10 requires the removal of Field to the rear of Herts Crescent and McAlpine Close from Policy LP5. The modifications have been incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan which is attached at Appendix 1 and will be subject to referendum.

1.14 A number of additional minor factual updates that do not affect the policies of the plan have been agreed with the Parish Council. These have also been incorporated into the plan attached at Appendix 1. The table below lists the minor modifications.

Page No	Paragraph /Policy	Change	Origin of change
6	1.1	Remove "This Submission version" to read "The Loose Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031 has been prepared..."	Parish Council change
7	1.7	Replace "is being" with "was" to read "In Loose, the preparation of the neighbourhood plan was led by a steering group..."	Parish Council change
7	1.8	Amended to read "There was an ongoing dialogue between Loose Parish Council and Maidstone Borough Council during the preparation phase to ensure the neighbourhood plan policies conform with national and local policy, as required by the regulations."	Parish Council change
7		Amend top of column 2 to read "Progress 2013 - 2019"	Parish Council change
7	1.13	Line 5 = Changed received to receive Last line = Changed this to the	Parish Council change
8	1.21	Final sentence amended to read "This material became the basis for the draft plan."	Parish Council change
9	1.25	Line 3 = Changed and to which Line 5 = Changed was to were	Parish Council change
9	1.27	Line 4 = Removed been Last line = "Responses to the Pre-Submission Consultation Draft Plan were used to inform the Submission Plan."	Parish Council Change
9	1.29	New paragraph at 1.29 added "Examination 1.29 In March 2019, the Loose Neighbourhood Plan passed independent examination, subject to a series of	Parish Council change

		recommendations. These recommendations have been enabled to create this final version of the plan”.	
9	1.30	1.29 renumbered to 1.30 and final sentence amended to read “All these communications have invited opportunities for further feedback.”	Parish Council change
12	2.1	Line 4 = Changed stream to Stream	Parish Council change
12	2.5	Line 4 = Changed from “...parish, the housing stock....” to “...parish. The housing stock....”	Parish Council change
14	2.13	Line 3 = delete comma	Parish Council change
15	2.20	Amended references to Maidstone Borough Local Plan polices to read <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SP17 Countryside - SP18 Historic Environment - SP20 Affordable Housing - DM3 Natural Environment - DM4 Development Affecting Designated & Non-Designated Heritage Assets 	Agreed proposed change
27	Policy AM1	Supporting text – “Between” removed	Parish Council change
29	5.12	Amended text to read: “The neighbourhood plan intends to support the maintenance of existing routes as a benefit to the Parish and make improvements to the PRow network, and to Kent County Council’s Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2028 (ROWIP).”	Agreed proposed change
30	5.21	Removed “between”	Parish Council change
48	6.44	Reference to Figure 12 added	Parish Council change
65		Paragraphs 8.1 to 8.4 under Next steps removed “Further Information” now reads “Contact details”	Parish Council Changes

1.15 As set out in paragraph 1.9 above Maidstone Borough Council as the local planning authority are required by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 to make a decision on what action to take in response to the examiner’s recommendation. In accordance with the agreed Neighbourhood Planning Protocol it is for this Committee to make a decision on whether to accept the Examiner’s report including any recommended modifications, to decline the report, or to accept the report and

recommended modifications along with any further modifications it considers necessary.

- 1.16 If the local authority considers that the Neighbourhood Plan meets the required basic conditions, is compatible with the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with statutory requirements set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), or would do so if modifications are made (whether or not recommended by the Examiner)⁴ it must put the Neighbourhood Plan to a local referendum.
- 1.17 Where more than 50% of those who cast their vote approve the Neighbourhood Plan the local authority must then 'make' the Neighbourhood Plan which will then form part of the Development Plan for the local authority and will be used in the consideration of planning applications the Local Plan area.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Option A: The Committee agree the recommended modifications outlined in the Examiner's report and summarised in this report, together with the factual updates to the Neighbourhood Plan agreed with the Parish Council, and move the Neighbourhood Plan to local referendum.
- 2.2 Option B: The Committee agree to decline the Examiner's report and move to local referendum without any modifications being made to the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.3 Option C: The Committee do not agree to move the Neighbourhood Plan to a local referendum. This would prevent any further progress to the current neighbourhood plan. This could potentially compromise the good working relationship that has been built between the Strategic Planning Team and the Parish Council and would require the publication of the reasons for the decision which would then be open to challenge. There would be certain statutory steps that would need to be undertaken to notify the Parish Council and other prescribed persons and as set out in Schedule 4B paragraphs (10) – (13).

⁴ Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Schedule 4B paragraph 12(4)

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Committee is recommended to agree to Option A and approve the proposed modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan and move forward to referendum. The Neighbourhood Plan has met prescribed legislative requirements and there are no reasons why the Plan should not move to referendum. Following a successful referendum and decision by Full Council to 'make' the Neighbourhood Plan, it will become part of the Development Plan. The Development Plan guides the decision-making process on development.
-

4. RISK

- 4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. That consideration is shown in this report at paragraphs 2.3 and 3.1. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The Neighbourhood Plan has been subject to two public consultations. Representations made at Regulation 14 and Regulation 16 consultations have been considered by the Examiner in his report.
- 5.2 At its meeting in December 2018, SPST Committee resolved that: "The Loose Neighbourhood Plan be supported and an appropriate response be made by the Head of Planning and Development."
-

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Strategic Planning will publicise this Committee's decision on the Maidstone Borough Council website and notify those individuals who requested to be notified of the decision.

- 6.2 Strategic Planning will work with colleagues in Electoral Services to arrange the local referendum in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012.
- 6.3 Subject to the result of the referendum, a report will be brought back to this Committee setting out the results, and where this a successful referendum, seeking a recommendation to Full Council to make the plan.

7. 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. However, if 'made' the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan. This will assist in the delivery of the Council's objectives.	Rob Jarman
Risk Management	Section 4 sets out the risks associated with not moving the Neighbourhood Plan to local referendum.	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.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Rob Jarman
Legal	Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council's duties under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).	Cheryl Parks Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
Privacy and Data Protection	Any data held by the Council for the purposes of Neighbourhod Planning is done so in line with the Council's data protection policies and the GDPR.	Cheryl Parks Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)

Equalities	An The Council has a responsibility to support communities in developing a Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Planning process provides an opportunity for communities to develop a plan that meets the housing need of its population.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Rob Jarman
Crime and Disorder	There are no implications for Crime and Disorder	Rob Jarman
Procurement	There are no procurement requirements	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Loose Neighbourhood Plan

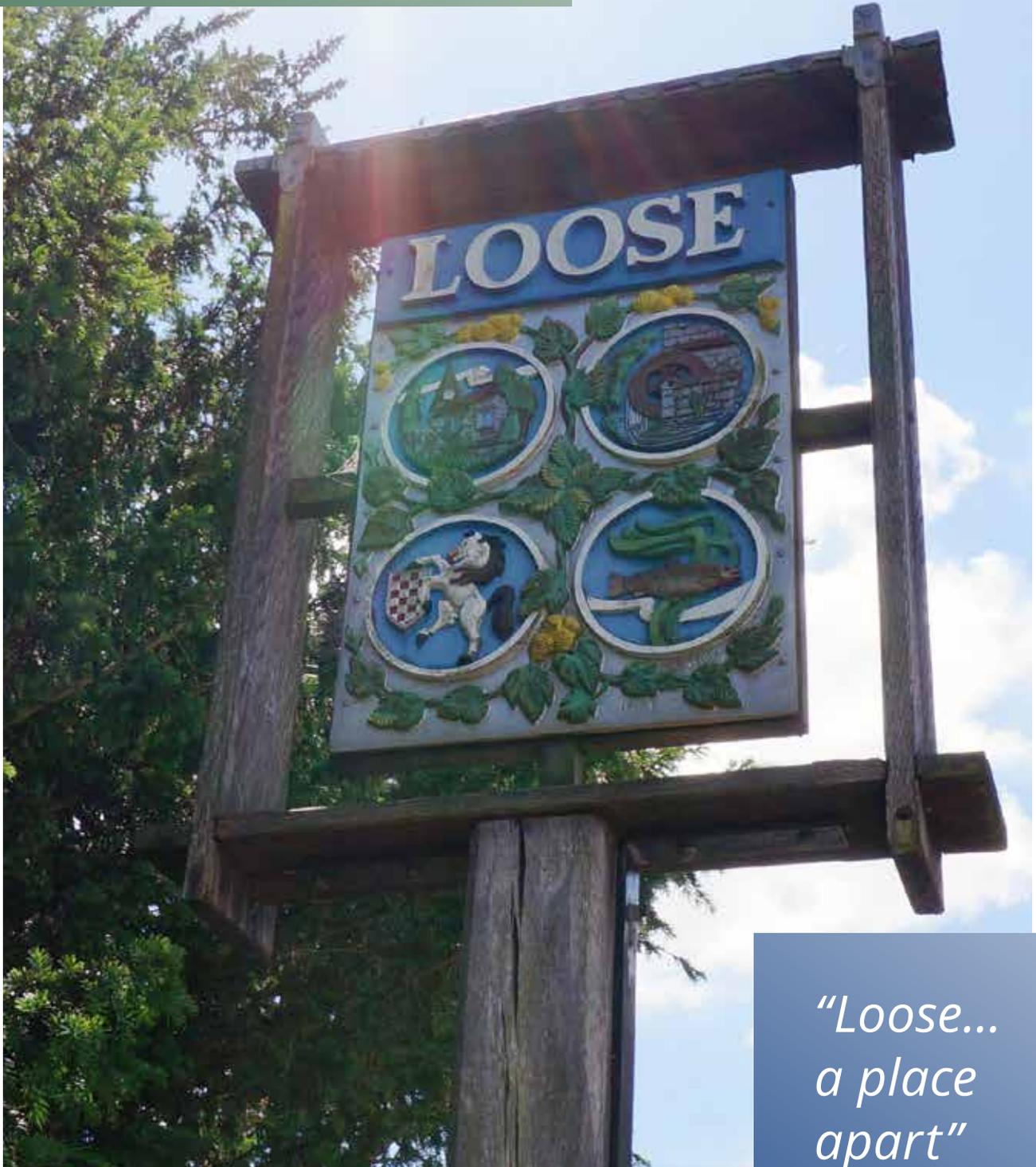
9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Background Document 1: Report on Loose Neighbourhood Plan 2018 – 2031 (Examiner’s report):
https://www.maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/269656/Loose-Neighbourhood-Plan-Examiner-Report.pdf
- Background Document 2: Neighbourhood Planning Protocol
<https://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/documents/s61500/Appendix1%20Neighbourhood%20Planning%20Protocol.pdf>

Loose Parish Council

Neighbourhood Plan

Final Plan 2018 — 2031



*“Loose...
a place
apart”*

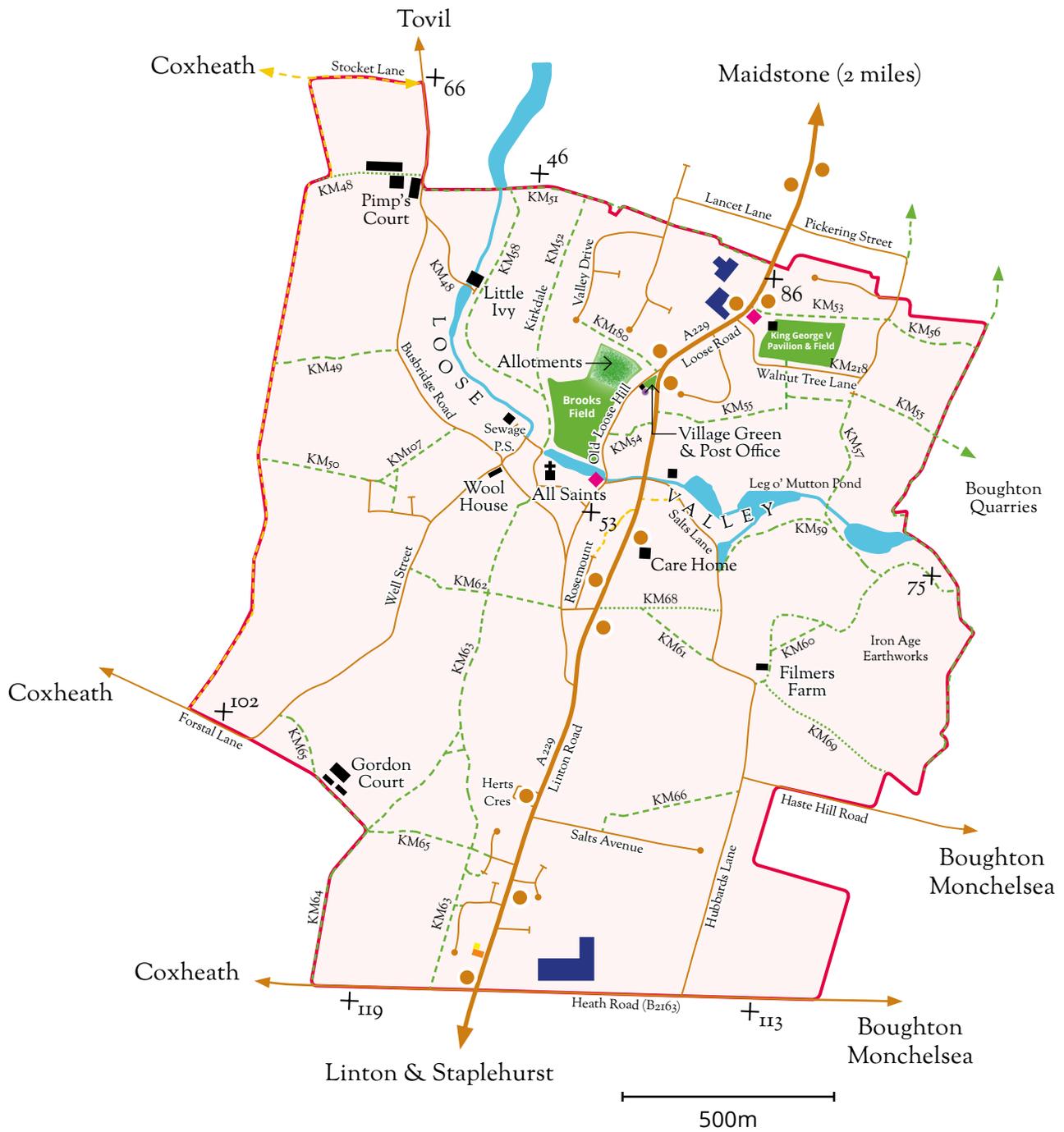
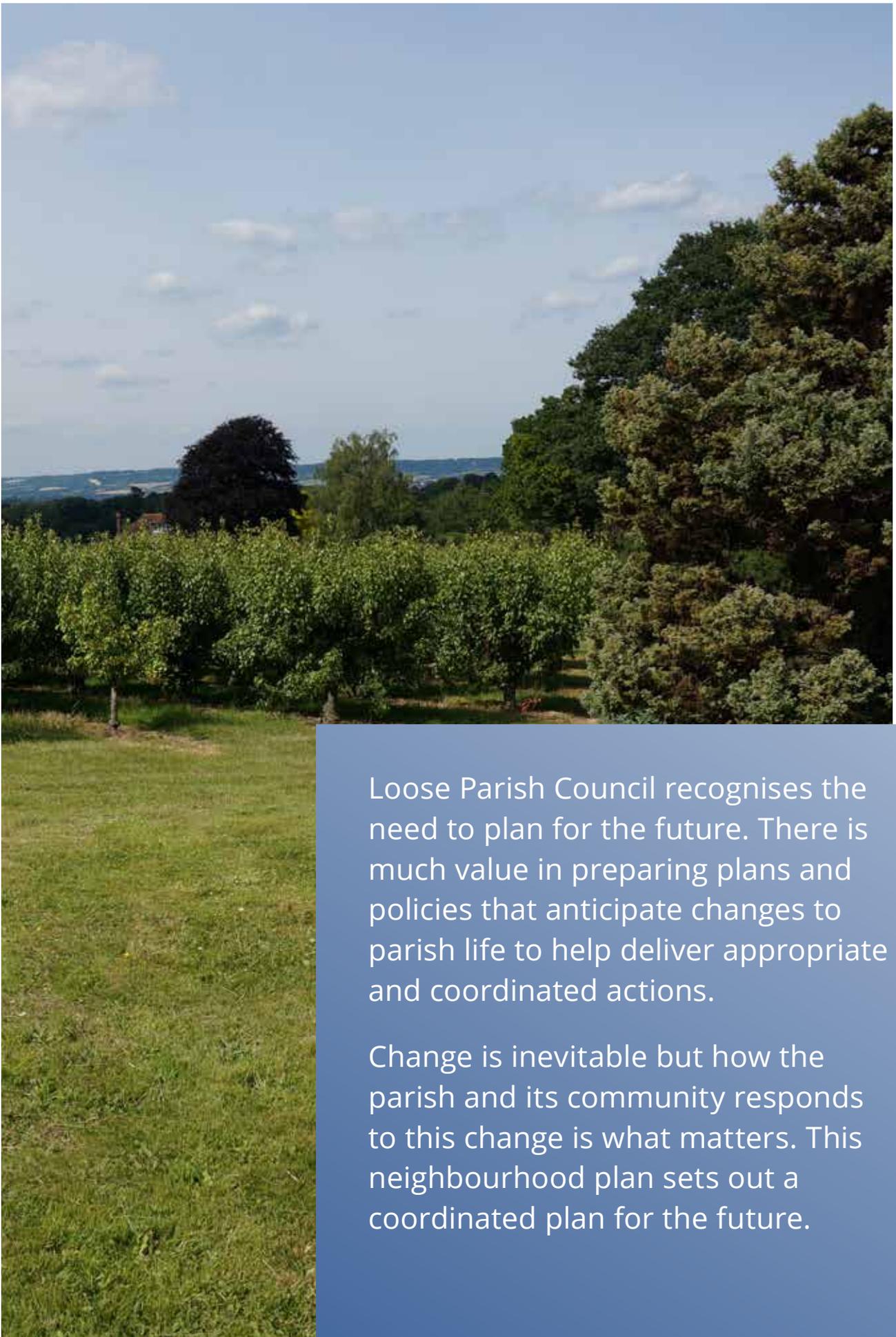


Figure 1 - Neighbourhood planning area designated by Maidstone Borough Council (4th October 2013).

Loose Parish (2018)



- Parish Boundary
- Road
- Loose Stream & Mill Ponds
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Byway
- Public House
- School
- Petrol Filling Station
- Bus Stop
- + Spot Heights (m)



Loose Parish Council recognises the need to plan for the future. There is much value in preparing plans and policies that anticipate changes to parish life to help deliver appropriate and coordinated actions.

Change is inevitable but how the parish and its community responds to this change is what matters. This neighbourhood plan sets out a coordinated plan for the future.



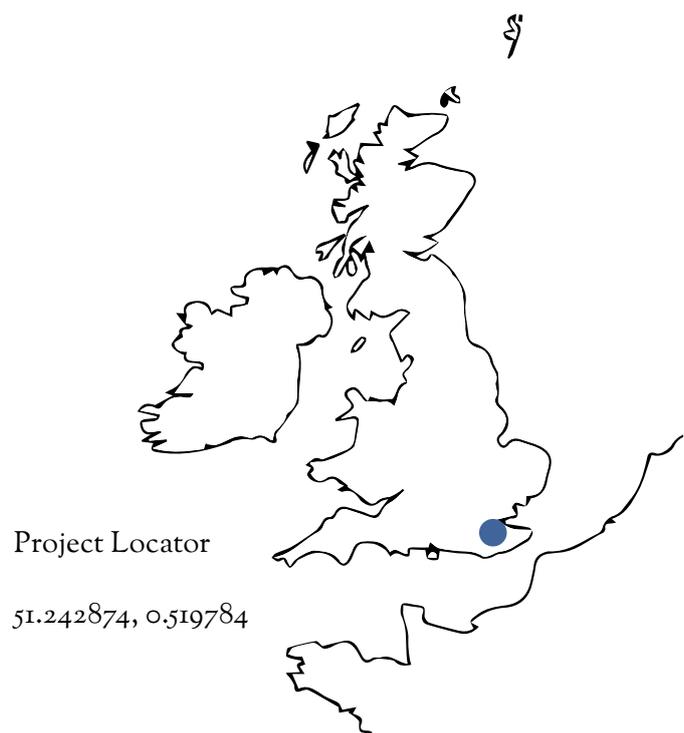
Feria Urbanism is a planning and design studio that specialises in urban design, urban planning, neighbourhood strategies, public participation and community engagement. Established in 2007, we have been involved in a diverse range of planning and design projects across the UK.

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39	<i>Policy LP2 Loose Valley Landscape of Local Value</i>
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1. Background

How this neighbourhood plan was developed



1.1 The Loose Neighbourhood Plan 2018 — 2031 has been prepared by Loose Parish Council on behalf of those who live and work within the parish of Loose. The plan sets out a vision for the parish until 2031 and is supported by a set of planning polices and a series of specific projects.

1.2 In accordance with the neighbourhood planning regulations, this plan has been prepared through extensive community consultation.

What is the Loose Neighbourhood Plan?

1.3 Neighbourhood planning is a community-led process introduced by the Government to encourage local people to shape and influence development within the places where they live and work. They are produced by community forum groups or parish or town councils.

1.4 Neighbourhood plans are policy-based community-led plans which correspond to the Local Plan. In this case, the Local Plan is prepared by Maidstone Borough Council.

1.5 Neighbourhood plans can influence or allocate new housing, produce design policies for allocated sites or for general development. They can protect or identify new community facilities and identify green spaces to be protected from future development proposals.

1.6 The Government introduced the opportunity for local communities to prepare neighbourhood plans through amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Localism Act 2011 and through new regulations, Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, which set out the requirements for neighbourhood plans.

1.7 In Loose, the preparation of the neighbourhood plan was led by a steering group formed of Parish Councillors and residents that reports to Loose Parish Council.

1.8 There was an ongoing dialogue between Loose Parish Council and Maidstone Borough Council during the preparation phase to ensure the neighbourhood plan policies conform with national and local policy, as required by the regulations.

Progress 2013 — 2019

1.9 Work on the Loose Neighbourhood Plan began on 11th February 2013 when an application was made by Loose Parish Council to Maidstone Borough Council to designate the boundary of the parish to be the boundary for the Loose Neighbourhood Plan. This application request was approved by Maidstone Borough Council on 4th October 2013.

1.10 In 2014, the parish council engaged FERIA Urbanism, a design and planning practice based in Bournemouth, to act as consultants. The process in early 2014 comprised site visits by the consultant team in March and July. There were also several key other events to engage the community:

1.11 At the Annual Parish Meeting on 30th April 2014 the outline of a neighbourhood plan and its benefits were presented to the meeting verbally and by a poster display. The well-attended meeting was supportive.

1.12 In May 2014, Loose Parish Council delivered a questionnaire to all properties and businesses in the parish. The questionnaire invited comments about Loose as a place. The comments received have been used to inform the subsequent stages of the process.

1.13 On most Saturdays throughout August and September 2014, manned poster and discussion points were set up around the parish to inform residents about the neighbourhood plan process and to receive comments. Comments were generally supportive and these views have been taken forward to assist the development of the submission plan.

1.14 Visioning Event held on 10th September 2014 to examine some of the critical issues in more detail. This event was attended by over 100 people drawn from across the parish.

1.15 Three-Day Design Forum held on 21st, 22nd and 23rd October 2014. This was a design-led exercise that examined how change can be designed and planned across Loose parish.

1.16 Two reports were produced later in 2014 following the autumn events, “Loose Neighbourhood Plan, Results Of The Village Visioning Event” and “Loose Neighbourhood Plan, Report From The Three Day Design Forum”. These two reports set out some key themes and ideas for the emerging neighbourhood plan.

1.17 Annual Parish Meeting on 15th April 2015 included a manned poster display plus a verbal presentation on progress so far, and the three possible policy areas. The display included a visitors location map (e.g. place an orange dot on the map) and a photo exhibition called “Aspects of Loose” that invited comments about what was liked or disliked. The three emerging planning policy areas were displayed and comments on them were invited. All comments received about the work were positive.

1.18 The Annual Duck Race held in Brooks Field on 25th May 2015 was a very popular and well-attended event (e.g. 2,000 to 3,000 people). There was a manned poster display again, plus photos. There was a lot of interest and comments were favourable.

1.19 Loose Valley Care Home, Open Day on 22nd August 2015 included a manned poster display. The event consisted mainly of dialogue between members of the steering group, employees and visitors. The emphasis of this event was on “hard to reach groups”.

1.20 The Loose Parish Fete held at King George V Playing Field on 5th September 2015 also included a manned poster display. The three policy areas were shown with a breakdown of the stages of neighbourhood plan preparation. Visitors were invited to support (or not) the policies with a sticky dot vote. There was a unanimous “yes” vote but not a large sample. A crowd of around 500 attended the village fete and many engaged in conversation at the stall about the neighbourhood plan.

1.21 In late 2015, the parish council held a three day exhibition event where a draft policy document was shared with the public. The event on 5th, 7th and 8th December 2015 was well-attended by local residents and businesses. This was an opportunity to comment on a series of draft policy themes and an outline of the neighbourhood plan that had been developed over the previous months. The themes of Landscape Protection, Access & Movement and Design Quality were shared by the steering group and were largely endorsed by those in attendance. This material became the basis for the draft plan.

1.22 Annual Parish Meeting on 4th May 2016. A time-line showing progress to date, the current situation and what remained to be done was displayed at a manned poster and discussion point. Emphasis was placed on the importance of input by stakeholders into the pre-submission plan.

1.23 Duck Race, 30th May 2016. Again, a very well attended event. A similar approach and display was presented to that at the Annual Parish Meeting.

1.24 Loose Parish Fete on the 3rd September 2016. Considerable interest was shown in the draft work which was put out for consideration. The focus of the display was to alert stakeholders about how and where they would be able to make their comments when the pre-submission draft plan was launched into the parish and the importance of these comments.

1.25 The Annual Duck Race, 26th May 2017. A stall was set up in a prime position just inside the access gate which displayed the “timeline” used at the Annual Parish Meeting and copies of the Pre-Submission Consultation Draft were again on display for perusal. Members of the Steering Group were on hand to discuss any issues raised.

1.26 Loose Parish Fête, 2nd September 2017. This was the last face to face public engagement event. Relevant documents were put out for viewing and discussion with the stall representatives. The “orange dot” map was also utilised.

1.27 This consultation and engagement work provided a body of evidence from which the Pre-Submission Consultation Draft Plan was formulated. The views of the community were sought on this draft plan between 31st October and 13th December 2016. Responses to the Pre-Submission Consultation Draft Plan were used to inform the Submission Plan.

1.28 Throughout this period, several meetings took place between Loose Parish Council and Maidstone Borough Council officers.

Examination

1.29 In March 2019, the Loose Neighbourhood Plan passed independent examination, subject to a series of recommendations. These recommendations have been enabled to create this final version of the plan.

Other Communication

1.30 Throughout the process, Loose Parish Council has communicated with its parishioners about the neighbourhood plan through updates in the “In and Around” newsletter, an independent monthly mail drop; through “Loose Views”, the parish council’s quarterly newsletter; its website, Facebook and once in the All Saints Church parish magazine. Updates have also been displayed on parish council notice boards and at other strategic locations. All these communications have invited opportunities for further feedback.



The combination of built heritage and landscape setting in Loose is special and this neighbourhood plan sets out to protect and enhance it.

Community Consultation Events



Three-Day Design Forum was a design-led exercise that examined how change can be accommodated and planned across Loose parish.



Site visits across the parish have been conducted by members of the steering group and the appointed consultants.



The Visioning Event was attended by over 100 people drawn from across Loose parish, including youth groups.



Local residents and interest groups were involved throughout during the Three-Day Design Forum, sharing their opinions with the steering group and the appointed consultant team.



Three-Day Design Forum generated a lot of debate and discussion but also gave the neighbourhood planning process a clear focus.



Seeing sites first hand has been a key part of the process to date.



The Visioning Event asked questions about the challenges faced by different demographic groups in the parish.



The Three-Day Design Forum in October 2014 gathered a series of “position statements” from many different organisations, seen here pinned up on the red display board.

2. Loose Parish Context

Understanding the history and setting

Location

2.1 Loose is located some 3 kms south of Maidstone, around the Loose Valley, with which it forms the Loose Valley Conservation Area. The fast-flowing Loose Stream, which rises near Langley, runs through the centre of the village and once supported fulling mills and paper-making industries, evidence of which can still be found. Loose village itself is situated in the Loose valley and extends along Busbridge Road towards Tovil. The parish population is currently around 2400 with around 990 individual dwellings.

History & Origins

2.2 The name is believed to be an Anglo-Saxon term “lose” meaning where pigs are kept. While its origins were in Saxon times its main period of growth was during the Industrial Revolution, when Loose, Boughton Monchelsea and Bockingford developed around the many mills powered by the Loose Stream. There are several remains of the mills, including millraces at Leg O’Mutton Pond, Gurney’s Mill, Loose Village Mill in Bridge Street, and the mill ponds at Little and Great Ivy. Along the valley are disused quarries where Kentish ragstone was once mined, some being used to build the Tower of London.

2.3 Old Loose Hill descends into Loose village and the valley, the hill being so steep that in the 18th and 19th Centuries additional horses were added to the wagon teams at the aptly named “The Change”. The road is still lined with haul stones around which ropes were tied to help relieve the horses of the weight of the carts. At the foot of the hill to the north of the stream is Brooks Field.

Housing Layouts

2.4 The civil parish of Loose lies to the south of the urban area of Maidstone. At its northern boundary with Maidstone, the area consists mainly of medium to low density housing built largely during the 1960s and 70s. There is one recent development of a much higher density at the north eastern boundary built since 2010.

2.5 Development to the south of the valley is largely along the line of the A229, Loose Road and Linton Road, which runs north-south through the parish. The housing stock dating mainly from the 1930s and 1950s with some more recent development close to the southern boundary. The Cornwallis Academy, newly built on the site of the former Cornwallis School, is the largest building and the largest employer in the parish and is also located at the southern boundary of the parish.

2.6 The historic village centre sits in the valley bottom and the building stock ranges from 12th to 20th Century. The village centre is characterised by buildings located at the back of the footway, narrow streets, steep hills and the numerous streams running through it to join the Loose Stream.

Heritage

2.7 There are 49 Listed Buildings or structures within the parish, ranging from the viaduct, designed by Thomas Telford, which carries the A229 across the valley, through houses and agricultural buildings to a number of memorials in All Saints Churchyard. The parish and village is known as a “ragstone village” and has a number of disused ragstone quarries, mainly around Well Street and towards the eastern parish boundary with Boughton Monchelsea.



“Loose — A ragstone Village” reads the welcome sign on the village green.

2.8 Those in Well Street have been subject to intermittent housing development over the last few hundred years whilst those to the east of the A229 have “returned to nature” and are now tree covered. There are also some naturally occurring ragstone outcrops at various locations within the parish.

Landscape Qualities

2.9 From the north of the parish southwards, the land falls sharply into the Loose Valley where the Loose Stream flows east to west from Langley through Boughton Monchelsea before following a sharp bend in the valley at Loose to run north towards the boundary with Tovil parish, from where it flows on for another mile before joining the River Medway.

2.10 The southern face of the valley initially rises as steeply as the northern face and then in a gentler slope to the southern parish boundary and the highest point in Loose, just over 120 metres above sea level. It is the many springs in this south face that feed a number of small streams which flow north, down the Green Sand Ridge, into the Loose Stream. The higher part of this face of the valley is visible from the routes crossing the North Downs ridge at Bluebell Hill and Detling, some 10 kms north.

2.11 The greater part of the land area of the parish is in agricultural use, mainly orchards with some mixed farming, horse pasture, woodland and some areas of uncultivated land. Smaller farmsteads and clusters of agricultural buildings can be found in outlying parish areas. The Loose Stream, with its steep fall, supported a large number of water mills in the past. Those buildings that remain have almost all been converted for residential use.

Land Ownership

2.12 Several areas of land in the valley have been acquired in order to protect them from future development and provide access for the public. Loose Amenities Association owns approximately 9 hectares to the west of the village which extends past Little Ivy into Tovil parish.

2.13 Loose Parish Council has acquired Brooks Field in the centre of the historic village and is currently enhancing that land with the planting of a new community oak wood at the western end whilst restoring the rest of the land to a traditional meadow. It also owns the King George V Playing Field, the Village Green, allotments (in trust) and other small parcels of land. Loose Swiss Scouts own just over 17 hectares in the valley to the east of the village, part of which falls within Boughton Monchelsea parish. The land is leased and farmed by a local farmer and crossed by public footpaths.

2.14 The Boughton Monchelsea Heritage Trust (BMHT) has acquired about 5 hectares of land in Loose, to the east of the A229 Linton Road, bounded by Salts Place to the north, Salts Avenue to the south and Hubbards Lane to the east. This land was purchased in order to prevent development that would cause the coalescence of the built areas of Loose and Boughton Monchelsea.

Loose Valley Conservation Area & Article 4 Direction

2.15 Loose was one of the first villages in Kent to have a designated Conservation Area. This was confirmed in 1970 under the terms of the 1967 Civic Amenities Act and comprised the historic centre of the village. More recently the Conservation Area has been extended to include large areas of the Loose Valley and extends into the neighbouring parish of Tovil, directly abutting the Parish of Boughton Monchelsea. It is now known as the Loose Valley Conservation Area.

2.16 In conservation areas, it is the protection of the quality and special interest of the neighbourhood or area as a whole that is intended, rather than specific buildings. For example, the layout of boundaries, roads, vistas and viewpoints, trees and green features, street furniture and surfaces, the characteristic building materials of the area, the mix of different uses, and the design of shop fronts may all be taken into account when deciding whether an area has a particular special architectural or historic interest.

2.17 There are additional planning controls over certain works carried out within the conservation area. For example, demolition within conservation areas requires consent. The designation does not preclude development from taking place, but does require that developments preserve or enhance the historic character of the area, for example by ensuring that new buildings are of a high quality design. Conservation area status also removes some permitted development rights that apply in undesignated areas.

2.18 An Article 4 Direction, made some years ago under the terms of the 1951 General Development Order, now incorporated into The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) 2015, and subsequent amendments, covers some of the Conservation Area and extends into Tovil parish. Unlike the Conservation Area the Article 4 Direction does not extend east of the A229.

2.19 An Article 4 Direction removes from an area all permitted development rights. This means that all new buildings, changes and additions to buildings, fences, surface treatments and trees require the grant of planning permission. This covers all structures including sheds, greenhouses, conservatories and patios. However, the extent of the area is not considered sufficient. Outside the scope of this neighbourhood plan, Loose Parish Council will seek an extension of the direction.



Many of the properties in the Loose Conservation Area benefit from the Article 4 direction.

Maidstone Borough Local Plan, 2011 — 2031

2.20 The Maidstone Borough Local Plan was formally adopted at full council on 25th October 2017. The local plan includes the following policies relevant to Loose:

- SP17 Countryside
- SP18 Historic Environment
- SP20 Affordable Housing
- DM3 Natural Environment
- DM4 Development Affecting Designated & Non-Designated Heritage Assets.

2.21 The plan also references the 2012 Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment, the 2015 Maidstone Landscape Capacity Study and the 2016 Green and Blue Infrastructure. Also relevant to the Loose Neighbourhood Plan is the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan and safeguarding areas.

3. Landscape Context

How can the neighbourhood plan support and protect the current balance of uses in Loose?

Landscape & People

3.1 Understanding the distinctive landscape character of Loose parish, and how the main services and facilities sit within that landscape, is critical to the delivery of the right type of development in the right places.

3.2 There is a variety of life and activity that occurs in Loose and the landscape is a working and living patchwork of spaces that are essentially about people. It helps the people who live, work and visit Loose to enjoy a better quality of life.

3.3 The Loose landscape comprises a variety of spaces that supports the life of the community. Figure 2 begins to explore the various landscape layers and the activities that occur across the parish. It is not intended to be precise or prescriptive but aims to give a strategic overview to inspire those involved in shaping the neighbourhood plan to think creatively about the different ways the landscape is used by Loose residents.

3.4 The names of the five neighbouring parishes, and Maidstone, are marked on the plan in white text.

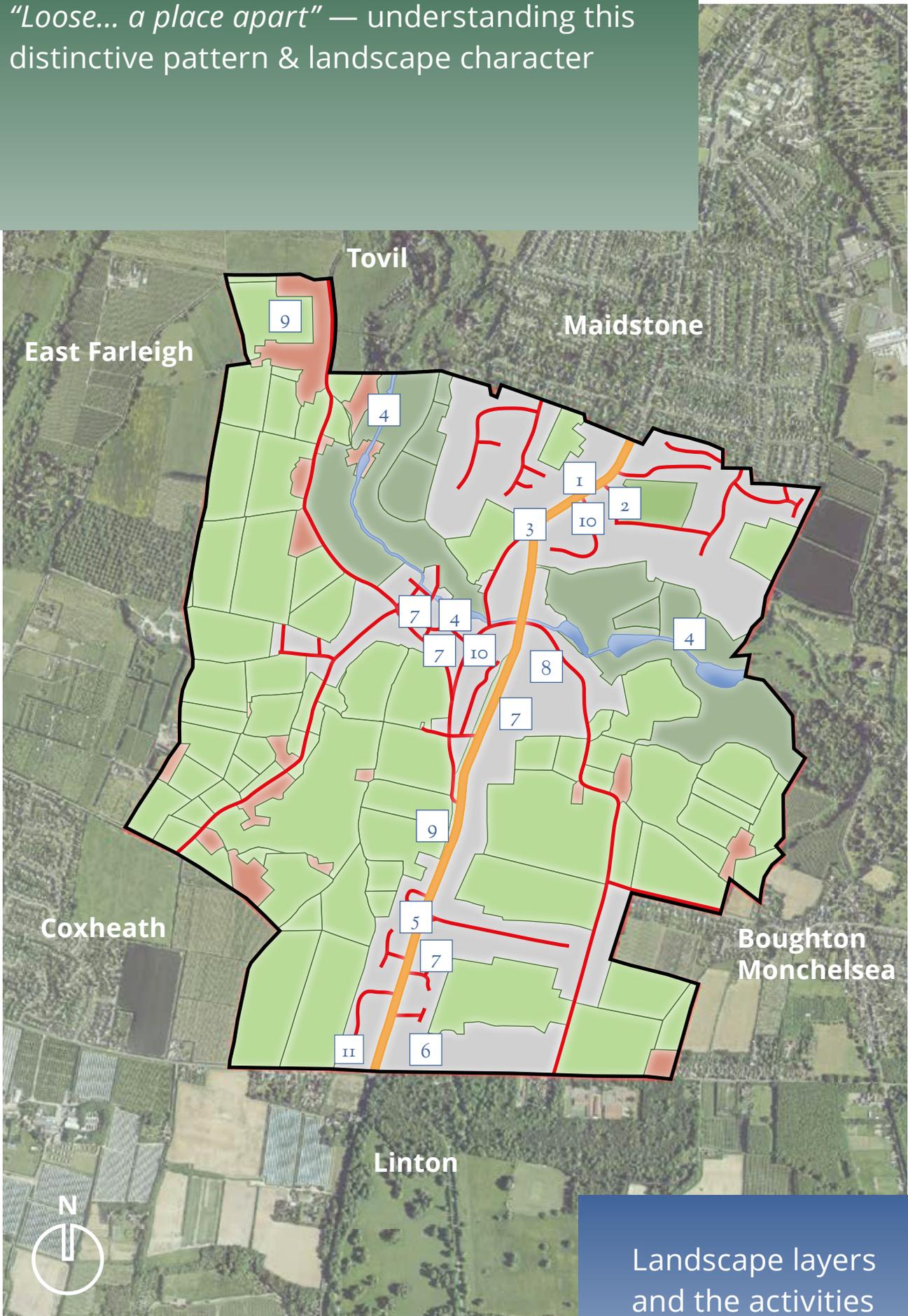
PLAN KEY

-  Main built areas of the parish
-  Outlying buildings & farms
-  Streams & watercourses
-  Loose Valley woodland belt
-  Farmland, orchards & open landscape
-  A229 main road
-  Streets & lanes
-  Neighbourhood area boundary

KEY FEATURES & FACILITIES

-  Loose Primary School
-  King George V Playing Field & Pavilion
-  Village Green, Allotments, PO & Shops
-  The Valley (Conservation Area) & Loose Stream
-  Fish & chip shop
-  Cornwallis Academy School
-  Places of Worship
-  Care Centre
-  Small Business Units
-  Public Houses
-  Petrol Filling Station

“Loose... a place apart” — understanding this distinctive pattern & landscape character



Landscape layers and the activities across the parish

Figure 2

Landscape Character Components

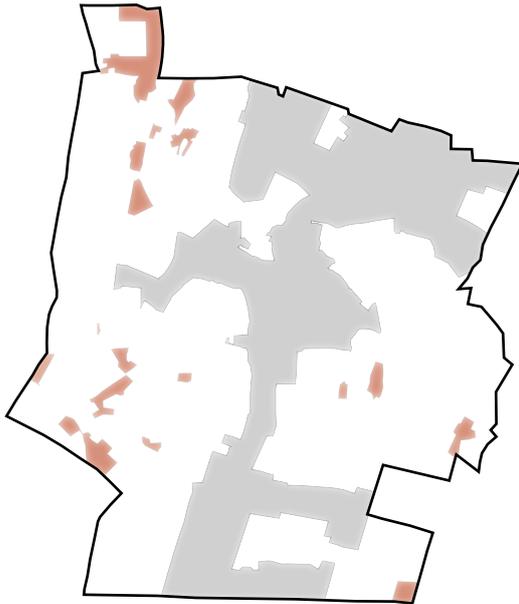


Figure 3

Built Environment

3.5 The built environment of the parish comprises small farmsteads and clusters of agricultural buildings (brown shaded areas) in outlying areas. Larger tracts of primarily residential development (grey shaded areas) can be found to the north of the parish and along a central spine around the A229 main road. The residential areas vary in character from low-rise bungalows to clusters of heritage buildings.

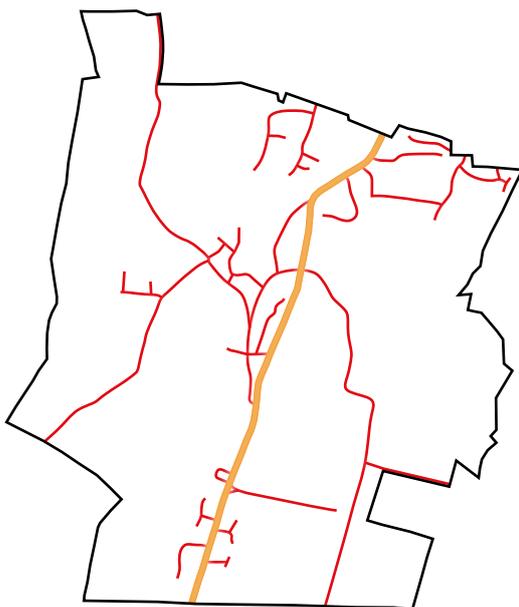


Figure 4

Movement Network

3.6 Running the full length of the parish in a north-south direction is the A229 (orange line). This is a main movement “spine” in and out of Maidstone from the south and carries a relatively high volume of traffic. Linking to this main road is a network of country lanes and residential streets (red lines) that provide access to the wider parish areas to the east and the west.

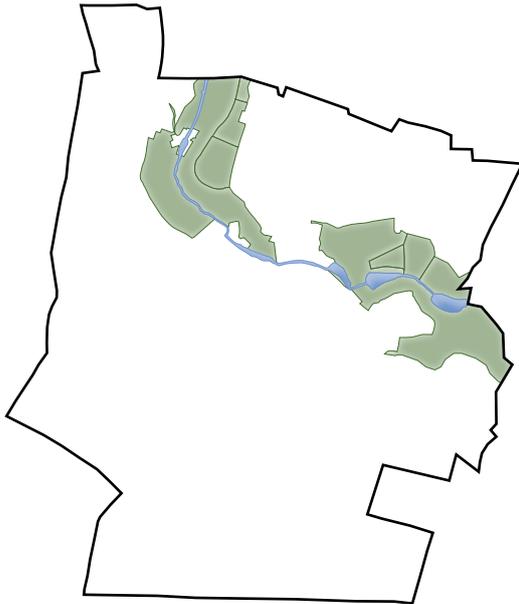


Figure 5

Loose Valley

3.7 The Loose Valley is narrow and steep-sided, centred along the Loose Stream and ponds (blue) forming a pleasant and secluded area stretching from Boughton Quarries to Tovil. The Loose Valley, along with other special landscape areas around the periphery of Maidstone town provide local distinctiveness which is unique to the borough's identity. Other wooded areas can be found alongside the A229 and to the south west of the parish.

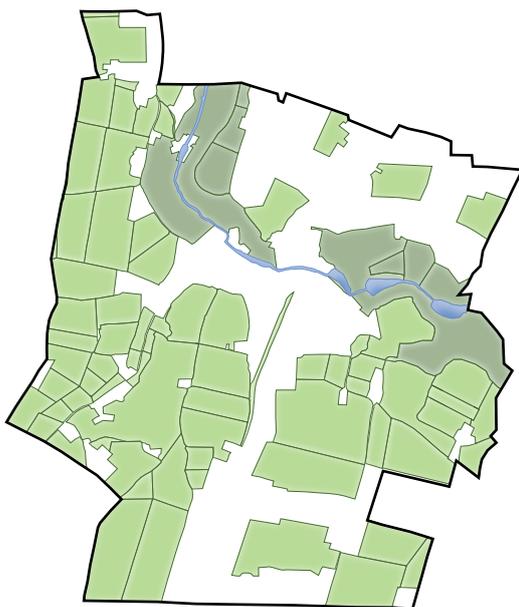


Figure 6

Productive Landscapes

3.8 Immediately surrounding the areas of built environment and beyond the special character of the Loose Valley is a patchwork of productive landscape areas (light green). This includes orchards, arable land, managed woodland and other areas of open countryside that provide the parish with its distinctive character and green appearance.

4. Planning Policy Framework

How will the three policy themes help guide the development of Loose into the future?



Loose Neighbourhood Plan Vision Statement

“Loose is a place apart, full of energetic and welcoming people. It has a celebrated history and a clear view of the future. It will continue to be a place with a distinct character and identity where new development sensitively integrates the needs of people into a special landscape”.

Policy Themes

4.1 The three policy themes that have been developed through the consultation work are as follows:

Access & Movement

4.2 The parish council, working with partners, will deliver a balanced mix of initiatives that will make moving around Loose parish a more pleasant, efficient and sustainable experience.

Landscape Protection

4.3 All landscape works and development should respect the distinctive landscape setting of Loose and not undermine the purpose, high quality and special distinctiveness of the different landscape characters that can be found across the parish.

Design Quality

4.4 All developments should be built to high design standards and something that improves and enhances the built environment of Loose for now and for future generations.

Shared Vision

4.5 “Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood” (para. 183 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012). Therefore, each stage of the Loose Neighbourhood Plan process to date has sought to extend the amount of common ground between local residents and businesses, narrowing down various options through a transparent and open process. At all stages, the neighbourhood planning process will allow room for dissent and minority views but the overall aim of the process is to build a broad-based consensus. This process has allowed a set of objectives for the neighbourhood plan to be developed with a supporting Vision Statement.

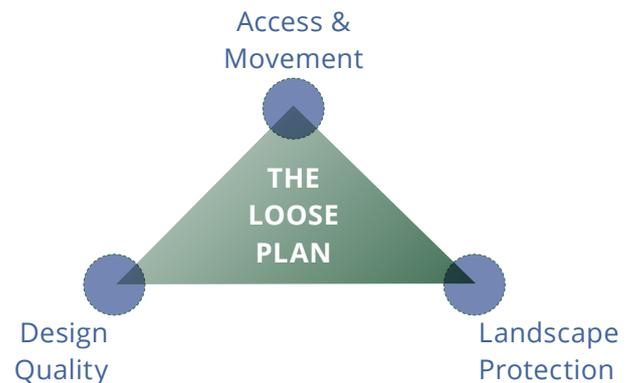


Figure 7

4.6 This diagram in Figure 7 shows how the three key themes contribute to the overall plan for Loose and demonstrates the mutually supportive quality to the three themes. Each policy theme (and the individual policies within them) has been tested against both the Vision Statement and the Neighbourhood Plan objectives to ensure that they are complementary and effective at delivering change and protection in the right ways.

Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

4.7 The objectives of the neighbourhood plan are to:

1 — Maintain and enhance the rural character of the built elements of Loose parish, its immediate settings and the wider landscape of the parish area.

2 — Coordinate all new development so that it contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and essential services for everybody who lives and works in Loose.

3 — Create a robust, yet flexible, access and movement network appropriate for all modes of travel for current and future populations.

4 — Use land and resources efficiently so that new developments have a

reduced demand for energy and plan for a low carbon future.

5 — Protect and enhance the natural and historic environment, the quality of the built environment and the wider countryside.

6 — Ensure inclusive design qualities through the use of appropriate materials and details that respond to the Loose context.

7 — Ensure that land made available for development will be developed in such a way as to improve people's quality of life, for both new and existing residents.

8 — Deliver the community infrastructure necessary to support Loose in the 21st Century.



The protection of the watercourses in Loose must be an integral part of all planning applications and permissions (Objective 5).



Protection of the built environment is a critical aspect of the plan (Objectives 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7).



Protection of the landscape setting of the village and parish is also important (Objectives 1, 5 and 6).

Background to the Neighbourhood Plan Objectives and Policies

4.8 The objectives and policies of the neighbourhood plan have been informed by the following themes and ideas raised during the consultation process. The background is explained here.

Built environment protection

4.9 The landscape protection offered by the Loose Conservation Area status and the Article 4 Direction has, to an extent, been diminished through a general unawareness of both measures, but particularly the Article 4 Direction, by parish residents.

4.10 Therefore, the neighbourhood plan includes a policy to lift the level of design quality expected in new developments across the parish, including in the Loose Conservation Area. See Policies DQ1 and DQ2.

Protection of long distance views

4.11 The protection of long distance views has been identified as an important factor in the public surveys and workshops held in connection with the plan. In order to protect long distance views, no new development should be permitted along the “valley rims” where it could be viewed from within the Loose Conservation Area or from the higher ground on opposite sides of the valley if it detracts from the view. See Policy LP1.

Natural environment protection

4.12 Across the Loose Valley the landscape is typified by the Loose Stream and the numerous small streams that flow into it from the southern side of the valley. All of the watercourses in the plan area are also wildlife habitats. There have been several large pollution incidents involving the main stream and some of the smaller streams. There have been several incidents of sewage overflows from the wastewater pumping station onto private land and into the Loose Stream. All planning applications should consider the management of rain water run-off from buildings and hard surfaces so that pollutants are not carried into the streams and where large volumes of water are involved the streams are not overwhelmed.

4.13 Not only is the stream important but so too is the need to protect the rest of the natural environment. Hedgerows, orchards, woodland, grassland, scrubland and meadows are all features that contribute to the attractive distinctiveness of Loose. They provide important flora and fauna habitat and movement corridors. Consideration needs to be given to the protection of these. The reduction in species such as the song thrush, bats, water vole and dormouse is evident. Planning applications should consider their impact on these areas and not compromise their well-being. See Policy LP4.

Tree planting projects

4.14 For many years now Loose has been noted for its trees and has on several occasions received regional awards and commendations for the way in which trees have been managed and protected in the parish. The yew tree in All Saints churchyard is considered to be over 1,500 years old and is of national significance. The importance of continuing this practice cannot be overstated in the overall management of the landscape across the whole of the parish.

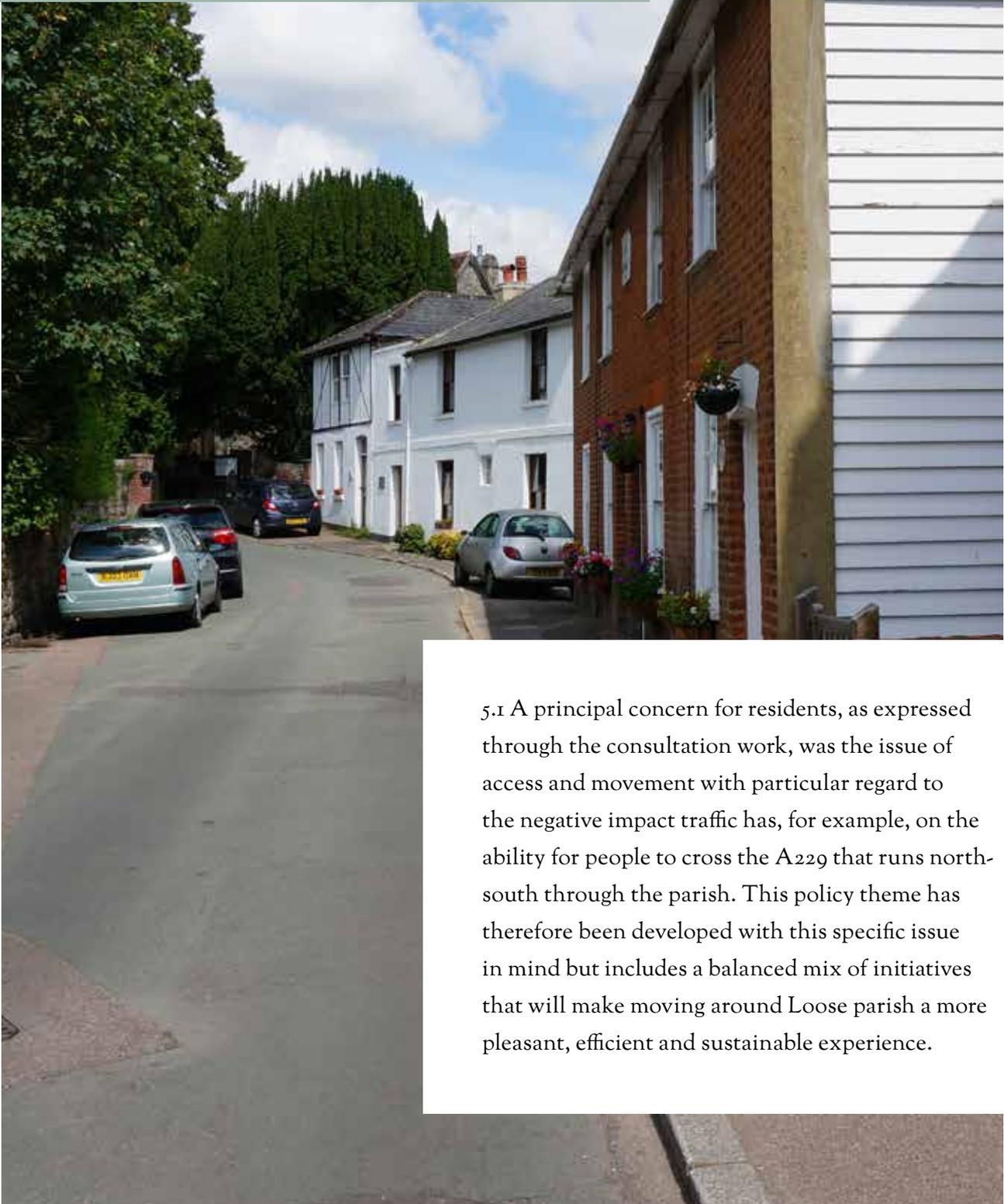
4.15 Trees are the most civil company. They provide shelter and protection from the extremes of weather and soften the hard edges of the built environment. Many of the responses to the neighbourhood plan survey and workshops cited trees and their protection as a key factor for consideration in the Loose Neighbourhood Plan and for many, along with the stream, typify the landscape of the parish of Loose.

4.16 In considering trees, the plan should not just think in terms of the open country and woodlands but also the trees within gardens that enhance both village and suburban areas providing shelter and privacy as well as the many diverse garden landscapes for which Loose is so well known.

4.17 Within the Loose Conservation Area any trees lost due to age, storm or other damage should be replaced with specimens of the same type or a type approved by the borough council. Planning applications across the parish should consider the impact of the change or development upon trees within the site or adjacent to it regardless of the type of application. Where the application includes new building whether it is an extension to an existing building, a single new build or a larger development it should include a landscaping scheme which takes into account the impact upon the amenity of neighbours as well as longer distance views. See Policy DQ2.

5. Access & Movement

Planning Policies



5.1 A principal concern for residents, as expressed through the consultation work, was the issue of access and movement with particular regard to the negative impact traffic has, for example, on the ability for people to cross the A229 that runs north-south through the parish. This policy theme has therefore been developed with this specific issue in mind but includes a balanced mix of initiatives that will make moving around Loose parish a more pleasant, efficient and sustainable experience.

Policy AM1

Improving the Environment for Pedestrians and Cyclists

1) SEEK IMPROVEMENTS TO THE NETWORK OF FOOTPATHS, FOOTWAYS AND CYCLE ROUTES THROUGHOUT THE PARISH TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE SAFE, CONVENIENT AND COMFORTABLE.

2) NEW PEDESTRIAN CROSSING FACILITIES WILL BE SUPPORTED ALONG THE A229 AT AGREED LOCATIONS TO ENABLE EASIER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE EAST AND WEST OF THE PARISH.

3) FOOTWAY WIDENING AND RESURFACING WHERE NECESSARY WILL BE ENCOURAGED.

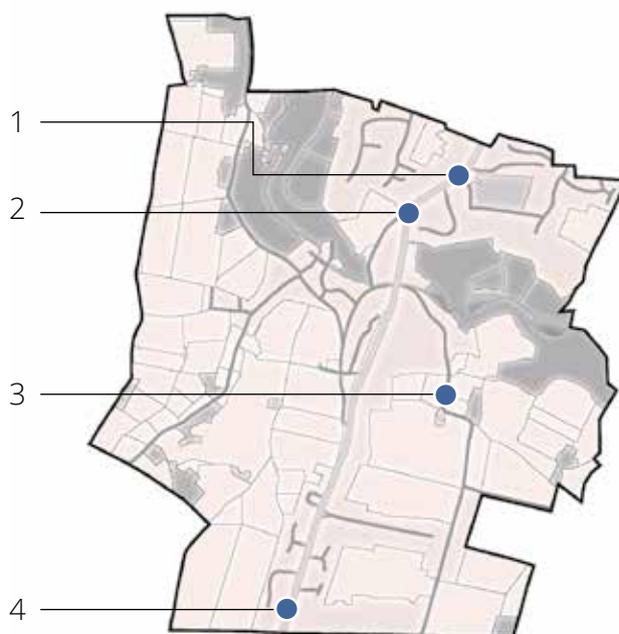


Figure 8 — This policy is to be applied at specific locations (1) the area adjacent to Loose primary school; (2) the village green; (3) country lanes and; (4) Cornwallis Academy and Linton crossroads.

Three locations for new pedestrian crossings have found favour with residents. These are:

Rosemount Close to No. 51 Linton Road; at the Loose Primary School, where a pelican or toucan crossing is required; and a dedicated pelican crossing at the Linton crossroads adjacent to Cornwallis Academy.

Policy Justification

5.2 The parish council, working with partners, will deliver a balanced mix of initiatives that will make moving around Loose parish a more pleasant, efficient and sustainable experience.

5.3 The present day layout of the roads, streets, lanes and track ways of the parish can be traced back to the movements of early Saxon settlers. Over the centuries, the parish has been shaped by the influence of the transport routes from north to south.

5.4 The need for a contemporary high quality access and movement strategy is at the heart of this policy theme along with a determination to create a more pleasant village centre with strong walking links to the outlying areas. Design and planning principles must inform this ambition and should be incorporated into every new development.

5.5 When considering the users of the streets and roads within Loose, the following hierarchy of needs should be observed so that a balanced and sustainable approach can be developed: Pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, specialist service vehicles and other motor traffic. This movement hierarchy will help ensure that the correct priority is given to the preferred user during the policy formulation, planning, design, construction and management phases.

Some Key Projects & Actions Arising from this Policy Area

5.6 Some key projects and actions arising from this policy area are:

- Enhanced public realm projects at the village green, Old Loose Hill / A229 junction.
- Support for new cycling routes projects.
- Review of lower speed limits and new, dedicated pedestrian crossings along the A229.
- Improving the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network

5.7 There are further opportunities to enhance the landscape of Loose through public realm projects e.g. new benches, seats and useful street furniture (including more waste bins) similar to those implemented in the last few years around the parish with the assistance of ward councillors and the Loose Amenities Association, private individuals and Loose Parish Council.

5.8 Future projects could include work around the Village Green, along the A229 on the southern approach and around the Pickering Street/Leonard Gould Way area. These projects could be initiated by the parish council or other bodies in the area with funding provided from either public, charitable or local commercial sources.

Footways (Pavements)

5.9 The network of existing footways throughout Loose does not always allow for safe and convenient access. In many places they are too narrow to be used comfortably. There is also a need to address the perceived threat to pedestrian safety that results from narrow footways, the passage of HGVs and the associated issue of air pollution, especially along the A229.

5.10 To encourage more people to walk in Loose, the existing and future footways around the village need to be generous, well-surfaced, safe and well-connected. Some footways could be widened to make walking more comfortable.

Footpaths

5.11 Many residents value living close to some of the most attractive countryside in England. Opening up more land around the edges of Loose to create highly-valued recreational routes will be one way to ensure the new village edges have a sense of permanence and will reassure village residents that growth will not go unchecked.

5.12 The neighbourhood plan intends to support the maintenance of existing routes as a benefit to the Parish and make improvements to the PRow network, and to Kent County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018 — 2028 (ROWIP).

5.13 The neighbourhood plan will seek an appropriate level of signage in keeping with the rural nature of the area with natural surface materials that are robust and all-weather.

Cycle Routes

5.14 The creation of streets that are safe for cycling and walking will encourage healthy active lifestyles for all ages. In certain areas, segregated or dedicated cycling infrastructure may be required, for example, at key junctions.

5.15 These measures will help raise the level of utility cycling (e.g. riding to work, to the shops or to school). Good quality cycle infrastructure will give cyclists the space they need to ride safely on the roads and keep the pavement space for pedestrians. Facilities that are to be shared between pedestrians and cyclists must be avoided if at all possible within the built part of the village.

Off-Road Cycle Routes

5.16 Loose is surrounded by attractive open green spaces. The creation of off-street recreational cycling routes will enhance existing access and connections between the built-up parts of the village and the green spaces beyond. These routes need to be convenient, accessible, well-signed and enjoyable if they are to help encourage cycling as a recreational activity which in turn, may help raise levels of utility cycling.

5.17 Such off-road routes through the countryside can often be safely and successfully shared between walkers and cyclists. Cycle routes should blend in with the local landscape. Regular access to green open space has a significant positive impact upon an individual's mental health. Access to the countryside setting of Loose parish can be promoted by well-connected cycle routes.

5.18 The proposal for a shared pedestrian-cycle route at Kirkdale was met with considerable objection and alternative options are now being considered. There is an option for a potential route alongside the allotments going into Bray Gardens and Waldron Drive from Old Loose Hill. This is supported in principle by Loose Parish Council and negotiations are on-going with Kent County Council about how this route could be delivered.

5.19 It is feasible that the cycle route terminating at Old Drive could be extended eastwards along Lancet Lane to the rear entrance of the primary school in Waldron Drive. Although outside this neighbourhood plan area, the proposal is supported by the North Loose Residents Association with a made neighbourhood plan covering Lancet Lane.

5.20 There are three byways in the parish, currently open for walking, horse riding and cycling. These are Filmers Farm to Camp Field Farm; Filmers Farm to Atkins Hill and Linton Road to Salts Lane.

Better & More Frequent Pedestrian Crossings

5.21 The A229 carries a combination of through-traffic and local traffic. It is also a vital walking route between different neighbourhoods and village services, such as the schools and bus stops. Better and more frequent pedestrian crossings at specific points are required to provide safer and more convenient access between where people live and where people want to get to. In Loose, these locations with support are:

- Rosemount Close to No. 51 Linton Road;
- At the Loose Primary School, where a Pelican or Toucan crossing is required;
- A dedicated pelican crossing at the Linton crossroads adjacent to Cornwallis Academy. This could align the school entrance with the school crossing. The timing and sequence of the traffic lights could also be changed to give greater pedestrian priority.

Lower Speed Limits

5.22 There has been widespread support during the consultation phases for reduced speed limits along the A229 and other roads. In response to this, Loose Parish Council has agreed to set up a community “speed watch” group to monitor this route through the parish. Findings from this group will form the basis of recommendations to Kent County Council Highways. The speed monitoring will be taken between Linton crossroads and the viaduct, although monitoring of speed elsewhere on the A229 could be a later consideration.

Protection Of Country Lanes

5.23 The consultation work has identified that “rat-running” (i.e. vehicles using minor country lanes rather than the main road) is prevalent along Busbridge Road, Salts Lane, Church Street, Well Street and Highbanks.

5.24 The neighbourhood plan identified that these roads need to be protected, and that any further development along these routes should be resisted in order to maintain that protection longer term.

5.25 The designation of these routes as “Quiet Lanes” or similar may be a way to deter use by non-essential traffic. The designation could be accompanied by traffic-calming features and new signages, appropriate for a rural area.

Traffic-Calming & Car Parking

5.26 Areas around the village green, the north end of Northleigh Close, Leonard Gould Way, Well Street, and Loose village centre have been identified as having on-street parking problems. There are no easy answers to these parking issues. The compact form of Loose means that the narrow streets, with a positive village character, often do not have the room to accommodate many vehicles.

5.27 Neighbours, residents and visitors in these areas should act responsibly with courtesy to one another.



Parked cars can often block narrow pavements and obstruct sight lines.

Policy AM2

Land adjacent to the post office at Old Loose Hill and Loose Road junction — “The Village Green”

1) NEW PUBLIC REALM PROJECTS AT THE JUNCTION OF OLD LOOSE HILL AND THE A229 ON LAND AT AND NEAR THE VILLAGE GREEN WILL BE SUPPORTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

THAT THE DESIGNS AND REVISED LAYOUTS:

— PROVIDE A BETTER SETTING FOR THE VILLAGE GREEN

— PROVIDE A BETTER SENSE OF ARRIVAL

— HELP TO SLOW TRAFFIC

— FACILITATE THE TURNING OF LARGER VEHICLES LESS THAN 7.5T WEIGHT & BUSES

— PROVIDE CLEARER ACCESS TO OLD LOOSE HILL

— HELP PRESERVE THE WELL-BEING OF THE LOCAL SHOPS

Policy Justification

5.28 The neighbourhood plan supports a public realm project at the junction of Old Loose Hill and the A229 on land at and near the village green. The aims of this project will be several, as follows:

— To provide a better setting for the village green, one of the few publicly accessible small-scale green spaces in Loose;

— To provide a better sense of arrival and a “gateway” for those arriving in the parish from the north, helping to slow traffic and make the lower speed limit ambition more deliverable;

— Implement a revised traffic layout that better facilitates emergency vehicles and buses which could allow the return of a bus service to the village;

— Revisions to the layout and design of the area should be done with the express aim of helping to preserve the well-being of the local shops in the immediate area, with a more appropriate parking regime.

5.29 These measures are supported in principle by Loose Parish Council and negotiations are on-going with Kent County Council. A final package of agreed measures, supported by both Kent County Council and Loose Parish Council, may be promoted through the neighbourhood plan.

Access & Movement Issues



Crossing the A229 can be difficult. There is just one pedestrian crossing in the parish which is at the Linton cross roads and this is incorporated within the traffic light system which is less than satisfactory.



The village green area is often congested with cars and this can make some traffic movements difficult.



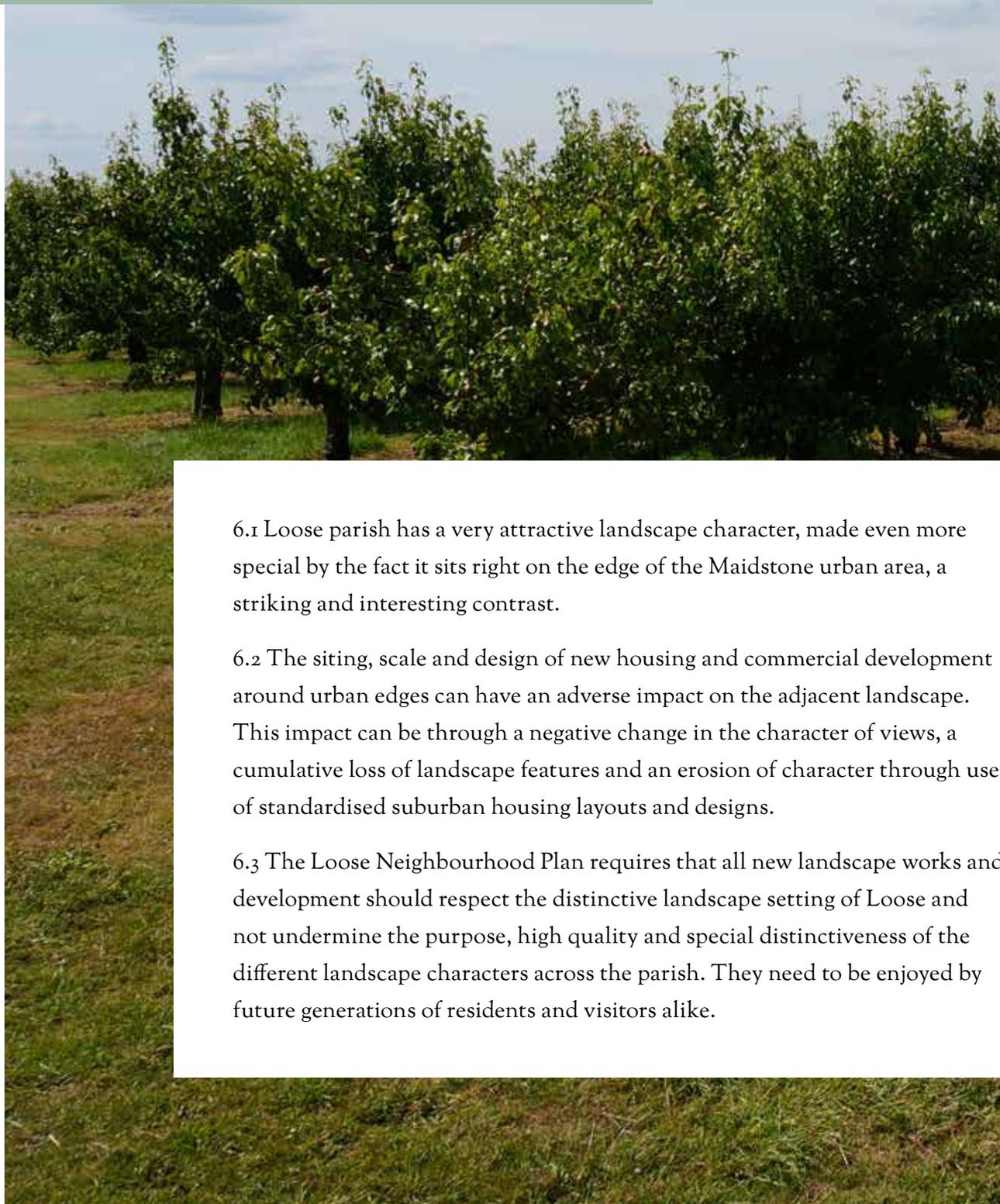
Pavements are narrow and in the absence of any dedicated cycle infrastructure, they are often used as safe routes to and from schools by some cyclists.



The drop-off and pick-up times at the primary school can add to driver delays along the A229.

6. Landscape Protection

Planning Policies



6.1 Loose parish has a very attractive landscape character, made even more special by the fact it sits right on the edge of the Maidstone urban area, a striking and interesting contrast.

6.2 The siting, scale and design of new housing and commercial development around urban edges can have an adverse impact on the adjacent landscape. This impact can be through a negative change in the character of views, a cumulative loss of landscape features and an erosion of character through use of standardised suburban housing layouts and designs.

6.3 The Loose Neighbourhood Plan requires that all new landscape works and development should respect the distinctive landscape setting of Loose and not undermine the purpose, high quality and special distinctiveness of the different landscape characters across the parish. They need to be enjoyed by future generations of residents and visitors alike.

Policy LP1

Views Across Village & Countryside

1) DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD GIVE CONSIDERATION TO IDENTIFIED SHORT AND LONG-RANGE VIEWS ACROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE AND THE VILLAGE, AND WHERE APPROPRIATE SHOULD SEEK TO SAFEGUARD THESE VIEWS.

See supporting photos on pages 36 — 37 and plan in Figure 9, page 38.

Policy Justification

6.4 There is a strong relationship between the built elements of Loose parish and its wider landscape setting. At various points in and around the parish, there are clear lines of sight out to open countryside and back again from open countryside towards and across the village. This experience is enhanced through several elevated locations in the parish. This locally distinctive context provides a sense of identity and a particular character to Loose.

6.5 The neighbourhood plan process has made an assessment of the key views, explained their qualities and recorded them on the plan in Figure 9. This assessment process has helped to formulate a protection policy.

6.6 Applications for new development should demonstrate an understanding of this assessment and show how their proposals respond in an appropriate manner.

LP1 Views Across Village & Countryside



1. The long-distance view looking south from the allotments across the village towards the southern edge of the valley and parish boundary, predominantly orchards. From map ref. TQ75875229.



2. The open view over agricultural land, looking east from the path leading north east from Salts Avenue to Hubbards Lane. From map ref: TQ75985129.



3. The view looking south east, following the Loose valley, towards the village, from Busbridge Road near Pypmes Court Farm. Predominantly Conservation Area. From map ref: TQ75435263.



4. Long distance view looking north across the orchards of the Loose Valley and allotments to the North Downs on the horizon. From the fruit farm packing station, approx. 400m due south of church. From map ref: TQ75555168



5. The view looking south over the village and Conservation Area from approx. 100m north of Kirkdale cottages on west side of footpath. From map ref: TQ75685233..



6. One of the views across the Loose Valley and Conservation Area into the village, from the east side of Busbridge Road. From map ref: TQ75365238 to TQ75545218.



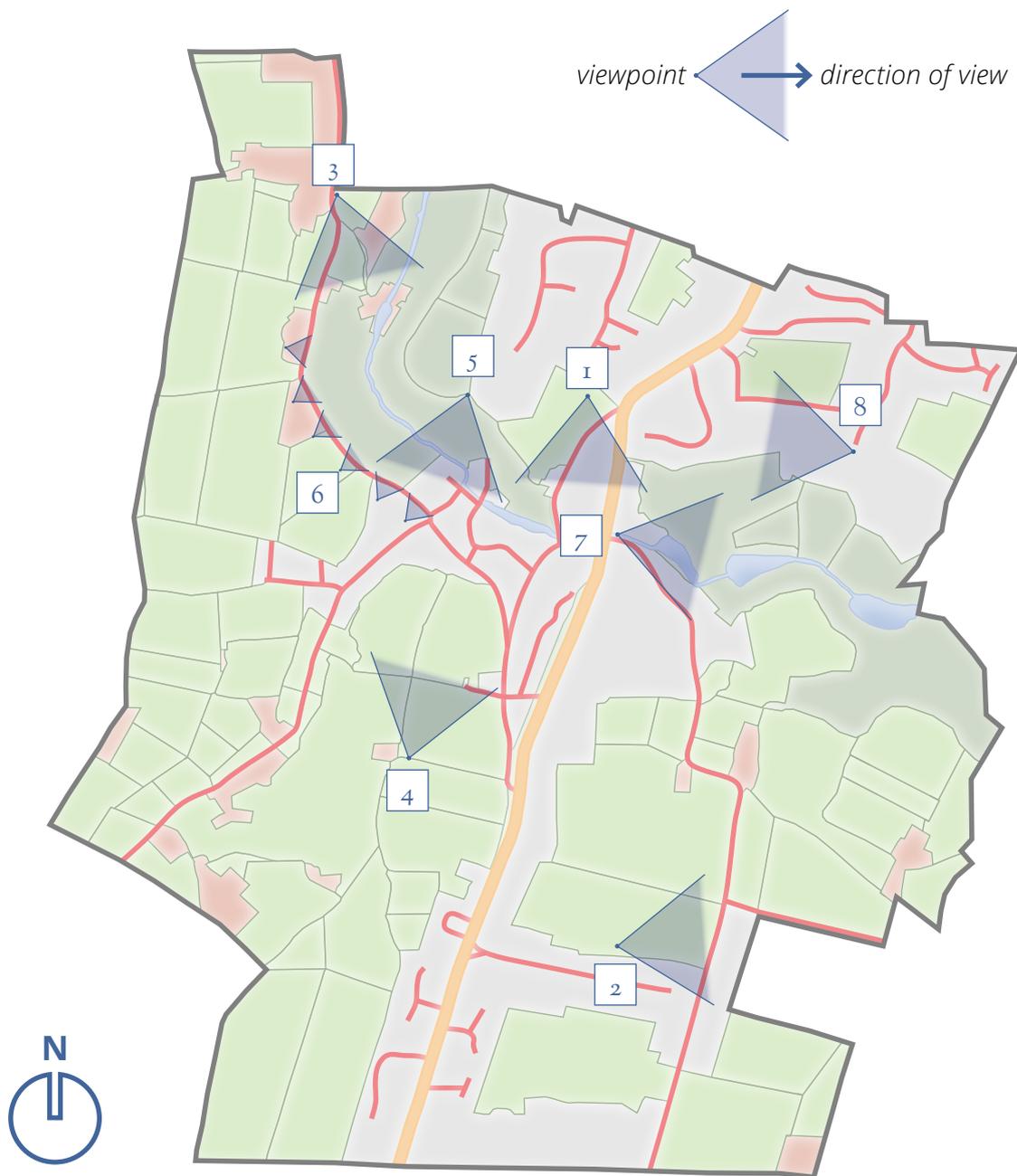
7. Views of the Loose Valley looking east through the Conservation Area, from the Loose Viaduct on the A229. From map ref: TQ75955207.



8. The view of open and working countryside in the Conservation Area, looking westwards from the Pickering Street (Old Lakenham) footpath to Boughton Woods. From map ref: TQ76395205.

Policy LP1 Key Views

Figure 9 — Eight key views to be protected



Policy LP2

Loose Valley Landscape of Local Value

1) DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN THE LOOSE VALLEY LANDSCAPE OF LOCAL VALUE SHOULD HAVE PARTICULAR REGARD TO THE SCENIC QUALITY AND DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF THE AREA, AND SHOULD MITIGATE ANY IMPACTS.

Policy Justification

6.7 The Loose Valley performs a vital local function by demarcating particular distinctive features which are important to Maidstone specifically. The Loose Valley provides local distinctiveness which is unique to Maidstone's identity.

6.8 Protection will be given to the Loose Valley, a narrow and steep-sided valley centred on the Loose stream and mill ponds which forms a pleasant and secluded rural area stretching from Boughton Quarries to Tovil.

6.9 This neighbourhood plan policy seeks landscape protection as part of other planning considerations. This specific policy will therefore become an important planning mechanism to protect the wider parish from intrusive development proposals.

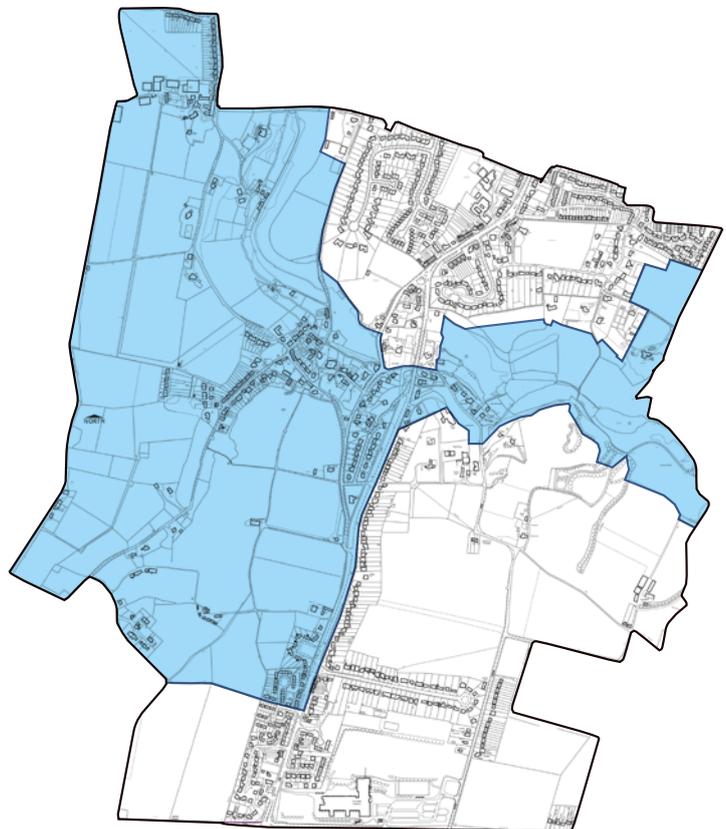


Figure 10 — Land within the parish that is designated part of the Loose Valley Landscape of Local Value

Policy LP3

Design of Development in the Countryside

1) DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WITHIN THE PARISH BOUNDARY AND OUTSIDE THE BUILT AREAS OF LOOSE, AS ILLUSTRATED IN FIGURE 11, WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE SPECIFIC LANDSCAPE DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR THIS AREA SET OUT IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN. IN PARTICULAR, NEW DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD:

- a) PROVIDE FOR HIGH QUALITY DESIGN
- b) BE LOCATED TO AVOID THE LOSS OF IMPORTANT VIEWS
- c) SEEK TO RETAIN KEY LANDSCAPE FEATURES
- d) RESPECT THE CHARACTER AND DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE LOCALITY
- e) ENSURE THAT SITE ENTRANCES AND ACCESS RESPECT AND INCORPORATE LANDSCAPE FEATURES, WHERE APPROPRIATE
- f) PROTECT AND ENHANCE BIODIVERSITY FEATURES.

2) DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WITHIN THE BUILT AREAS OF LOOSE, AS ILLUSTRATED ON FIGURE 11, WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE SPECIFIC DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR THIS AREA SET OUT IN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN. IN PARTICULAR, NEW DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AND SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD:

- a) PROVIDE FOR HIGH QUALITY DESIGN
- b) ENSURE NEW DEVELOPMENT RESPECTS AND COMPLEMENTS THE RURAL SETTLEMENT FORM, PATTERN, CHARACTER AND ITS LANDSCAPE SETTING
- c) MAINTAIN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE HISTORIC SETTLEMENT CORE AND THE LANDSCAPE SETTING THROUGH THE PROTECTION OF VIEWS AND VISTAS
- d) USE APPROPRIATE LOCAL MATERIALS
- e) SEEK TO RETAIN EXISTING LANDSCAPE FEATURES
- f) PROTECT AND ENHANCE ON-SITE BIODIVERSITY FEATURES.

3) PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT WILL BE REQUIRED TO RETAIN THE CHARACTER AND SETTING OF THE AREA AND SHOULD SEEK TO AVOID COALESCENCE WITH THE SETTLEMENTS OF COXHEATH, BOUGHTON MONCHELSEA, TOVIL, EAST FARLEIGH AND LINTON.

Policy Justification

6.10 Landscape is not a subject which stands alone. It can be the integrating framework for the parish and its setting, within which everything else interacts: the people, the buildings, the wildlife, the water courses and so on. Therefore ensuring the landscape framework is properly considered in relation to all new and existing developments is important as the implications can be far-reaching.

6.11 Good development can add to the character of the village and can also fund and deliver many benefits for the community. Carried out without proper care and consideration it can erode landscape character and local distinctiveness. In order to achieve the aspirations of this neighbourhood plan, these landscape policies need to inform development. Without this, local character and distinctiveness may not be retained and enhanced as it should be.

Landscape design principles for development outside the built areas of Loose

in support of Policy LP3 (1)

6.12 Any new buildings and infrastructure within the parish boundary and outside the built-up areas of Loose need to be located to avoid loss of important views towards features such as church towers or the wider landscape, as well as avoiding intrusion onto sensitive ridge lines, prominent slopes and damage to distinctive landscape settings.

6.13 New development should seek to retain key landscape features on development sites, such as woodland, shaws (narrow belts of woodland), hedgerows, orchards, mature trees, watercourses and ponds as a basis for the new landscape structure and setting of the site.

6.14 Development should avoid regimented buildings on the settlement edge for new developments.

6.15 Designs should integrate new development with local character, using open space and planting to provide a visual link to the countryside and an attractive backdrop to development.

6.16 Secure and manage native woodland, shaw, hedgerow and tree planting to integrate and/or screen new and existing developments.

6.17 Consider massing, form, height and colour, texture of buildings and structures, taking account of local distinctiveness and characteristics through the use of locally sympathetic materials. In the case of Loose, this will include ragstone, red brick, tile hanging and weatherboarding.

6.18 Coordinate building colour to secure a complementary effect between buildings and the surrounding landscape (e.g. use of matt neutral colours to minimise reflectivity).

6.19 Ensure that site entrances and approaches are designed to fit within the landscape, and use discrete signage.

6.20 Consider the need for lighting and where essential, seek to minimise its impact in the landscape through choice of light source and control of light spillage.

6.21 Consider the need for fencing. Where security fencing is required use wooden posts and galvanised wire and screen with thorny hedges of native plants.

6.22 Consider the impact of development on the Public Rights of Way network. Any development proposals which would adversely affect the existing Public Rights of Way network will not be permitted.

6.23 Sufficient space is to be included within site layouts to meet obligations linked to ecological requirements, such as the retention of mature hedgerows and trees and the creation of wetland habitats, linked to a SuDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) implementation plan. New development should seek to include sustainable drainage systems within green infrastructure. Additional information is available in Kent County Council's Drainage and Planning Policy Statement (June 2017)

Landscape design principles for development within the built areas of Loose

in support of Policy LP3 (2)

6.24 Recent development in rural areas has not always reflected the character and form of the host settlement. Furthermore, without respect for the relationship with the surrounding landscape, such developments can “suburbanise” the character of Loose.

6.25 Meanwhile, choice of materials does not always reflect local distinctiveness, often using standardised bricks and tiles. To avoid such situations in the future, all new developments in Loose should:

6.26 Ensure new development respects and complements the rural settlement form, pattern, character and its landscape setting, reinforcing local distinctiveness.

6.27 Conserve sensitive parts of settlement settings.

6.28 Maintain a direct relationship between the old settlement core and the surrounding landscape, allowing views in and out.

6.29 Use native woodland, shaw, hedgerow planting as appropriate to local character and open space to integrate new development. Use advance planting of native local trees and shrubs, where appropriate.

6.30 Avoid the introduction of features such as close board fencing, suburban style walls and fast growing conifers, particularly on the boundaries with rural lanes or with the wider landscape.

6.31 Use appropriate local materials. In the case of Loose, this will include ragstone, red brick, tile hanging, weatherboarding and peg tiles.

6.32 Seek to minimise the impact of new residential accesses by retaining existing hedgerows or traditional walls where possible.

6.33 Use new native hedge species and sympathetic grass mix verges where new sight lines are necessary. Where possible, use local provenance wildflower and grass-seed mixes.

6.34 Avoid the introduction of urban bollards, concrete block paving, concrete or plastic kerbs and highly coloured signage.

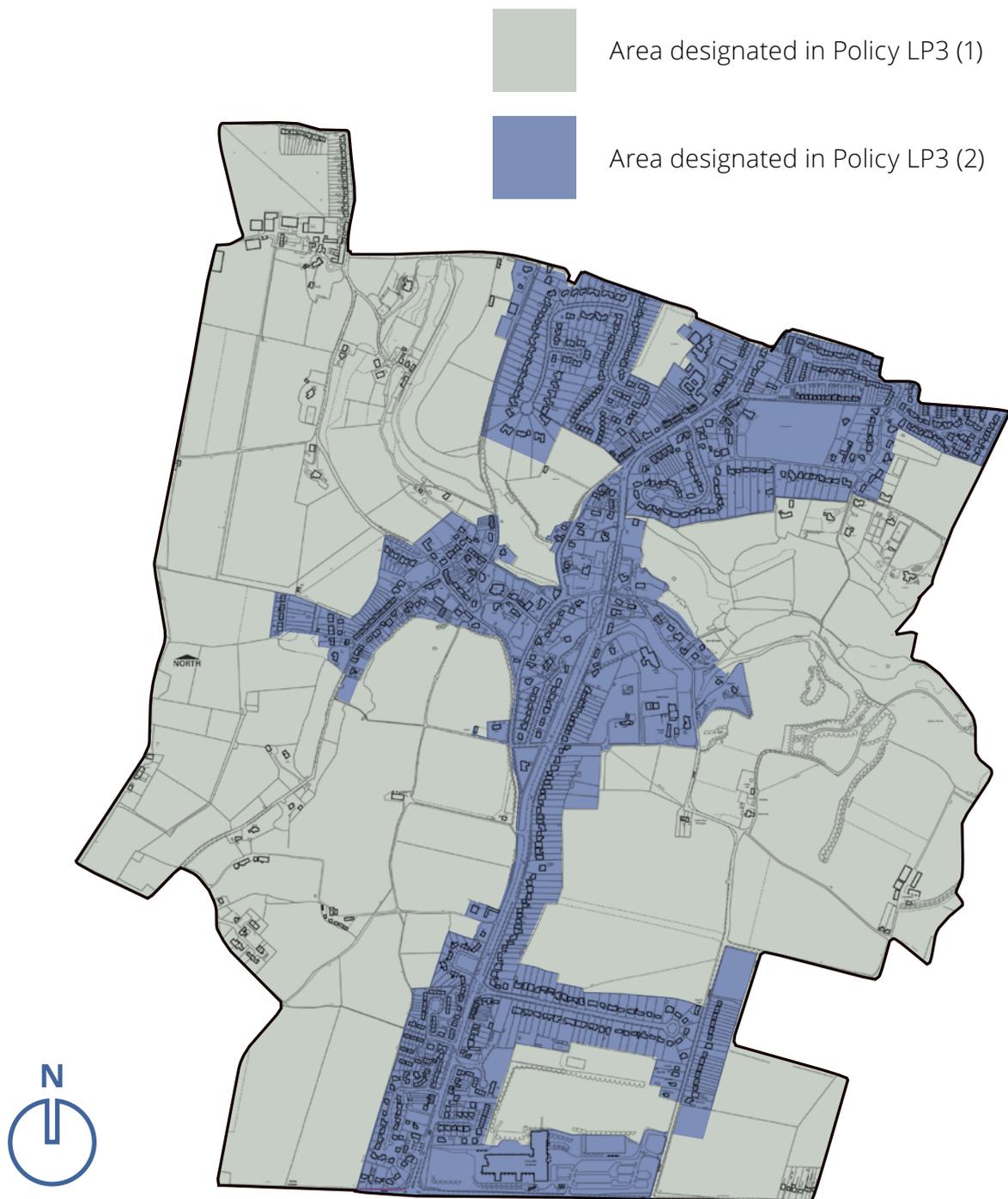
6.35 Use local stone on kerbs and surface dressings to complement local materials for carriageways and pavements.

6.36 Consider the need for lighting and minimise its impact.

6.37 Sufficient space is to be included within site layouts to meet obligations linked to ecological requirements, such as the retention of mature hedgerows and trees and the creation of wetland habitats, linked to a SuDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) implementation plan.

Policy LP3 Design of Development in the Countryside

Figure 11 — Plan in support of Policy LP3



Policy LP4

Natural Environment in Loose

1) DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS SHOULD SEEK TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ACROSS THE PARISH, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON THE LOOSE VALLEY AND LAND THAT SURROUNDS IT. NEW DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT AND TO SAFEGUARD EXISTING HABITATS WITHIN THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDING AREA.

2) PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE PLAN AREA SHOULD INCLUDE AN ECOLOGICAL SURVEY AND A FLOOD SURVEY IN ORDER TO INFORM THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS, AND TO IDENTIFY ANY MITIGATION MEASURES THAT MAY BE NECESSARY.

3) DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS OF ALL SCALES SHOULD MAKE PROVISION FOR HABITAT AND CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENTS, AS PART OF THE DESIGNS.

Policy Justification

6.38 The Loose Valley and the areas surrounding it support a broad diversity in both flora and fauna, including many species regarded as under threat. Numbers have dropped dramatically in recent years for the song thrush, turtle dove, grey wagtail and spotted flycatcher. In order to ensure that this diversity is maintained and that rare and threatened species are encouraged to thrive, biodiversity must be given a high priority when planning new developments and determining planning applications. This policy is applicable across the parish, not just to the areas of open countryside or agriculture, but in the built areas as well.

6.39 As well as the woods, meadows and fields across the parish, gardens and transport routes (e.g. roads, footpaths, tracks and watercourses) also provide important migratory routes for small mammals as well as nesting and feeding habitats for birds, from wrens to buzzards, and increasingly red kites, and various waterfowl. The neighbourhood plan area also includes a wide range of habitats supporting many species of fauna and varied ecosystems, some of which are now regarded as rare or endangered.

6.40 Plans for development should include a comprehensive biodiversity survey, having regard not only to the immediate location but also the effect the development may have on the Loose Stream and migratory routes. The removal of trees or hedgerows should be avoided and, if necessary, the plans should be adapted to ensure their retention. Development plans should also make provision for “mini-habitats” such as nesting boxes, swift bricks, bat boxes and bug hotels together with safe road crossings on identified migratory routes.

Policy LP5

Designated Local Green Spaces

TO PRESERVE, PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE LOCAL CHARACTER AND SETTING, THE FOLLOWING GREEN SPACES ARE TO BE DESIGNATED AS LOCAL GREEN SPACES AND BE AFFORDED PROTECTION:

1. King George V Playing Field
2. Brooks Field
3. Village Green
4. Allotments
5. Green verges on the western side of A229, from the viaduct to just south of Herts Crescent
6. Green triangle at western end of Salts Avenue
7. Green verges at western end of Copper Tree Court
8. Junction of Leonard Gould Way and Pickering Street
9. Coppiced slope on southern side of Salts Lane
10. Herts Crescent Green
11. North verge of Holmesdale Close

Policy Justification

6.41 Good planning and design requires an integration of the landscape features with the built form. A local green network of landscape infrastructure has been identified and this will be protected and enhanced through the provisions of this policy.

6.42 Local green space designation is a way to provide special protection against development for green areas of particular importance to local communities.

6.43 In Loose, the spaces to be protected are considered important through a combination of being beautiful, acting as a green edge, having historic qualities, being of recreational value or providing a tranquil space or being a wildlife habitat. These designations will not only continue to provide the village with its rural character and identity but will also provide recreational opportunities for residents and support biodiversity. Blue infrastructure, in the form of ponds, lakes and watercourses has been integrated into this network.

6.44 The neighbourhood plan has identified on a map green areas for special protection (see Figure 12 on page 50). The designation of these spaces is consistent with local planning for sustainable development in the area. Further opportunities for pocket parks, street trees and enhanced landscape planting should also be explored and offered as part of all development proposals across the parish.

6.45 It should be noted that all landowners, including MBC and KCC, were individually consulted over the designation of their landholdings as local green spaces.

6.46 If it proves necessary to install essential statutory utilities infrastructure, and no other feasible site is available then the Parish Council will liaise with the utility providers to ensure that such infrastructure is provided with minimum impact upon the Local Green Space.

Designated Local Green Spaces *with the reasons for designation*

1. King George V Playing Field

G R T

2. Brooks Field

B G R T

3. Village Green

B H T

4. Allotments

G R T

5. Green verges on the western side of A229, from the viaduct to south of Herts Crescent

B G T

6. Green triangle at western end of Salts Avenue

B T

7. Green verges at western end of Copper Tree Court

G T

8. Junction of Leonard Gould Way and Pickering Street

B G T R

9. Coppiced slope on southern side of Salts Lane

B G T

10. Herts Crescent Green

G R T

11. North verge of Holmesdale Close

G T

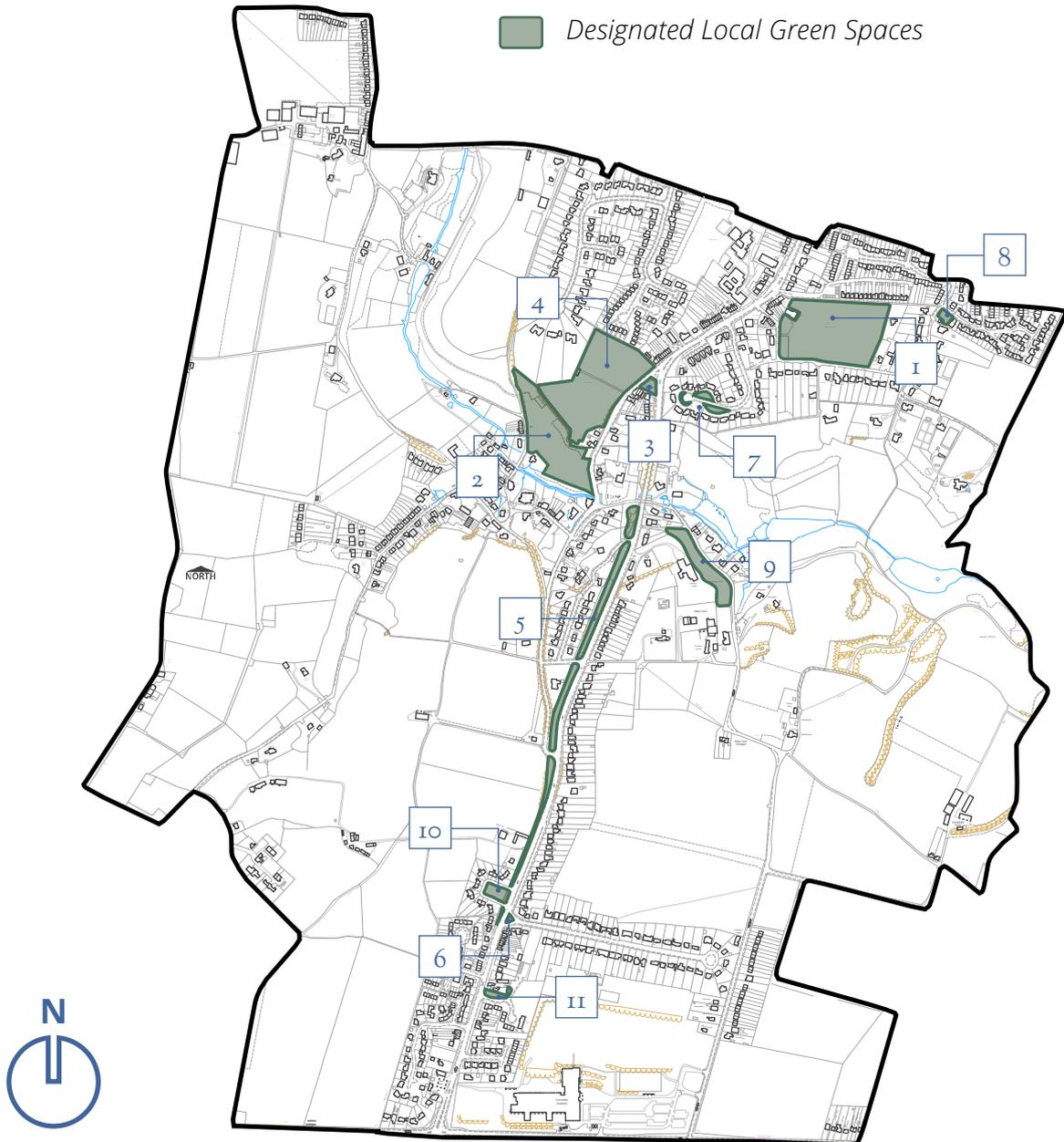
See supporting photos on pages 51 — 53 and plan in Figure 12, page 50.

KEY TO LOCAL GREEN SPACE TYPOLOGIES

- B Beauty
- G Green Edge
- H Historic Qualities
- R Recreational
- T Tranquillity & Wildlife Habitat

Policy LP5 Designated Local Green Spaces

Figure 12 — Designated Local Green Spaces





1. King George V Playing Field, viewed from the south west corner.



2. Part of Brooks Field, viewed from the south east corner.



3. Village Green, viewed from south west corner.



4. The allotments, viewed from northern boundary.



5. A229 verge, looking north from the mid-point of the space.



6. Salts Avenue triangle, viewed from the east.



7. Part of Copper Tree Court, viewed from western end.



8. Leonard Gould Way and Pickering Street, viewed from the north.



9. Typical part of a coppiced slope, Salts Lane.



10. Herts Crescent, viewed from south east corner.



11. Part of Holmesdale Close, viewed from the west.

7. Design Quality

Planning Policies



7.1 Any new housing development must be shaped and influenced by the traditional character and style of the parish. The Loose Neighbourhood Plan requires all new developments to reference the local context and demonstrate the use of high quality materials and styles appropriate to the place. For example, any small-scale in-fill and extensions to existing properties and developments adjacent to the built areas of Loose must be sensitive to the rural and more historic context, by reflecting the character of housing in proximity to countryside.

7.2 The aim for all new developments must be for them to leave a positive architectural legacy, to be sensitive to their local context and environment and add to the positive character of the Loose parish.



Policy DQ1

Design Quality

1) THE DESIGN, FORM AND DETAIL OF DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD BE PRINCIPALLY INFORMED BY THE TRADITIONAL FORM, LAYOUT, CHARACTER AND STYLE OF THE PARISH'S VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE. THIS WILL BE APPLICABLE TO NEW BUILD HOMES, COMMERCIAL AND EMPLOYMENT USE BUILDINGS AND TO ALTERATIONS TO EXISTING PROPERTIES.

2) CAREFUL INNOVATION IN DESIGN OR THOUGHTFUL MODERN OR CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE WILL NOT BE PRECLUDED. SUCH DESIGNS ARE ENCOURAGED, PROVIDED THEY ARE SYMPATHETIC TO THE SCALE AND CHARACTER OF LOOSE.

3) PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PLAN AREA SHOULD TAKE FULL ACCOUNT OF THE DESIGN GUIDE CRITERIA SET OUT AT PARAGRAPHS 7.16 — 7.33 IN THE PLAN.

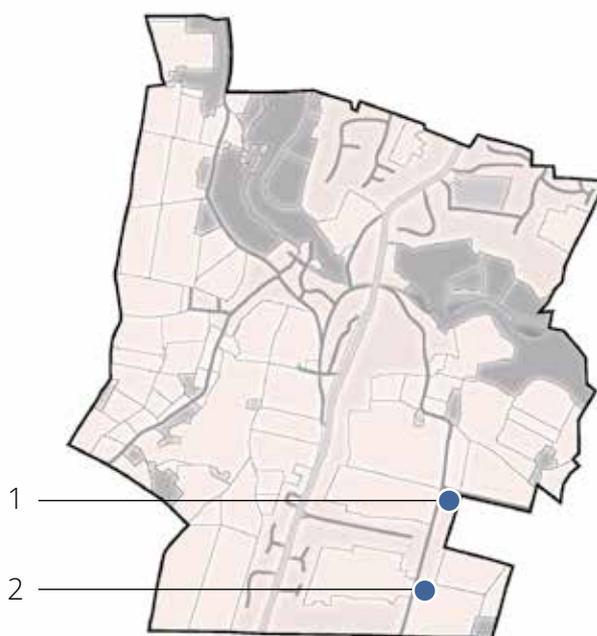


Figure 13 — This policy on good design will apply across the whole parish as well as having specific application on two sites allocated in the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, Adopted 25th October 2017:

1 — Approx. 20 dwellings at Hubbards Lane and Haste Hill Road, Loose. This is Policy H1 (51) in the adopted MBC Local Plan.

2 — Approx. 8 dwellings at Hubbards Lane south. This is Policy H1 (55) in the adopted MBC Local Plan.

Policy Justification

7.3 Loose needs to promote good architecture through better definition of what is considered to be good quality design. The transitional spaces between private and public space are critical and parameters need to be set to guide development. There should be a consideration of the massing of buildings, with detailed design from the street and eye level upwards to the skyline. Local designers and construction companies should combine with local labour and material supplies. This combination can provide positive ecological and economic impacts and help the local community to have a greater say on the future of the village. Energy efficiencies and alternative sources of power should be introduced at the earliest design stage. It is important for new developments to reflect the historic and unique values that have contributed to Loose's character and identity whilst still looking to the future through modern designs.

Local character

7.4 Any new housing development must be shaped and influenced by the traditional character and style of the village. The Loose Neighbourhood Plan requires all new developments to reference the local context and demonstrate the use of high quality materials and styles appropriate to the place. For example, any small-scale in-fill and extensions to existing properties and developments that may come forward within the built environment area need to respect the local and historic context, by reflecting the character of housing in the immediate proximity. Small clusters of new housing may have their own distinctive characters, to add to the overall variety and mix of Loose.

Consultation response

7.5 Through the consultation, the residents of Loose are generally agreed that they wish to see any new development in their village to be of a high design standard. They are also keen to see new developments improve their environment rather than downgrade it. They are proud of the local built environment and want to protect and enhance this legacy into the future.

Leaving a legacy

7.6 The aim for all new developments must be for them to leave a positive architectural legacy, to be sensitive to their local context and environment and add to the positive character of Loose. This policy will not exclude innovation or modern and contemporary architecture. Such designs are encouraged across the parish on individual sites as exemplar projects.

7.7 Where appropriate, architects are encouraged to create new designs that reflect both the local context and the technology and materials of the era within which they will be built.

Internal space standards

7.8 The size of new homes often falls short of existing space standards. The now defunct "Parker-Morris" space standards created more spacious buildings than those often being built today. All new developments are therefore to have space standards in accordance with the DCLG Technical Housing Standards. Housing development should also consider the storage and parking of bicycles.

Homes for modern living

7.9 The Loose Neighbourhood Plan will require all future housing development to support modern lifestyles through innovative design. These will include reducing energy costs through meeting high design standards as well as internal space standards and layouts that will encourage working from home.

7.10 Design details, such as the ability to receive parcels securely when not at home, meter reading, storage of several bicycles, flexible use of garage and garden spaces and the effective storage of waste and recycling bins must all be considered. All housing should seek to meet “Lifetime Homes” standards to ensure properties are sustainable and can be easily adapted to meet the needs of a changing population. The development of bungalows must also be considered.

7.11 All housing designs must promote efficient use of water, electricity and energy. The introduction of on-site generation technology, smart meters and other measures to reduce energy consumption should be considered across all housing sites.

7.12 The use of locally-sourced and recycled materials for use in construction should also be considered. Consideration should also be given to self-finish and/or self-build homes, as well as innovative hybrid housing that can respond to modern lifestyles.

Investment in community facilities

7.13 Loose currently has no dedicated community hall suitable for use by the wider population of the parish. The pavilion at the King George V playing field has provided sterling service over recent years but is now considered too small for many events and is hampered by the lack of smaller rooms to run events in parallel. A dedicated parish council office is badly needed. It is no longer appropriate for the parish office to be run from a private house and an extended building here could incorporate a dedicated operational space.

7.14 The majority feeling amongst residents through the consultation was that an investment in this location through an expansion of the existing building will be better than trying to secure a new site elsewhere in the parish. Furthermore, this site is probably the only one where publicly owned land is available for a project of this size and type.

7.15 The Loose Neighbourhood Plan has therefore identified a project for a new community hub facility at the King George V playing field. This will be supported subject to the following criteria: the provision of additional meeting spaces, including multiple rooms of different sizes; the inclusion of a dedicated parish office; and the use of high quality materials and external landscape works. The scale and design of this community hub will be subject to consultation.

Loose Neighbourhood Plan Design Guide

DESIGN CHECK-LIST

7.16 The following design topics should be addressed through a Design & Access Statement (DAS) by any applicant seeking planning permission for development or redevelopment in the neighbourhood plan area:

Amenity

7.17 Green spaces of appropriate scale and quality within new developments will be encouraged. All new houses to have private amenity space and/or gardens, at the front, back or side of the property, as appropriate.

Construction

7.18 The build quality of new developments, and the materials selected as part of the construction process, should ensure a high standard of appearance over time. Construction techniques and materials should prevent a rapid deterioration that can lead to buildings with an unsightly or neglected appearance. Building maintenance should be cost-effective and easy to administer.

Density

7.19 The density of new development should be in character with the local surrounding area, respect the character of the area and be designed to give an impression of spaciousness with opportunity for green landscape between buildings.

Discretion

7.20 Car parking should be discreet, with a proper provision of off-road parking as appropriate. On-road parking needs to be accommodated carefully to ensure that footways are not blocked or narrowed.

Domestic

7.21 The scale of new dwellings to be of a small or domestic scale suitable for the Loose local context. This is especially true within the existing built areas.

Evolution

7.22 Loose is to evolve gradually and not to experience rapid large-scale development. All development proposals are required to demonstrate how they will contribute to this positive evolution.

Extension

7.23 House extensions are to be sympathetic with the style of the host house and use similar materials and fenestration. Modern style extensions to traditional houses will be resisted.

Integration

7.24 New buildings should be well-integrated into the site and become part of a unified and interrelated composition, both with other buildings on site and with existing buildings adjacent to the site.

Layout

7.25 New developments should incorporate access routes and footpaths within the layout that reflect the historic character of Loose.

Lighting

7.26 Consideration should be given to the need for lighting, and where it is deemed essential, efforts should be made to seek to minimise its impact in the landscape through choice of light source and control of light spillage. Lighting should only be installed in areas of need. Areas adjacent to open spaces should be left unlit to avoid light pollution.

Locality

7.27 New buildings are to use local construction materials and techniques and reflect local building traditions. Materials should be obtained from local sustainable sources.

Resource Efficiency

7.28 Measures to help conserve water and energy in new buildings will be encouraged. The reuse and recycling of building materials will be encouraged, as will the use of locally sourced timber in construction.

Security

7.29 All developments and improvements in Loose parish should be designed to ensure that safety and security are built in. Designs should ensure people feel safe during hours of darkness through unobtrusive path lighting and active frontages (i.e. doors and windows facing onto the street) and safe, permeable routes where appropriate.

Ecology

7.30 New development should seek for ecological enhancement to the immediate area, such as provision for birds and bats to be incorporated into new buildings.

Tradition

7.31 Styles and materials that relate to those found in the more historic parts of the locality will be encouraged.

Gateway

7.32 Development on gateway sites that fail to take advantage of opportunities to improve the entrance points into Loose will be resisted.

Skyline

7.33 Developments should maintain and enhance the character views out to open countryside.

Built Environment Design Issues



Short rows of linked houses and the use of timber cladding is a design approach that will be supported.



On-site energy generation is an issue that must be considered as part of the design quality assessment of any proposal.



Use of ragstone on boundary treatments creates a robust and distinctive Loose identity.



This building has been successfully enlarged, with the new build wing blended effectively with the host property. A good example of how older buildings in Loose can be converted for modern use.

Landscape Design Issues



The landscape around Loose is rich agricultural land with a long history of fruit production, including cherries and apples. The neighbourhood plan wishes to see this productive quality maintained and enhanced.



The topography of Loose creates a higher plateau on the east of the parish with elevated views out towards open countryside.



Many footpaths are narrow and can feel overgrown at certain times of the year.



Sites within the parish afford residents and visitors long distance views out to open countryside and beyond the parish boundary.

Policy DQ2

Protection and Enhancement of the Loose Valley Conservation Area

1) NEW DEVELOPMENT OR ALTERATION TO AN EXISTING STRUCTURE WITHIN THE LOOSE CONSERVATION AREA WILL BE REQUIRED IN ITS DESIGN, SCALE AND MATERIALS TO PRESERVE OR ENHANCE THE SETTING OF THE AREA AND THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF LOOSE AND TO HAVE REGARD TO THE GUIDANCE CONTAINED WITHIN THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN.

2) WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA ANY TREES LOST DUE TO AGE, STORM OR OTHER DAMAGE SHOULD BE REPLACED WITH SPECIMENS OF THE SAME TYPE OR A TYPE APPROVED BY THE BOROUGH COUNCIL.

Policy Justification

7.34 The Loose Valley Conservation Area (LVCA) was established in 1970 and seeks to protect and enhance a defined area of the parish due to its heritage value. While this designation affords the area a high degree of statutory protection, key points that the neighbourhood plan wishes to emphasis include:

7.35 Within the LVCA any trees lost due to age, storm or other damage should be replaced with specimens of the same type or a type approved by the borough council. Planning applications across the parish should consider the impact of the change or development upon trees within the site or adjacent to it regardless of the type of application.

7.36 Where the application includes multiple new buildings, it should include an appropriate landscaping scheme which takes into account the impact upon the amenity of neighbours as well as longer distance views.

Future conservation projects

7.37 Loose already benefits from both the Conservation Area and an Article 4 direction that removes certain permitted development rights for the betterment of the built environment. However, the extent of this power is not considered wide enough. Loose Parish Council will seek an extension of the Article 4 direction area. An associated project will be to create a Loose Valley Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Plan, currently absent from the local planning framework.

DQ2 Conservation Area & Trees



The commemorative oak tree in the village green provides shade during the summer months, making the village a more hospitable and pleasant place to be.



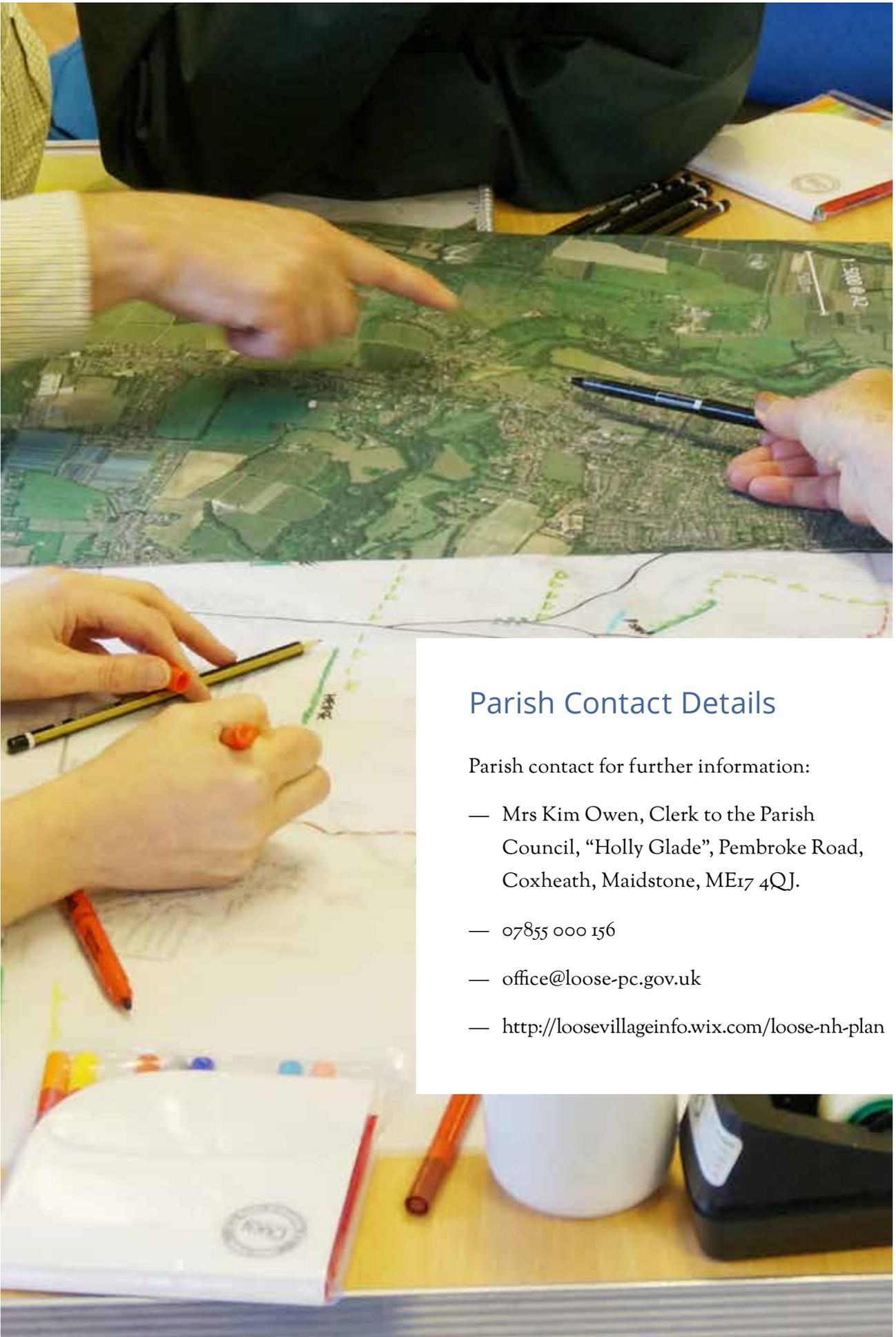
Trees within private gardens can have a positive impact on public streets and spaces.



Smaller species of tree and shrubs within the conservation area help provide the distinctive setting for Loose.



Trees can help frame views and soften the view of development within landscape.



Parish Contact Details

Parish contact for further information:

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*“Loose...
a place
apart”*

Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

25 June 2019

Maidstone Borough Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) Update

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Helen Smith, Principal Planning Officer Tay Arnold, Planning Projects and Delivery Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on progress made to date on the actions contained within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) and associated risks to delivery, 9% of which are currently rated as having a red risk to delivery. However, it should be noted that many of these actions are ongoing rather than finite so this appraisal is based on the current situation and may change over time, depending on funding and resources, particularly in regard to those actions where MBC has a facilitation role.

This report makes the following recommendations to the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

That:

1. The progress made to date on the actions contained within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) be noted.
2. Officers focus their efforts on advancing specific ITS actions H1, PT1 and PT2.
3. The "Route Corridor Walking and Cycling Assessment: The A20 London Road, Maidstone (May 2019)" (Appendix 2) be agreed and approved for publication.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee	25 June 2019

Maidstone Borough Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) Update

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS)

- 1.1 This Committee adopted the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (**ITS**) and Walking & Cycling strategy (**W&CS**) in September 2016. On 12 June 2018, an update report on the W&CS was brought to this Committee. The report outlined the progress made to date on achieving the objectives within the ITS that specifically related to walking and cycling. The remaining actions from the ITS were not reported on at this time.
- 1.2 For context, the ITS assesses the principal existing and future challenges affecting the transport network across all modes, throughout the borough. It contains strategic objectives and actions to address the identified challenges, as well as targets to monitor the progress of the ITS in achieving its objectives. It is an integral component of the MBLP evidence base and is strongly interlinked with the delivery of the MBLP. It is therefore important that progress in delivering the ITS is monitored.
- 1.3 The ITS sets out five strategic objectives that are to be achieved through the delivery of a number of specific actions. These actions are grouped under six transport themes: highways; parking; Ultra-low/Zero emissions; public transport; walking; and cycling. The 5 objectives are:

Objective 1: Enhancing and encouraging sustainable travel choices including:

- A. The development, maintenance and enhancement of walking and cycling provision, through network improvements and encouraging uptake amongst the population;
- B. The development, maintenance and enhancement of public transport provision, including Park and Ride, encouraging uptake amongst the population;
- C. Promotion and education regarding walking, cycling and public transport travel options;
- D. Ensuring that the provision of parking is fair and proportionate, considering the needs of all users, whilst also encouraging sustainable travel choices; and
- E. Place sustainable travel options at the heart of all new developments within Maidstone, to ensure a fully integrated network that puts pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users at the centre of any transport proposals.

Objective 2: The enhancement of strategic transport links to, from and within Maidstone town.

Objective 3: Ensure the transport system supports the growth projected by the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

Objective 4: Reducing the air quality impacts of transport.

Objective 5: Ensure the transport network considers the needs of all users, providing equal accessibility by removing barriers to use.

1.4 Overall, good progress has been made against delivery of each of the ITS objectives although it is reasonable to surmise that while many actions have been progressed considerably, further work is needed in some areas. Table 9.2 in the ITS identifies six targets to monitor the progress of the ITS in achieving its overall objectives. Whilst the majority of the targets have a deadline year of 2031, annual monitoring of progress in delivering the MBLP more broadly (and therefore the associated ITS and IDP) is recorded through a series of indicators as set out in the Authority's Monitoring Report (**AMR**). The AMR is published annually on the Council's website. Below is Table 9.2 from the ITS with commentary on progress towards these targets:

Target	Description	Progress comments
1	To increase walking mode share in Maidstone from 8% of all work trips to more than 10% of all work trips by 2021 and 12% by 2031.	Progress against MBLP monitoring indicators M48 and M50 are reported on annually through the Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR is published on the Council's website.
2	To increase cycling mode share in Maidstone from 0.8% to more than 2% of all work trips by 2021 and 3% by 2031.	
3	To increase public transport mode share in Maidstone from 7.3% to more than 10% of all work trips by 2021 and 12% by 2031.	Official data on modal shift will be available through national census data, collected every 10 years – the next census year will be 2021.
4	To decrease car driver mode share in Maidstone from 44.3% of all work trips to below 40% by 2021 and below 37% by 2031.	
5	To undertake a full and independent review of Maidstone's Park and Ride provision, issue and act upon recommendations by 2017.	An independent review has been carried out, encompassing Park and Ride, Bus interchanges and parking strategy. This was approved by SPST for publication in January 2018. Further reports were brought to this Committee in April 2018 and November 2018 and a new contract with Arriva will commence July 2019
6	To double the number of electric charging points in Maidstone by 2021 and to double again by 2031.	The provision of EV charging points is monitored and reported annually via the Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) Local Plan indicator M42. The 2017/18 AMR

		records that 2 applications were granted permission with air quality mitigation measures, including the provision of EV charging points. A needs assessment study for the EV charging network in Kent has now been produced by KCC.
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- 1.5 A summary of the progress made to date against the actions are outlined below, listed in the order they appear within the ITS. The summary also includes updates of the actions previously reported in the June 2018 W&CS update report to this Committee. 9% of the actions within the ITS have been rated as red in terms of delivery, in particular actions H1, PT1, and PT2. With the remainder being 30% Amber and 61% Green. However, it should be noted that many of these actions are ongoing rather than finite so this appraisal is based on the current situation and may change over time, depending on funding and resources, particularly in regards to those actions where MBC has a facilitation role or where funding is revenue related. MBC officers will continue to work proactively and collaboratively with KCC and other providers to ensure that delivery continues for those actions rated green and to progress those actions rated red and amber.

Highways

- 1.6 **H1 Targeted implementation of highway improvements at key strategic locations to relieve congestion and to aid public transport.** This is an integral action within the ITS and is comprised of a number of key junctions and proposed interventions set out within the ITS that collectively aim to reduce congestion on Maidstone's roads. The table in Appendix 1 details the schemes listed in the ITS under this action and shows the progress made against each one. Due to a number of complexities around scheme designs, funding and political agreement, some of the schemes listed under Action H1 have not been progressed as quickly as originally envisaged. Officers are disappointed with the overall lack of progress and have identified that renewed efforts are required to ensure the timely delivery of Action H1 and the important schemes therein.
- 1.7 **H2 Maintain and develop Maidstone's Intelligent Transport Systems and the proactive sharing of real time traffic and transport information with road users to manage congestion.** This system is managed by KCC and cameras are in place at strategic locations throughout the borough to monitor traffic flows. Based on the observations of traffic flows, KCC is able to update its Twitter feed in real time and provide links to traffic maps. In addition, roadside message signs can also be updated to reflect the current road conditions. These signs are able to show a range of information for road users, including: car park capacity/spaces; safety information e.g. messages on wearing a seatbelt; roadwork details; promotional information e.g. car sharing or litter campaigns; and incident information (this takes priority over any other messages).

- 1.8 Most signals in Maidstone are Scoot connected, allowing them to synchronise to achieve optimum traffic flow. Scoot is an effective and efficient tool for managing traffic on signalised road networks and uses data from vehicle detectors and optimises traffic signal settings to reduce vehicle delays and stops.
- 1.9 Information is also available on www.kenttrafficinfo including real time bus information, planned roadworks, parking information and traffic speed details. All of this enables road users to plan ahead to better manage congestion on the roads.
- 1.10 **H3 Facilitate and promote the expansion of the County Hall Car-Club service to meet any identified increase in demand on an annual basis.** This scheme is administered by KCC and predominantly aimed at their staff as pool cars and since entering into a new contract in May 2018, 63 KCC staff have registered to use the County Hall Car Club service and 230 trips have taken place. Average monthly utilisation based on reservations made from May to December 2018 is at 66%; with a peak of 90% in June 2018 and the lowest utilisation in August 2018 at 47%. This lower figure is likely due to the school summer holidays.
- 1.11 The County Hall Car Club has two cars that are made available for use by the general public in the evenings after 6pm and at weekends. Based on the data received from the contractor, uptake of the scheme by members of the public has been consistently growing since August although the actual numbers remain relatively low. This is potentially due to the fact that at present, the use of the cars is limited to out-of-hours availability only. Moving forwards, there are plans to use digital marketing to promote the scheme, using social media accounts such as Kent Connected and Kent Highways. Advertising materials will be provided by the contractors.
- 1.12 Discussions are also currently taking place around the idea of having a third car available for use by anyone (staff or public) at all times. KCC and MBC may look further into the risks and benefits of this idea as a potential joint venture once more information is provided by the contractors.
- 1.13 **H4 Actively promote and encourage car sharing initiatives.** KCC continue to manage the Kent journey share website <https://liftshare.com/uk/community/kent>; a free web-based service that links people making the same or similar journeys and encourages them to share their trip. There are currently over 4,700 members of the 'Kent County Council – Kent Journey Share' group. Similarly, Kentconnected.org provides an integrated, cohesive approach to the provision of public transport information; making it easy for users to plan a journey, switch their commuting mode of travel, or find information news and events relating to smarter ways to travel around Kent. This includes the promotion of car sharing initiatives.
- 1.14 Active promotion of car sharing initiatives also occurs through targeted use of road signs as mentioned under Action H2.
- 1.15 **H5 Ensure road safety education continues to be provided for across the borough.** Bikeability cycle training (levels 1, 2 and 3), Young Driver

Education and the "Licence to kill" film production continue to be offered to schools in Maidstone.

- 1.16 In addition, the Small Steps programme aimed at educating 8-11 year olds in pedestrian road safety continues to be delivered across schools in Maidstone. In 2018, 7 Maidstone schools took part in the programme, including Southborough Primary, Lenham Primary and Headcorn Primary and are likely to once again in 2019. In addition Senacre Woods Primary, Marden Primary, Oaks Academy and Molehill Primary are either currently undertaking or about to commence the course at time of writing.
- 1.17 **H6 Installation of additional electric car charging points and the promotion of electric car use.** As reported to Maidstone Joint Transport Board on 16 January 2019, work is continuing to progress in relation to the promotion of electric car use and the installation of electric car charging points.
- 1.18 MBC's Parking Services are currently engaging with electric vehicle (EV) users to identify the best charging method and operation model in line with customer expectations. Quotes for civil works undertaken by UK Power Networks (UKPN) for each proposed EV point location have been confirmed and once market testing is complete and the operational model agreed, Parking Services will place an order with UKPN for the procurement/leasing of 8 new EVs.
- 1.19 MBC and KCC have worked in partnership to successfully secure funds from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) under their Ultra Low Emission Taxi Infrastructure Scheme. The funds will enable KCC and MBC to install charging infrastructure to encourage a shift to ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) for use as taxis and private hire vehicles.
- 1.20 KCC is currently drafting an Electric Vehicle Strategy to outline actions that will be taken to promote uptake in EV and plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEV) and have recently completed the needs assessment study for the EV charging network in Kent. Additionally, KCC are also updating their Parking Planning Guidance (as part of the Kent Design Guide) to provide guidance to developers around charging infrastructure requirements in new developments.
- 1.21 As is reported on below, EV charging points are being conditioned as part of new development being approved as part of the development management process.
- 1.22 Work is currently underway to adjust the current parking on County Road, Maidstone in order to increase the amount of EV charging spaces from 2 to 4 (see Action H3).

Parking

- 1.23 **P1 Introduce Parking Standards to ensure a means by which development can ensure an appropriate amount of parking is provided and reduce the overall demand for car parking.** Parking standards were introduced through the MBLP. Policy DM23 (Parking

Standards), sets out the borough's approach to parking standards for both residential and non-residential uses. This action continues to be monitored as part of the MBLP monitoring, under indicator M50. KCC are currently updating their Parking Planning Guidance as part of the Kent Design Guide too.

- 1.24 **P2 Optimise long stay parking charges to extract maximum value from parking charges, whilst controlling demand through a 50% increase in long-stay charges by 2031.** Car parking within the Town Centre is largely controlled by private operators (69%), with MBC generally controlling the smaller car parks. In 2016, it was agreed that charges for MBC long stay car parks would increase by 3% per annum (subject to review), bringing the total increase in charges to almost 50% by 2031.
- 1.25 **P3 Optimise the current level of parking space provision in the town centre.** This target seeks to ensure no net increase in the quantum of parking available in the town centre over the period of the strategy as a means of discouraging car use from current and new developments. To this end, a number of town centre car parks are allocated for residential or mixed-use redevelopment in the MBLP. These are:
- H1 (12) Union Street
 - H1(13) Medway Street
 - RMX1 (2) Maidstone East and Sorting office
 - RMX1 (3) King Street car park
- 1.26 Of the above sites, only RMX1 (2) specifically requires the reprovision of commuter parking to serve Maidstone East railway station. This is in acknowledgement of the need to accommodate commuter parking at the key town centre station for rail services into London Victoria, as well as the imminent provision of additional Thameslink services to other central London stations and on to Cambridge (see Action PT9).
- 1.27 **P4 Improve parking enforcement on highways to reduce the impact of obstruction on bus reliability.** The Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) was set up to improve and facilitate communication and decision making regarding bus service provision in the Maidstone Area. Attendance by representatives from MBC, KCC, and multiple bus operators at this quarterly meeting allows collaborative discussion of any bus related matters.
- 1.28 The issue of bus reliability is now a standing item on the QBP agenda, which has led to specific targeted enforcement campaigns in areas reported to be particularly problematic in terms of parking causing bus obstruction.
- 1.29 The formation of the Punctuality Improvement Partnership (**PIP**) promotes a joint approach between KCC, local authorities and bus operators in improving the punctuality and reliability of local bus services. This group successfully continues to work on identifying issues and providing solutions to improve bus punctuality and reliability, with the ultimate aim of increasing patronage and making bus travel a dependable alternative form of transport.

Ultra-low/Zero emissions

- 1.30 **UL/Zero Emissions 1 *Encourage the provision of suitable infrastructure for ultra-low and zero emissions vehicles throughout the borough.*** This action relates to the provision of suitable infrastructure for ultra-low and zero emissions vehicles in new developments as opposed to those available for public use.
- 1.31 As reported in the January 2019 Maidstone JTB report, MBC has now approved for planning application purposes an adapted version of the Kent and Medway Air Quality Planning Guidance. The guidance promotes the incorporation of EV charging points in qualifying schemes at a rate of 1 EV charging point per dwelling or 1 charging point per 10 communal parking spaces, generally secured by condition. This is a significant positive step in encouraging the use of ultra-low and zero emissions vehicles by private road users.

Public transport

- 1.32 **PT1 *Provide bus priority measures on strategic routes linking the town centre to residential developments and key local amenities.*** This action relates directly to schemes within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP) and IDP, specifically highways improvements under schemes HTSE1 – capacity improvements on the A274 Sutton Road between the junctions of Wallis Avenue and Loose Road, incorporating bus prioritisation measures from the Willington Street junction to the Wheatsheaf junction, together with bus infrastructure improvements; HTJ75 – provision of bus priority measures on New Cut Road to include traffic signals at the junction with the A20 Ashford Road; and HTB1 – measures to improve the public transport infrastructure across the borough to deliver strategic objectives of the MBLP, the ITS and the W&CS.
- 1.33 As reported under Action H1, HTSE1 is interlinked with the main body of improvement works along the A274/Sutton Road (see Action H1, HTSE6). Due to a number of complexities around scheme designs, funding and political agreement, some of the schemes listed under Action H1 have not been progressed as efficiently as originally envisaged. Officers are disappointed with the overall lack of progress and have identified that further efforts are required to ensure the timely delivery of Action H1 and the schemes therein – a number of which relate directly to the delivery of Action PT1. KCC have agreed to apply the funds secured through S106 planning obligations to achieve highway mitigation works as deemed appropriate by KCC (in consultation with MBC) which mitigate the highways impacts of development in the A274 Sutton Road corridor.
- 1.34 **PT2 *Facilitate an improvement of bus services to ensure a good frequency of service is provided on all radial routes to the town centre within the Maidstone Urban Area.*** Ensuring a frequent bus service encourages public transport use, improving passenger perceptions of the convenience and robustness of using buses. The improvements in passenger numbers driven through frequency improvements has been seen on some existing bus routes in Maidstone. The ITS lists seven key routes and specifies the frequency of bus service that should be provided (at a

minimum in the peak hours). Below are the seven routes with updates on their current provision:

- *A20 London Road – aspiration of 7-8 minute frequency.* Currently at this frequency 15 minutes (71/71A) plus 1 extra bus (72), totalling 5 buses per hour, also extra local buses for part of day as far as Allington including Nu-Venture (79A/79C).
- *A274 Sutton Road – aspiration of 6-7 minute frequency.* Currently 8 minutes on part and 10 minutes (82) plus 2 extra buses (12); totalling 8 buses per hour, average 7½ minutes - to be expanded when housing schemes progress and to be combined with the bus priority measures outlined in PT1.
- *A229 Royal Engineers Way (to and from the Medway Towns) – Aspiration of 10 minute frequency.* Currently Service 101 (Sapphire standard) is on a 12 minute frequency. Plus the hourly 155 via Ringlestone towards Aylesford, Wouldham/Peters Village and Rochester/Chatham.
- *A26 Tonbridge Road – aspiration of a 7-8 minute frequency.* Currently a 10 minute frequency (services 3 & 7) plus 1 bus per hour (6), resulting in a total of 7 buses per hour.
- *Work with service providers to upgrade service to Sapphire standard (or equivalent) and explore the possibility of extending the 6X service (Maidstone-Pembury Hospital Route) into Maidstone Town Centre.* The 6X extension was achieved during 2017/18 on an experimental basis however it was discontinued during 2018 due to low passenger numbers and traffic congestion on the A26/Tonbridge Road (including temporary road closure and route diversion due to the presence of a sinkhole).
- *A229 Loose Road – 10 minute frequency.* Currently the 82 has a 10 minute frequency as far as the Wheatsheaf junction and 4 buses per hour (service 89, every 20 minutes plus hourly service 5) as far as Linton Corner.
- *Potential to increase frequency of 89 service from Coxheath from every 20 to every 15 minutes. Potential to increase service 5 from Staplehurst to a half-hour frequency.* Still to be achieved.
- *A249 Sittingbourne Road (to and from Sittingbourne/Faversham) – 15 minute frequency coupled with the promotion and an increase in frequency of services 333 and 334 from Sittingbourne and Faversham. Work with the service providers to upgrade service to Sapphire standard (or equivalent).* Currently 2 buses per hour (79) divert to Penenden Heath via Holland Road, and 4 buses per hour (9, 333, 334) divert via Vinters Park, so the section of Sittingbourne beyond Claremont Road is almost entirely unserved. Service enhancements on the main road are possible as new developments including shopping facilities at Eclipse Park evolve.
- *A20 Ashford Road – 20 minute frequency.* Currently 4 buses per hour but unevenly spaced – 4 every 30 minutes as far as Madingford (towards Downswood), 11 hourly as far as Landway (towards Bearsted) and 10X (Stagecoach) hourly to Ashford.

1.35 As is evident, some of the desired bus route frequencies have not yet been achieved and in some cases, frequencies have in fact reduced slightly. To this end, a more focussed effort in achieving this action is required. As

discussed under action P4, the formation of the PIP provides a platform upon which to continue to work collaboratively on measures to ensure a good frequency of service is provided on all radial routes to the town centre.

- 1.36 **PT3 Increase the proportion of school children using the bus to get to school.** Travel to and from schools creates significant pressure on the highway network, which requires intervention to encourage alternative travel arrangements to car drop-off and pick-up.
- 1.37 KCC continues to provide the Young Person Travel Pass (for children in schools years 7 to 11) and the 16+ Travel Card (for over 16s who are in school, college or training), to encourage and promote bus travel among young people. The 2018/19 full annual cost for these passes is £290 and £400 respectively. Concessionary rates apply for the Young Persons Travel Pass if the applicant receives free school meals and passes are free if applicants are young carers, in care or are a care leaver, or if a family is applying for more than two full cost passes (the third or fourth passes are then free). Concessionary rates are also available for the 16+ Travel Card, depending upon household income.
- 1.38 In 2017, 37.9% of Maidstone's secondary school pupils travelled to school, by public bus, down from 38.8% in 2016. However, when taking into account all Maidstone Schools, not just secondary, there has been a noticeable and encouraging overall increase in use of public buses to travel to/from school from 21.4% in 2016 to 27.2% in 2017.
- 1.39 **PT4 Continue to engage with and facilitate Statutory Quality Bus Partnership schemes in Maidstone.** The Quality Bus Partnership (QBP) continues to meet quarterly and in 2018 membership was expanded to include New Venture as well as Arriva. QBP is now a recognised 'outside body' in MBC's constitution and update reports are provided to this Committee by the appointed councillor representative.
- 1.40 **PT5 Improve rail station access for pedestrians, cyclists and the mobility impaired** Recent resurfacing works have taken place at the Maidstone West railway station car park, significantly improving the surface for all road users. At Maidstone East railway station, significant works are already underway which will include improved ticket hall access. A successful bid has also been submitted for funds to provide a raised table to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety and provide improved permeability by Maidstone East.
- 1.41 KCC are currently updating the KCC Mobility Action Plan which provides best practice guidance for delivering accessibility measures.
- 1.42 **PT6 Improve the frequency and quality of bus services between Maidstone town centre, M20 Junction 7 and Sittingbourne/Faversham.** As per the update in PT2 Currently 2 buses per hour (service 79) divert to Penenden Heath via Holland Road, and 4 buses per hour (services 9, 333, 334) divert via Vinters Park, so the section of Sittingbourne beyond Claremont Road is almost entirely unserved. Service enhancements on the main road possible as new development, including shopping facilities at Eclipse Park, evolve.

- 1.43 **PT7 Provision of a North West Maidstone Bus Loop.** The purpose of the North West Maidstone Bus Loop is to connect Maidstone Hospital and the new housing sites on or adjacent to Hermitage Lane and London Road to Maidstone Town Centre along London road via a bus gate on Howard Drive, Allington.
- 1.44 Preparations are currently underway with KCC to move this scheme forward, with discussions around routing of services taking place. Funding for this has been secured through developer contributions.
- 1.45 **PT8 Promote the provision of high quality bus services from the Rural Service Centres and investigate using rail stations for interchanging facilities.** In summer 2019, KCC are launching a number of public transport pilot schemes as part of the 'Big Conversation' designed to improve the accessibility and sustainability of rural public transport. In Maidstone, services 13 and 59 are proposed to become 'feeder services' which provide more frequent journeys for the villages currently served. The services would no longer go all the way in to town. Instead, passengers would change onto frequent buses into Maidstone or Tenterden at Morrisons, Sutton Road. The new interchange will offer shelter and a real time information departure board. It is anticipated that initiatives like this will successfully contribute to an improvement of bus services to ensure a good frequency of service is provided.
- 1.46 **PT9 Lobby Government and Train Operating Companies (TOCs) for improved rail services to Maidstone including the restoration of direct services to London Bridge and Cannon Street.** The original date proposed for the Thameslink services from Maidstone East to London Bridge, Blackfriars and St Pancras was January 2018, although this was initially to have been a peak-only service. There were subsequently three deferrals to its introduction: first to May 2018, but with the benefit of all day service on Monday to Saturday; second, to December 2018; and third to December 2019 as part of a scaling back of the delivery schedule for the whole Thameslink programme.
- 1.47 In July 2018, KCC Cabinet Member for Transport wrote to the Minister of State responsible for rail services at the DfT, urging him to consider the adverse impact on Kent's rail passengers and the local economy of any further deferral of the programme.
- 1.48 In October 2018, it was resolved at the Maidstone JTB that the Chairman would send a letter to the appropriate authority, signed by MPs, KCC, MBC, local business groups and community groups, reiterating concerns about the rail service network in Maidstone and the subsequent impact that delays to the new Thameslink service would have on economic growth.
- 1.49 It is expected that the current timetable for Thameslink services in Maidstone will be adhered to, and that the introduction of the new service to Cambridge from Maidstone East will occur in December 2019. Lobbying will continue from MBC and KCC to ensure that rail service improvements are delivered to benefit Maidstone residents and the local economy.

- 1.50 **PT10 Investigate the potential for further rail halts at Tovil, Teston and Allington.** This subject has been raised for discussion with officers at KCC and Network Rail. However at this stage no further opportunities for additional rail halts have been identified. If a third party was interested in these stations then analysis would need to be undertaken as to whether they could be added to the existing timetables. The DfT would also need to support any proposal for a new station.
- 1.51 **PT11 Improve bus facilities at Maidstone East and Maidstone West train stations to maximise interchange capabilities.** Several bus services already use Week Street and Station Road such as routes X1, 79, 101, 130, 131, 150 and 155. As part of the Tri-study (an independent review encompassing Park and Ride, Bus interchanges and parking strategy) potential improvements for buses at Maidstone East and Maidstone West were looked at. This report was approved for publication by this committee in January 2018.
- 1.52 **PT12 Improve interchange facilities at Staplehurst rail station.** The Council continues to work with Southeastern, KCC and bus service providers to secure significant improvements to the existing bus interchange facilities at Staplehurst rail station. Whilst outline designs have been developed, the progression to more detailed design and implementation is dependent upon the receipt of S106 funding secured from specific housing sites as allocated in the MBLP.
- PT13 Work towards an improved bus station in Maidstone town centre.** The 2017 Maidstone Tri-study report looked at options that would improve the bus interchange facilities in Maidstone, including the bus station. It deemed the bus station to be in a suitable location but cosmetic improvements are required. Since that study, architects have been appointed by MBC and feasibility design work is ongoing this work is expected to be completed later this year.
- 1.53 **PT14 Better information and marketing of public transport options and improved signage.** The website kentconnected.org provides an integrated, cohesive approach to the provision of public transport information; making it easy for users to plan a journey, switch their commuting mode of travel, or find information news and events relating to smarter ways to travel around Kent. There is also the ability to download the Kent Connected App so that users can access this information from their mobile phones whilst on the move.
- 1.54 In January 2019, Arriva introduced contactless payments on their buses in Maidstone, making it easier for people to use the buses without pre-purchasing a ticket, needing a phone app or requiring cash to pay the driver on board. This new way to pay was accompanied by a marketing campaign to highlight and promote the ease and simplicity of bus travel.
- 1.55 New Maidstone County Town signage has been erected at Maidstone East railway station to promote the prominence of Maidstone within the county and of Maidstone East as the gateway to Maidstone town.

Walking

- 1.56 **W1 Provision of accessible pedestrian routes for all users.** An audit of both walking and cycling infrastructure in the town centre, south east corridor and northwest corridor has been undertaken. Enhancements to the existing pedestrian routes, particularly in the town centre, have been suggested, including the idea of having a 20mph zone in the town centre. Delivery of these improvements continue to be discussed with relevant officers and funding sources identified. A further audit has been commissioned looking at walking and cycling infrastructure along London Road. The completed document ("Route Corridor Walking and Cycling Assessment: The A20 London Road, Maidstone (May 2019)") is attached at Appendix 2 which this Committee is being asked to agree and approve for publication. MBC continues to work closely with KCC officers regarding the delivery of the Active Travel and associated Action Plan. MBC's public realm improvement works will also greatly enhance the accessibility of the associated areas. KCC have an overarching Inclusive Mobility Action Plan for the County. This plan recognises that improvements can be made to the pedestrian and road network as well as to the availability and accessibility of public transport services in Kent, to improve access for disabled people. MBC officers will support the delivery of the associated actions within the borough. In addition to this, promotion of walking routes and improved connectivity is encouraged in the development of Neighbourhood Plans. The MBLP and the IDP include specific requirements for pedestrian provision associated with new developments.
- 1.57 **W2 Improve pedestrian accessibility across the River Medway in Maidstone town centre.** The C&WS recommends improving the towpath to improve accessibility. This has been successfully delivered with 6.3 miles of surfaced cyclepath along the river from Aylesford to Barming Bridge. MBC contributed half a million pounds to the delivery of this scheme. The additional funds came from a successful Local Growth Fund bid as part of a joint MBC/KCC project. The route is incredibly popular and to further promote it an Explore Kent map is available. Further improvements to crossings were assessed as part of the Sustrans' Walking and Cycling Assessment. The assessment identified the bridge next to Maidstone East and the gyratory as the main desire line crossings for pedestrians, with the other two bridges north and south providing less utility. To improve the links over the river this assessment audit proposes upgrading the link between Maidstone East and the Barracks stations and improving the gyratory. Discussions will be held with relevant officers to see what enhancements can be achieved. The ITS also recommends investigating building a pedestrian bridge to improve connectivity over the River Medway between Earl Street and St Peter's Street. This will be considered when an appropriate funding stream is identified.
- 1.58 **W3 Implement public realm improvement schemes within the town centre, such that pedestrian access is the primary mode within the central core of Maidstone.** An accessible and attractive town centre encourages pedestrian movement and therefore such enhancements can make a vital contribution to the success of the town centre. MBC has invested £3.1m into regenerating Week Street and Gabriel's Hill. The works include improvements to drainage, and resurfacing with block paving to

produce a level surface, similar to that carried out in King Street and the High Street in 2013. There will also be better wayfinding, more landscaping and art works. Henderson and Taylor (Public Works) Ltd have been appointed to carry out the improvement works, which began on 14th May 2018.

- 1.59 **W4 Identify priority areas for implementation of safety improvements to reduce road traffic collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists.** Kent Police are responsible for collecting the crash and casualty data for the County. This is made up of the personal injury collisions that are reported and includes collisions where persons are injured on a public highway or footpath; at least one road vehicle or a vehicle in collision with a pedestrian is involved; Police have been informed within 30days. This does not include injuries to pedestrians with no vehicle involvement or collisions which occur off the highway such as on private roads or carparks.
- 1.60 KCC Traffic engineers regularly assess road safety on Kent's highway network. Crash cluster sites are defined where there have been 6 personal injury crashes in the urban area (all severity - slight, serious or fatal) over a three year period and 4 personal injury crashes in the rural areas with the diameter starting at 50m. The circumstances, vehicles and casualties involved in the crashes at a particular location are investigated to identify any patterns that engineering measures could prevent reoccurring in the future. This involves studying crash patterns over the 3 year period to seek out patterns of crashes in a bid to engineer/educate/enforce the likelihood of it recurring. The relative size of the problems and the ability to tackle them are assessed and suitable cost-effective solutions are devised and implemented. This approach looks to make changes to the road environment and influence driver behaviour to prevent collisions continuing to occur at these sites.
- 1.61 The borough is currently showing one pedal cycle cluster on Tonbridge Road junction with London Road. This is a new cluster and will be looked at as part of the Casualty Reduction Measures (CRM) next year. The CRM programme is intended to re-engineer the highway, where this is a contributory factor in crashes on the network. There are also 3 pedestrian clusters which again will be looked at as part of CRM. There is currently programmed CRM works at the A229, Fairmeadow Junction with Stacey Street, Maidstone, to improve pedestrian and cycle facilities including crossings.
- 1.62 Kent's Road Casualty Reduction Strategy commits the County Council to working towards an outcomes framework, in order to meet targets, reduce casualties and to improve safety and public health. Supporting this, KCC produces an annual delivery plan for coordinated education, training and publicity activities, setting out the Council's actions and encouraging partners and stakeholders to link with these. Further collaborative work with partners is needed to further understand the causes of the clusters and facilitate the success of the initiatives intended to address them.
- 1.63 **W5 Actively encourage and promote walk-to-school initiatives.** As reported under Action H5, KCC has this year once again offered its Small

Steps programme to primary schools in the borough. Small Steps is a programme aimed at Year 2 children and involves parents, teachers and project staff. The children are taught how to become safer pedestrians. KCC host Jambusters, through which schools are encouraged and supported to submit travel plans.

- 1.64 Schemes such as Walk on Wednesday and Active Bug are led in Maidstone by the Kent Messenger. In 2018, the two schemes were merged and are now titled 'Super WoW'. As part of this scheme families are encouraged to walk to and from school on Wednesdays. The KM charity team estimate that these schemes took a total of 21,192 cars off the road in Maidstone in 2018/2019. Maidstone borough is currently listed in the top 5 districts for this. In association with this, MBC has been working in collaboration with the KM Charity team on a complimentary initiative which encourages schools in the borough to monitor air quality around their school. St John's CEP School was the first in the county to sign up to the scheme.
- 1.65 **W6 Improve street signage with better pedestrian wayfinding and a reduction in footway clutter.** Columns for street signs and street furniture can prevent pedestrian movement by creating unnecessary barriers. By rationalising this, additional footway space can be created. As outlined above in Action W3, the public realm improvements include better wayfinding for pedestrians and a reduction in street clutter.

Cycling

- 1.66 **C1 Maintain and further develop a strategic cycle network, connecting the town centre to key facilities and residential areas.** The MBLP outlines specific cycling and walking routes for allocated sites to be delivered through developer contributions. The Sustrans Walking and Cycling assessment has highlighted areas for improvements to existing provision as well as additions to the current network, building on the routes outlined in the W&CS. Having costings for these improvements enables MBC to work proactively with KCC to identify potential funding to achieve these either from the government or developers (through S106 or CIL). As part of the assessment, associated Traffic Regulation Orders were reviewed and changes suggested that would assist with the movement of cyclists through the town centre.
- 1.67 In September 2016 Sustrans completed an assessment of the corridor between Loose and Cripple Street (action SEM2 in the action plan of the W&CS). Elements of this assessment have been implemented as part of KCC PROW's Loose Greenway scheme. The River Medway Towpath (action MTC9) was a joint project with KCC (further information in Action W2) and forms an off highway 'spinal route' through the town centre. Further connections to the towpath and potential funding options are being investigated by officers.
- 1.68 **C2 Maintain and further develop cycle routes in rural settlements connecting local amenities and transport hubs (rail stations and bus stops where new and improved cycle parking can be provided in conjunction with Action C6) to housing.** Station audits were carried out in 2016 at Lenham, Harrietsham, and Maidstone Barracks stations. These

produced a series of recommendations. Improvements to rail stations is the responsibility of Network Rail and Southeastern, however ways to progress these actions have been discussed with KCC officers and regular updates from Southeastern are provided. Improvements to Maidstone East's ticket office will also enhance the experience for cyclists and include additional cycle parking.

- 1.69 **C3 MBC and KCC to work with partners to ensure the regular maintenance of all cycle tracks within the borough.** MBC works proactively with KCC to ensure that the cycle routes in the borough are kept well maintained. Responsibility for the maintenance is dependent on the status of the route. KCC Highways is responsible for maintaining all 'on highway' routes. This includes routes like the towpath, which was adopted under the Cycle Tracks Act (1984). Kent's Public Rights of Way service is responsible for the maintenance of routes which are classed as bridleways or byways. The maintenance of the National Cycle Network routes within the borough is supported by volunteer Sustrans Rangers.
- 1.70 **C4(a) All Year 6 children will have access to Level 1 and 2 Bikeability training, and children in Year 7-9 will have access to Level 3 training. (b) Adult cycle training will continue to be offered, through initiatives including workplace travel planning.** Bikeability is offered to all Maidstone schools and is mainly delivered by a third party provider. KCC have continued to offer adult cycle training, with Maidstone being one of the main training venues. In 2018, 33 courses were offered in Maidstone (Learn to Ride – 24; Confident Road Cycling – 8; and Advanced Cycling - 1). This resulted in 68 people trained. Maidstone officers have met with KCC to discuss other potential training venues in the borough to further enhance uptake.
- 1.71 **C5 Support the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum as a group to promote the cycling cause in the borough; in order to ensure the Walking and Cycling Strategy and the Integrated Transport Strategy provide a coherent strategy for the promotion of Active Travel in the borough.** Since the Forum's relaunch in 2015 MBC officers continue to support the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum (**MCCF**) and attend forum meetings when there is a relevant topic being covered. The MCCF is an MBC 'outside body' and as such has a Councillor representative on it. This Committee receives update reports as part of this. The MCCF committee are invited to provide feedback and comments on relevant work streams such as last year's Walking and Cycling assessment.
- 1.72 **C6 Improve cycle security and parking at all key transport hubs and public amenities (including schools, healthcare facilities and retail locations).** Cycle parking is a key element of a cycle network, and the provision of secure, well located cycle parking is essential if people are to be encouraged to cycle as a means of transport. As part of the planning process, well placed, good quality cycle parking is advocated for new developments. Schemes such as the improvements to Maidstone East's ticket office include increased secure cycle parking. Unfortunately cycle parking grants are no longer available from KCC. However officers are currently progressing options for funding, to improve and expand cycle parking at key locations across the borough.

- 1.73 **C7 Encourage employers to incorporate cycling into Workplace Travel Plans.** Jambusters is a website hosted by KCC which supports businesses to develop and maintain travel plans. In previous years it has been possible for businesses to apply for a grant to support interventions. Unfortunately, this year funding is no longer available but KCC officers are developing a bid to obtain funding for future years. KCC have recently recruited an officer to monitor workplace travel plans for new developments. In addition to this, there are a range of workplace engagement programs such as Kent Sports' Workplace Active Travel Challenge, which encourages businesses to swap motorised transport for two legs or two wheels. Last year, Activemob working with KCC and MBC engaged with businesses in Maidstone to better understand and then overcome the barriers to travelling to work actively. As part of this work they attended MBC's One Council event in the summer of 2018. MBC over previous years has engaged with 50 businesses in the borough per year as part of supporting the Kent Healthy Business Awards, which amongst other things encourages active travel. For a business to achieve excellence in the awards and get accreditation they need to have "a travel plan that promotes physically active ways of getting to and from work and travelling between meetings." In Maidstone, 6 businesses achieved this, although many more have made significant changes. This programme is now no longer taking place due to changes in format and funding. MBC officers are working closely with KCC to develop an alternative approach. Whilst this action relates directly to workplace travel plans, it should also be noted that KCC have appointed an officer to monitor residential travel plans.
- 1.74 **C8 Promote cycling in schools through School Travel Plans.** KCC host Jambusters through which schools are encouraged and supported to submit travel plans. Schools who have submitted an annual school travel plan are able to bid for capital grant funding (April to June each year) to support their delivery. Uptake of cycling in schools is further supported by the provision of Bikeability training (covered in C4).
- 1.75 **C9 Ensure all cycle routes are fully advertised and signposted within the borough.** MBC officers continue to work with partners to improve signage and promotion, including online promotion. To further support this KCC and MBC have collaborated to encourage guided rides along routes such as from the Park and Ride sites in to the town centre.
- 1.76 **C10 Revise and update the "Explore Maidstone Walking and Cycling Map" to extend coverage to the wider borough and indicate destinations in neighbouring local authorities. Map to be available both electronically and in paper format.** The Explore Kent map has now been updated and printed. Copies are available at locations in the borough including Maidstone Museum, Kent Life and the Maidstone Library and Archive Centre. Copies have also been offered to Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum for events. An electronic copy is available through the Visit Maidstone website. This map is due to be updated to include the Mote Road cycle way shortly.
- 1.77 **C11 Standardise and clarify the requirements of planning applications with respect to the provision of walking and cycling**

facilities, to promote the use of these active travel modes. MBC officers have discussed approaches with the KCC Transport Planner (Cycling) and meet regularly with her and relevant colleagues to facilitate promoting the use of these active travel modes. The role also involves liaising directly with the KCC Transport and Development planners to advise on developments with the potential to improve or extend the cycle network in Kent. In addition, KCC planners and Highway engineers are kept fully aware of new developments in cycle route design and infrastructure. KCC Highways are also in the process of updating their Parking Standards, which will include reference to cycle parking.

- 1.78 **C12 MBC, KCC and the Maidstone Cycle Campaign Forum to identify opportunities to establish local cycling events.** KCC officers, MBC officers and Borough Members have supported MCCF's Cyclefest event for the past three years, which has successfully been held in the town centre. The 2018 Cyclefest event was attended by MBC and KCC officers, the Kent Community Rail Partnership and San Fairy Ann Cycling Club and Kent Police offered free security marking of cycles.
- 1.79 **C13 MBC and KCC to identify locations throughout the cycle network where new automatic cycle counters should be installed to enable a detailed analysis of usage. Installation to proceed as resources allow, but each new cycle infrastructure proposal will be assessed to see if an additional counter should be added to augment the data gathering process.** There are currently two cycle counters in Maidstone Borough and two walking counters. MBC has met with KCC officers to discuss potential locations in the borough that would benefit from the installation of new counters (to measure pedestrian activity as well as cycling). The siting of these counters will be dependent on whether funding can be identified.

Conclusions

- 1.80 To conclude, good overall progress has been made to date in working towards achieving the objectives contained within the ITS. However, there are some key areas where progress to date has been limited; namely Actions:
- H1** (the targeted implementation of highway improvements at key strategic locations to relieve congestion), **PT1** (to provide bus priority measures on strategic routes linking the town centre to residential developments and key local amenities) and **PT2** (to facilitate improvements to bus services to ensure a good frequency of service provided by high quality buses is provided on all radial routes to the town centre within the Maidstone Urban Area).
- 1.81 To this end, MBC will continue to work closely with key stakeholders including KCC and transport infrastructure providers to deliver the actions as listed under the six main transport mode themes, with a specific focus on collaboratively working towards the advancement of the three actions (H1, PT1 and PT2) where limited progress to date has been identified. Progress will continue to be closely monitored and risks to delivery assessed. More broadly progress will continue to be monitored and reported annually through the AMR.

- 1.82 As part of the ongoing MBLP Review, the ITS will also be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes to the MBLP. This will ensure the ITS continues to deliver the transport improvements necessary to support the growth and development proposed in the MBLP.
-

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Committee note the progress against actions within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy. This will enable officers to continue progressing the agreed actions within the ITS in order to meet the six ITS targets, which support the sustainable delivery of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan. This Committee further agrees and approves the publication of the "Route Corridor Walking and Cycling Assessment: The A20 London Road, Maidstone (May 2019)" (Appendix 2).
- 2.2 Committee chooses not to note the progress to date against actions within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy. This will undermine future delivery of the associated actions within the ITS, subsequently impacting on the sustainable delivery of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan.
- 2.3 Committee request that officers focus their efforts on advancing specific ITS actions H1, PT1, and PT2. This seeks to ensure that the overall ITS delivery continues to advance in order to meet the six identified ITS targets and subsequently enables the sustainable delivery of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan.
- 2.4 Committee chooses not to request that officers focus their efforts on advancing specific ITS actions H1, PT1, and PT2. This will undermine the overall ITS delivery and ability to meet the six identified ITS targets; subsequently impacting on the sustainable delivery of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan.
- 2.5 Committee chooses not to approve the publication of the "Route Corridor Walking and Cycling Assessment: The A20 London Road, Maidstone (May 2019)" (Appendix 2). This would impact the ability of officers to work with KCC to further explore and deliver improvements.
-

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that this Committee:

Note the progress against actions contained within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy.

Request that officers focus their efforts on advancing specific ITS actions H1, PT1, and PT2.

That the "Route Corridor Walking and Cycling Assessment: The A20 London Road, Maidstone (May 2019)" (Appendix 2) be agreed and approved for publication.

- 3.2 These recommendations will enable officers to continue progressing the agreed actions within the ITS in order to meet the six ITS targets, which in turn supports the sustainable delivery of the adopted Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

4. RISK

- 4.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The Integrated Transport Strategy was fully consulted upon prior to its adoption September 2016.

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Officers will continue to work collaboratively with key stakeholders to implement the actions outlined in the ITS in order to achieve the strategic objectives of the ITS and in turn contribute to the sustainable delivery of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

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 the core corporate priorities, in particular, 'embracing growth and enabling infrastructure'	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Financial	The specific proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	<p>need no new funding for implementation.</p> <p>Implementation of the various initiatives described in the report depends in most cases on external funding and the engagement of partners.</p>	
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Legal	There are no implications arising from this report	Cheryl Parks, Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no implications arising from this report	Cheryl Parks, Mid Kent Legal Services (Planning)
Equalities	Equalities and accessibility are clearly a key consideration of the ITS. They are given precedence in the Strategy's 5 priorities. EqIAs will be carried out as part of appropriate projects.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. .	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Crime and Disorder	N/A	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development
Procurement	N/A	Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: H1 Targeted implementation of highway improvements at key strategic locations to relieve congestion and to aid public transport.

- Appendix 2: London Road Walking and Cycling corridor assessment
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Walking and Cycling Strategy Update Report, June 2018:

<https://meetings.maidstone.gov.uk/documents/s61066/Walking%20and%20Cycling%20Update.pdf>

APPENDIX 2: H1 Targeted implementation of highway improvements at key strategic locations to relieve congestion and to aid public transport

Junction	Aim	Intervention	App No. /Funding	IDP Ref No.	2019 update
Maidstone Town Centre					
Town Centre Bridges Gyratory A229/A20/A26	Capacity improvements	New northbound link to bypass the gyratory	LEP Local Growth Fund and MBC Contribution (New Homes Bonus)	HTTC1	This scheme is now complete.
Maidstone Urban Area – M20 Junction 7 Strategic Area					
A249 Bearsted Road roundabout and Bearsted Road/New Cut Junction	Capacity improvements	Capacity improvements and signalisation of Bearsted Roundabout and capacity improvements at New Cut roundabout. Provision of a new signal pedestrian crossing and combined foot/cycle way between the two roundabouts.	Provided under 13/1163	HTJ71	Detailed design stage now complete and contract documents are currently being prepared. Construction is due to commence in Summer 2019. Funding is secured through Department for Transport, MBC and developer contributions. Scheme estimated cost is £11.39m.
Dual carriageway between A249 and New Cut Junctions	Capacity improvements	Additional carriageway/ revised junction arrangements.	Provided in connection with Newnham Court	HTJ74	Included under HTJ71.
M20/Junction 7	Capacity improvements	Signalisation of roundabout, widening of coast bound off-slip and creation of new signal controlled	Provided under 13/1163	HTJ72	Detailed design stage is now complete. However, the scheme only has S106 funding confirmed at this stage as Highways England has withdrawn their funding offer. Scheme will not be carried out

Junction	Aim	Intervention	App No. /Funding	IDP Ref No.	2019 update
		pedestrian route through the junction.			concurrent to other works unless alternative funding can be sourced.
M2 Junction 5 Improvement	Capacity improvements		13/1163 - £44.7k	HTJ73	Highways England published preferred route in May 2018 and are now carrying out detailed surveys to refine the design Option 4H1. Planned start of works March 2020, pending approval from Planning Inspectorate. Estimate cost between £50-100million. Funding gap identified.
Maidstone Urban Area - South East Maidstone Strategic Area					
A229/A274 Wheatsheaf junction	Capacity improvements	Works to improve capacity at the junction.	14/503167 - Proportion of £108k also split between Loose Rd/Boughton Lane & approaches to TC.	HTSE6	Detailed designs currently being worked up – expected later in 2019. Estimated cost is not yet known until scheme design is worked up.
A229/Armstrong Road	Capacity improvements	Works on the approaches to the Town Centre between the Wheatsheaf junction and the bridge gyratory traffic signal junctions.	14/503167 - Proportion of £108k also split between Loose Rd/Boughton Lane & approaches to TC.	HTSE7	A229 Loose Road corridor between Boughton Lane/Cripple Street and Sheals Crescent junction is included in the design work for HTSE6 (above).
A274 Willington Street junction	Junction capacity improvements	Improvements to capacity at the junction of Willington Street and Sutton Road.	13/1149 - £180k; 13/1523 - £30k; 13/0951 - £55.8k	HTSE2	On 17 th January 2018 the Maidstone Joint Transport Board resolved not to accept the proposed scheme and asked for an amended scheme.

Junction	Aim	Intervention	App No. /Funding	IDP Ref No.	2019 update
					Therefore, no scheme design is agreed at present.
A274 Wallis Avenue junction	Junction capacity improvements	Improvements to capacity at the junction of Wallis Avenue and Sutton Road.	13/1149 - £180k; 13/1523 - £30k; 13/0951 - £55.8k	HTSE2	As above.
A274 Corridor	Bus journey time reliability	Bus priority measures: Incorporating measures from the Willington Street junction to the Wheatsheaf junction, together with bus infrastructure improvements	13/1149 - £1.80m; 13/1523 - £300k; 13/0951 - £558k	HTSE1	This is interlinked with the main body of improvement works along the A274/Sutton Road (see HTSE6).
A229 Loose Road/Cripple Street/Boughton Lane junction	Junction capacity improvements	Highway improvements at Boughton Lane and at the junction of Boughton Lane and the A229 Loose Road.		HTUA1	A229 Loose Road corridor between Boughton Lane/Cripple Street and Sheals Crescent junction is included in the design work for HTSE6 (above).
Maidstone Urban Area - North West Strategic Area					
A20/Coldharbour Lane junction	Capacity improvements	Junction capacity and signals/left hand turn lane off A20 to M20 junction 5 link road.	13/1702 - £338K split between A20/Coldharbour & A26/Fountain Lane; 13/1749 - £676K; 14/501209	HTNW2	As outlined in the January 2019 report to MJTB, the initial feasibility design proposes to significantly enlarge the existing Coldharbour roundabout. Due to this increased size, traffic

Junction	Aim	Intervention	App No. /Funding	IDP Ref No.	2019 update
			- £189k; 14/500412 - £29.4k split between A26/Fountain Lane & Coldharbour		modelling demonstrates no need for signalisation or other works to increase traffic free flow. Therefore this scheme is no longer required on account of capacity achieved by enlarged Coldharbour roundabout improvement.
A20/M20 Junction 5	Junction capacity and signals		14/501209 £12k (Towards J5 improvements on the M20)	HTNW2	As above.
A20/M20 Junction 5	Capacity improvements	Interim improvement to M20 J5 roundabout including white lining scheme	13/1702 - £21.5k; 13/1749 - £43K	HTNW1	Awaiting S106 contributions from recent developments.
A20/B2246 Hermitage Lane junction	Junction capacity improvements			HTNW5	Hermitage Lane/London Road junction improvement may not be required if road link between Hermitage Lane and London Road is delivered as part of a new development in Tonbridge & Malling. Therefore work is ongoing to assess the most appropriate scheme to improve capacity in this area.

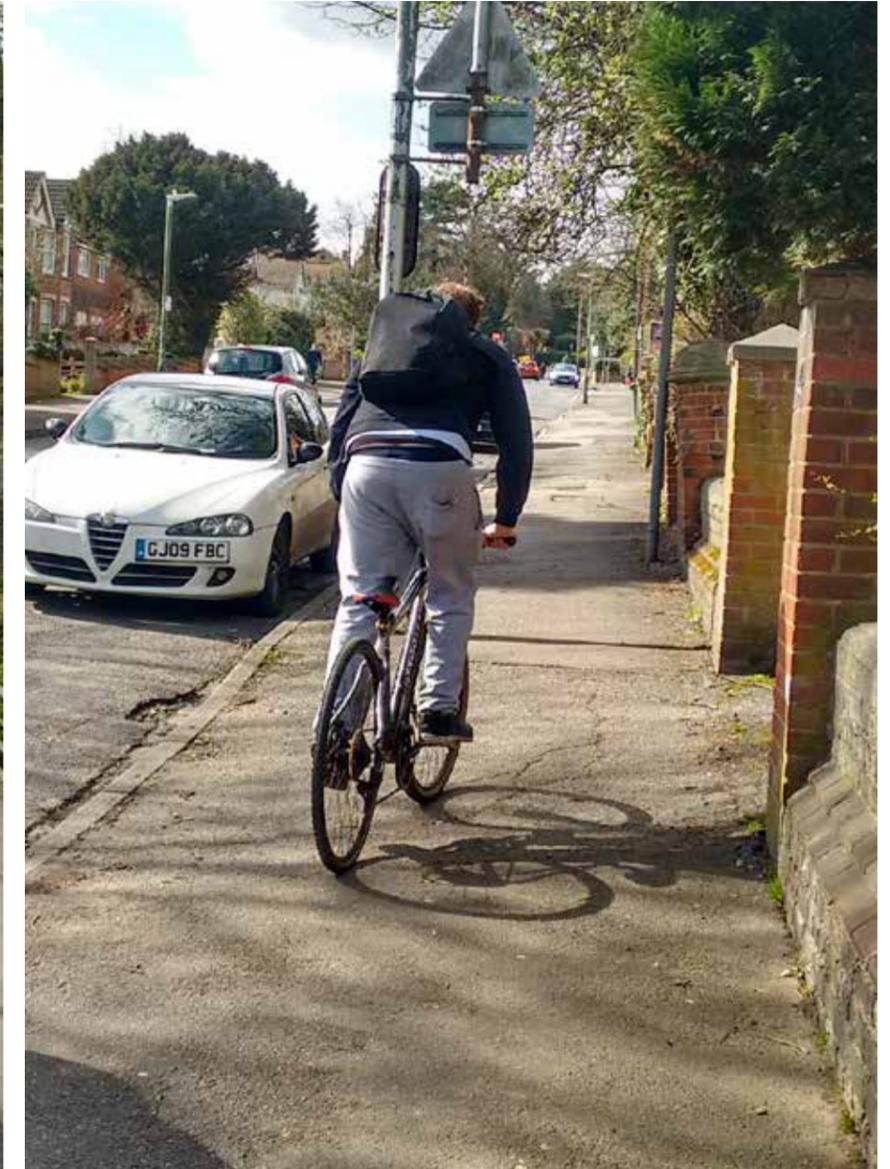
Junction	Aim	Intervention	App No. /Funding	IDP Ref No.	2019 update
A26/Fountain Lane/Hermitage Lane junctions	Capacity improvements	Changes to accommodate right turn vehicles within the junction introduction of MOVA and pedestrian sensing.	13/1702 - £338K split between A20/Coldharbour & A26/Fountain Lane; 13/1702 - £96.2k; 13/1749 - £200k; 14/500412 - £29.4k split between A26/Fountain Lane & Coldharbour	HTNW4b	As stated in the April 2019 report to MJTB, this project has now been removed from the MITP due to lack of demonstrable benefits and good value for money, but continues to be developed via a Member led working group utilising S106 funding.
Invicta Park Broad Location					
Improvements to Royal Engineers Road/Springfield/Invicta Park Roundabout	Capacity improvements	Partial signalisation of the A229 Royal Engineers Roundabout.		HTUA7	The Invicta Park Broad location remains in the Local Plan for future development.
Rural Areas					
A229 Linton Crossroads	Capacity improvements	Works on junction approaches	14/0566 - £108k	HTC1	Detailed design work for enhanced scheme has commenced.
A20 Harrietsham	Works to improve safety and pedestrian/cycle access		14/0828 - £399k	HTHA1	Scheme is currently under construction. Anticipated completion Spring 2019.
A274 North Street/Kings Road Headcorn	Capacity improvements	Signalisation of the Kings Road/ Mill Bank junction.	Funding mechanism in respect of H1 (37) is S278	HTHE2	Scheme design submitted. Delivery of scheme is associated with site H1(37) and should be completed prior to occupation of the units.
Oak Lane and junction of Oak Lane and Wheeler Street Headcorn	Safety improvements	Junction improvements and new footway.	S278 under 13/1943	HTHE1	This scheme is now complete.

Junction	Aim	Intervention	App No. /Funding	IDP Ref No.	2019 update
Highway schemes associated with Lenham	Capacity/safety improvements	Improvements to junctions at A20/Ham Lane, A20/Old Ashford Road and Maidstone Road/High Street/Faversham Road/Old Ashford Road		HTL2	Consultants on behalf of Lenham Parish Council have undertaken a transport assessment to review the existing transport infrastructure within Lenham for all transport modes and consider how new development may impact on existing and proposed infrastructure. As part of KCC's CRM, work has taken place at A20 Ashford Road Junction with Faversham Road, Lenham, Kent.
A229 Station Road/High St/Headcorn Road and Marden Road Staplehurst	Junction capacity improvements			HTS1	Initially proposed scheme was deemed unsafe by KCC. The site is extremely constrained and currently there is no suitable alternative scheme proposed.
Hampstead Lane/Maidstone Rd Junction	Capacity improvements	Provision of right turn lane on Hampstead Lane at junction with Maidstone Road.		HTY3	Improvements relate to site allocation RMX1 (4). No planning applications have come forward to date that would require this junction improvement.

Route Corridor Walking and Cycling Assessment

The A20 London Road, Maidstone

May 2019



About Sustrans

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle.

We are engineers and educators, experts and advocates. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

Sustrans works in partnership, bringing people together to find the right solutions. We make the case for walking and cycling by using robust evidence and showing what can be done.

We are grounded in communities and believe that grassroots support combined with political leadership drives real change, fast.

Join us on our journey. www.sustrans.org.uk

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-	Draft	DL	JF	02/04/2019
A	Issued Version	DL	JF	04/04/2019
B	Version 2	DL	SP	15/05/19

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Introduction

Context

The A20 London Road is an important movement corridor connecting 11,000 residents (2011 Census) with the town centre. The corridor includes multiple local destinations both along and off this road including 10 schools, 8 retail outlets and a handful of leisure and health destinations as well as the London Road Park and Ride located on Beaver Road.

The corridor has good potential for cycling and walking with a maximum journey distance to the town centre of 2 miles, representing a 12 minute journey by bike (based on a speed of 10mph) and a 42 minute journey on foot (based on a speed of 2.8 mph).

The existing design and layout of this street is geared to maximising motor traffic capacity, facilitated by a lack of pedestrian green stages at junctions and a lack of pedestrian signal crossings on links. The existing cycle network avoids the London Road and is instead routed via indirect back streets which reduces its utility and appeal for users. Provision in parts is critically substandard both in terms of width and a lack of crossings of the London Road.

Reallocating road space along this corridor has significant potential to unlock suppressed demand for walking and cycling with the rebalancing of road space giving people more choice in how they travel. The space efficiency of cycling and walking also has significant potential to offset congestion.

Alignment Choice

The following three route options were considered at the initial stage of the project:

1 A route along the A20 London Road

This a busy road carrying up to 19,000 vehicles per day which represents both the main barrier to walking and cycling as well as the most intuitive and direct route into the centre. The other two options run east of the A20 and only serve people living in the immediate area so only half the 11,000 local residents.

2 A route via the traffic-free section along the rail line

This option is well below the common standard required for a shared use path and would need to be at least 3.5m wide. Currently the path pinches at 1.7m and the overall width fluctuates around 2m which combined with the flight of steps at Buckland Lane make this route difficult to promote in its current form.

3 A route via Whatman Park

This is the most attractive option but would feel isolated after dark with the potential for issues of safety, and perceptions of safety, to discourage use. This option could be assessed further as required subject to a further commission.

Recommendations

- Accommodate crossings where people want to go (desire lines)
- Provide priority crossings for pedestrians and cyclists at junctions and widen footways
- Provide a cycleway consisting of two way and with flow stepped tracks along the London Road and via Leafy Lane into the centre.

Scope

It was agreed at the inception meeting to concentrate on improving provision along and across the London Road as this option provides the most direct route to the centre as well as providing access to the most local destinations.

This study will assess the existing level of service, existing street profile and make recommendations based on current guidance.



View East on Buckland Lane

Constraint

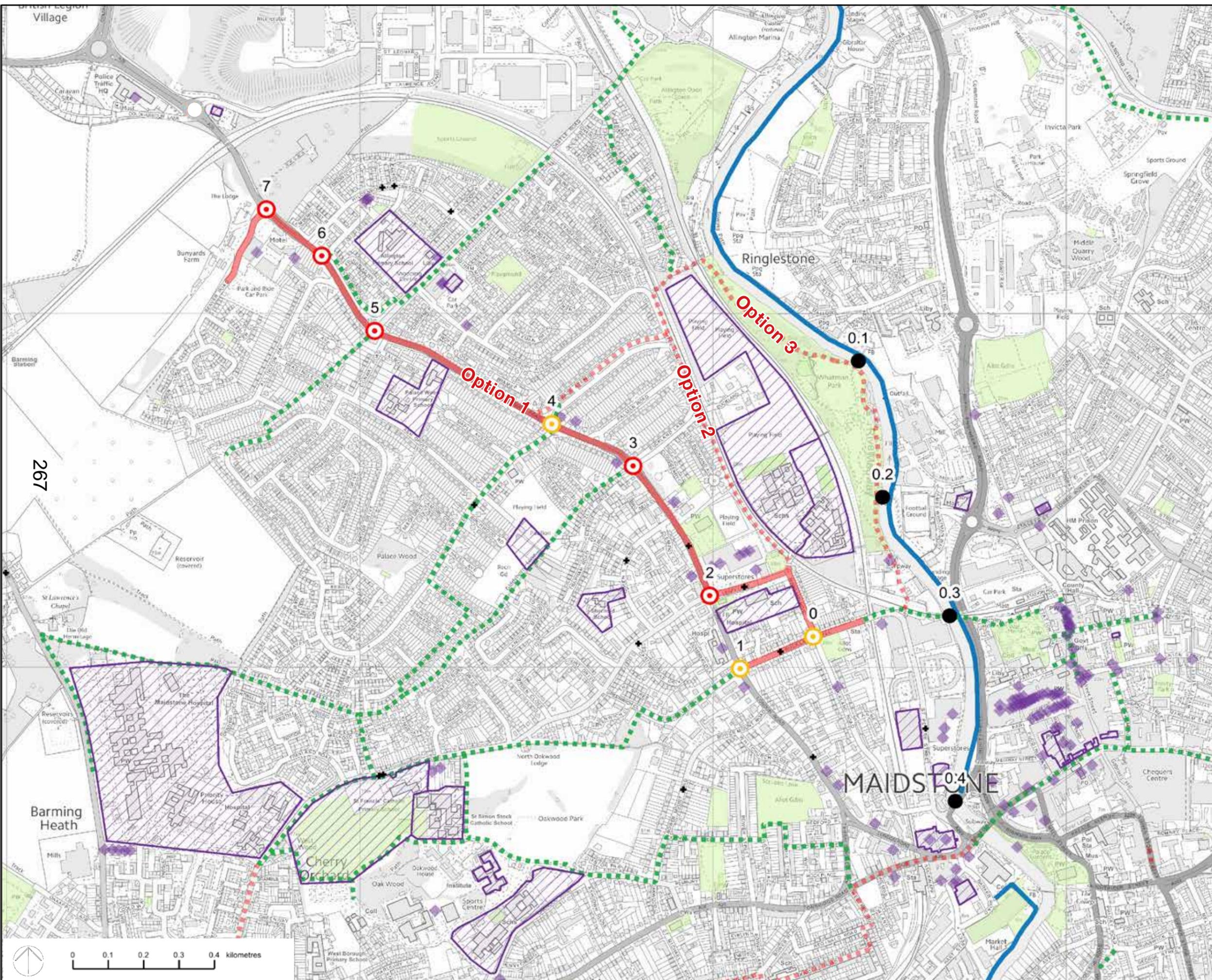
Set of steps that significantly impacts the level of service for cycling, would be impossible to negotiate for some and reduces the utility of the route for commuting



View North along the off-road section of option 2

Barrier

A general width of 2m that pinches at 1.7m and is further reduced when considering effective width due to edge constraints



Key

Junction Assessment

- Green
- Amber
- Red
- Crossing

Local Cycle Network

- Route Design
- - - Option
- - - Other
- Tow Path

Local Traffic Survey Data

- +

Trip Generators

- ◆ Points
- ▭ Areas

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PROJECT
London Road Assessment

TITLE
Overview Map

Drawn DL Checked JF Date 02 April 2019 Scale at A3 1:10000

STATUS
Final

DRAWING NUMBER 11980-SD-GA-00-00-01 REVISION



Summary of Interventions

Table of recommendations

The table is a summary of the recommended interventions described in more detail in each section of the report. A brief description of each item is provided, along with a very broad assessment of cost.

Costs

The costs have been calculated as a standard rate per metre length or per intervention type, based on similar projects in the South of England such as the Quietways and Connect2.

These figures should be taken as an early estimate and should not be considered as accurate. They do not include any allowance for land costs, which may be appreciable, nor for ancillary costs such as traffic management, statutory undertakers works, contingencies, supervision, detailed design or project management.

More detailed surveys of ground conditions, detailed information on rates from the highway authority and more detailed designs would be required to establish a better forecast of the total costs.

Section	Item	Brief Description	Rate (per linear m)	Cost
A1	-	150m Two-way track	£250 - 400	50 to £80,000
A2	-	220m Two-way track (includes road realignment)	£500 - 750	110 to £165,000
A4	1	New entrance		£2,000
A4	2	2 x continuous footway		£10,000
A4	3	Table junction		£35,000
A4	4	200m Two-way track	£250 - 400	50 to £80,000
A5	-	350m Two-way track	£250 - 400	87,500 to £140,000
Junction 0	-	Table junction		35 to £50,000
Junction 2	-	Re-configure junction		150 to £200,000
Junction 3	-	Re-configure junction (includes new crossing)		£100,000
Junction 4	-	Re-configure junction		150 to £200,000
Junction 5	-	Re-configure junction		150 to £200,000
Junction 6	-	Re-configure junction		150 to £200,000
Junction 7	-	Re-configure junction		150 to £200,000
B1	-	220m with flow cycle tracks	£500 - 800	110,000 to £176,000
B2	-	450m with flow cycle tracks	£350 - 600	157,500 to £270,000
B3	-	400m with flow cycle tracks	£350 - 600	140,000 to £240,000

Existing Conditions & Level of Service

Existing conditions for cycling and walking are poor when assessed using the cycling level of service and pedestrian comfort level tools backed by the DfT

Barriers to Walking & Cycling

The key barriers include:

- Traffic volume and mix along the A20 creating a barrier to all age and ability movement either by bike or on foot

Cycling

- Critically substandard existing provision for cycling
- Lack of a joined up cycle network with provision stopping at the main road

Walking

- The seven main junctions along the London Road pose significant issues for pedestrians with limited provision and a lack of pedestrian phases
- Lack of priority crossings of the London Road away from the junctions
- Sections of road with very limited footway widths especially around the junctions



View at the Junction of Castle Road and London Road

Desire Line & Barrier

Safe and easy movement across the London Road at the junctions are a significant desire line that isn't catered for. Users currently have to cross multiple lanes without any priority



View at the Junction of Leafy Lane and London Road

Barrier

Footway widths drop as low as 1.1m well below DfT standards



View at the Junction of Leafy Lane and London Road

Desire Line & Barrier

Pedestrians crossing multiple lanes and taking risks despite the bridge provision



View North on the London Road

Constraint

Conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. Cyclists seen going the wrong way on the east side of the London Road to avoid pedestrians



View at the Junction of Grace Avenue and London Road

Constraint

Lack of a single stage crossing means pedestrians seen crossing outside the green phase representing a lower level of service



View west on Buckland Hill

Barrier

Cyclist seen using the pavement all along this corridor due to difficult on-road conditions

Design Guidance

The London Road is part of the A road network and therefore should have provision in line with Highways England Interim Advice Note 195/16.

Existing Traffic Conditions

London Road (DFT 2016 & 7 day Count)

Volume 19,000 Average Daily Flow 1.8% HGVs
Speed 85th% 32.4mph

Buckland Hill (KCC 7 day Count)

Volume 7,000 Average Daily Flow
Speed 85th% 26mph

Provision based on Guidance provision should be as follows:

For cycling:

- Segregated cycleway of 2m in both directions with a minimum 0.5m separation from the carriageway
- Crossings should be signalled on the London Road and Parallel Zebra on Buckland Hill

For walking

- As a low flow environment footways should be a minimum of 2.9m with street furniture and 2m without
- 2.6m preferred next to 40mph sections
- Crossings should be provided that give a greater degree of priority on junctions, links and side roads
- All green pedestrian phases at junctions are suggested

Design Options

- The three street profiles shown represent the key design options based on guidance and existing conditions on the London Road.

1.1 Highways England Minimum provision for cycle routes

Speed Limit (mph)	Motor Traffic Flow (AADT-Average Annual Daily Traffic)	Minimum Provision for Cycle Routes
40 and over	All flows	Cycle Tracks (excluding stepped cycle tracks)
30	0-5,000	Cycle Lanes
	>5,000	Cycle Tracks
20	<2,500	Cycle Streets or Quiet Streets: combined traffic
	2,500-5,000	Cycle Lanes
	>5,000	Cycle Tracks

1.2 Highways England Minimum Widths of Cycleways

Table 2.2.11 Minimum Widths of Cycle Tracks and Cycle Lanes

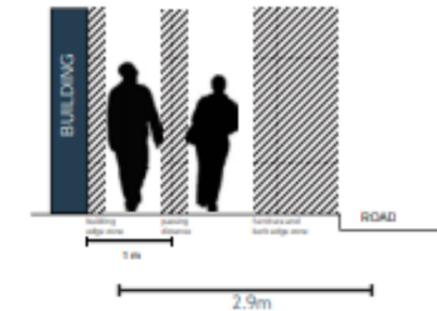
Cycle Route Type	Peak hour cycle flow (either 1-way or 2-way depending on Cycle Route Type)	Desirable Minimum Width	Absolute Minimum Width (for sections up to 100m)
Cycle Lane	<150	2.0m	1.5m
Cycle lanes with light segregation	<150	2.5m	1.5m
1-way cycle track (including stepped cycle track)	<150	2.5m	1.5m
	150-750	3.0m	2.5m
	>750	4.0m	3.5m
2-way cycle track	<150	3.0m	2.5m
	>150	4.0m	3.5m

1.3 London Cycle Design Standards

Cycle lanes ⁽¹⁾	2.0 metres		
	Lanes of 1.5 to 2 metres may be acceptable provided that the adjacent traffic lane does not have fast-moving traffic and a high proportion of HGVs and is not less than 3.2 metres wide.		
Nearside lead-in lanes to ASLs ⁽²⁾	1.5 metres		
	This should be for short lead-ins only, allowing space for cyclists to pass waiting traffic and access the ASL. Site-specific physical and traffic conditions may dictate that a 1.2- to 1.5-metre lead-in is preferable to no lead-in.		
Bus/cycle lanes	4.5 metres		
	A 'narrow bus lane' of 3.0 to 3.2 metres may be provided in constrained scenarios – this does not allow for overtaking ⁽³⁾ . Bus lanes of 4.0 to 4.5 metres can be acceptable, depending on site-specific conditions (risk associated with bus or cycle crossing into adjacent lane when overtaking). ⁽⁴⁾		
Cycle tracks including segregated lanes ⁽⁵⁾		one-way	two-way
	very low / low flow	1.5 metres	2.0 metres
	medium flow	2.2 metres	3.0 metres
	high / very high flow	2.5 metres +	4.0 metres +

1.4 Pedestrian Comfort Levels Minimum Widths

Low Flow
< 600 pph



The recommended minimum footway width (total width) for a site with low flows is 2.9 m. This is enough space for comfortable movement and a large piece of street furniture such as guard rail, cycle parking (parallel with the road), a bus flag for a low activity bus stop or a busy pedestrian crossing.

In high street or tourist areas the total width can be reduced to 2.6m if there is no street furniture (except street lights) to allow space for people walking in couples or families and with prams etc.

In other areas, low flow streets can be 2m wide if there is no street furniture. This total width is required for two users to pass comfortably and to meet DfT minimum standards.

Section A

Link from Maidstone Barracks Station and North West Maidstone via Buckland Hill, Buckland Road, Leafy Lane and the London Road (A20)

Design Choices

- Buckland Hill east of Buckland Road has a narrow street profile which limits options meaning that traffic management is required to free up space for better cycling and walking provision
- Provide provision on Buckland Hill west to the London Road as this connects to the Oakwood Park schools
- Provide a two way cycle track on the south side of Leafy Lane and the East side of the London Road. This will have to include short sections of absolute minimum widths for this type of provision due to width restrictions

Discounted Options

Limited widths on Buckland Hill east of Buckland Road make provision impossible to provide whilst retaining a two way road.

The section of the London Road between Buckland Hill and Queens Road was considered for cycle provision but discounted due to limited width at the south end.

Shared use

Discounted as an option for the following reasons:

- Limited width would mean a low level of service for both groups
- Any future increase in numbers for either mode will mean increased levels of conflict

Route over the river between Maidstone East and Maidstone Barracks

Please refer to previous Maidstone Walking and Cycling Assessment, April 2018.

Section B

Link along the London Road from Buckland Lane to the London Road Park and Ride

Design Choices

- From section B1 to B3 the street profile widens allowing space for with flow cycle tracks. This will require removal of hatching. In some places where there is significant verge such as section B3 the existing road lane profile can be retained through movement of the kerb lines
- For walking provide pedestrian phases of signals and priority crossings on links and continues footways over side roads.

Discounted Options

Two Way Cycle track

Discounted as an option for the following reasons:

- Cyclists travelling against the flow of the adjacent traffic lane are less likely to be spotted by turning vehicles creating conflict
- Two way tracks are more difficult to provide for at junctions
- With flow cycle tracks reduce the requirement for crossing the road

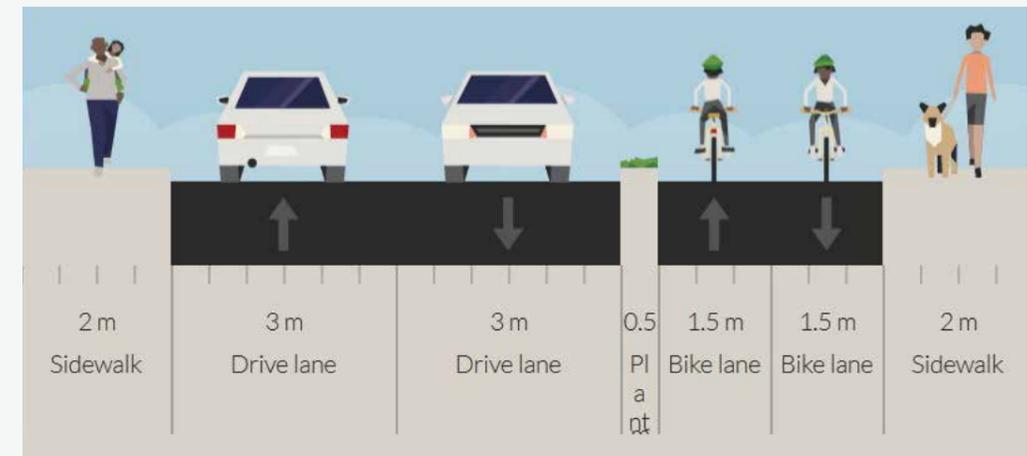
Shared Bus Lane

Discounted as an option for the following reasons:

- Provides a lower level of service for cyclists and would not be appropriate for all ages and abilities
- The recommended width for bus/cycle provision is 4/4.5m as shown in table 4.1. Narrowing the existing bus lane to 3m frees up enough space for with flow tracks
- From junction 3 onwards the street profile widens creating enough space to provide segregated provision
-

Street Profile: 2-way cycleway 13.5m

Minimum provision 13.5m Street, Absolute minimum (short sections) 12.6m street



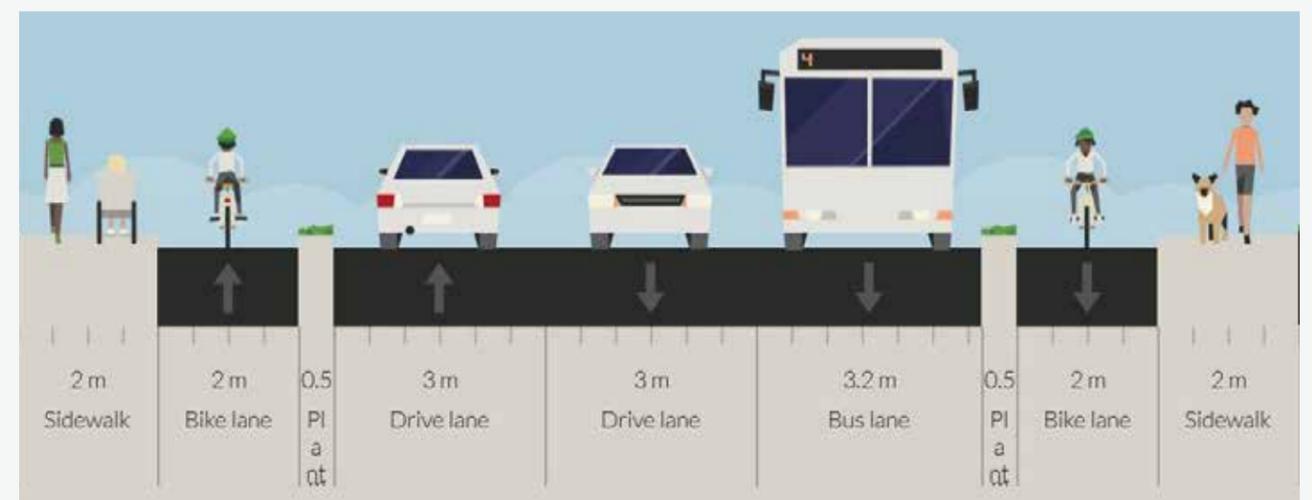
Street Profile: With flow cycleway 15m

Minimum provision 15m Street, Absolute minimum (short sections) 13.6m street



Street Profile: With flow cycleway & bus lane 18.2m

Minimum provision 18.2m Street, Absolute minimum (short sections) 16.6m street





KEY

- ◆ Trip Generators
- Trip Generators
- Grass
- Footway
- Carriageway

Traffic Data

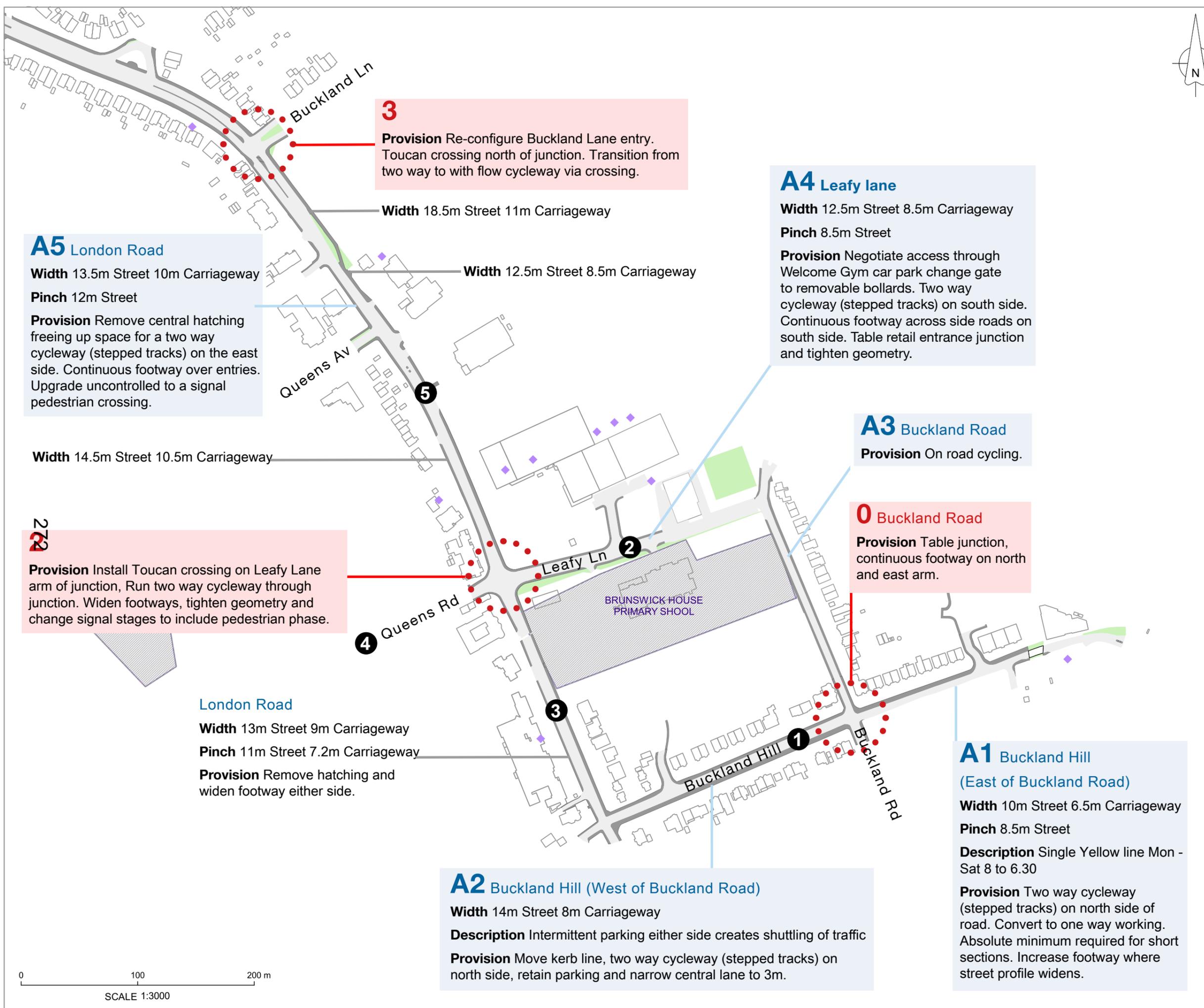
ID	Volume	Speed	%HGV
1	7,000	26	
2	5,900	32	
3	13,000		1.8
4	8,500	32	
5	19,100	32	

Volume

Annual Daily Flow taken from either the DfT or local traffic surveys

Speed

85th percentile mph



A5 London Road
Width 13.5m Street 10m Carriageway
Pinch 12m Street
Provision Remove central hatching freeing up space for a two way cycleway (stepped tracks) on the east side. Continuous footway over entries. Upgrade uncontrolled to a signal pedestrian crossing.

Width 14.5m Street 10.5m Carriageway

272
Provision Install Toucan crossing on Leafy Lane arm of junction, Run two way cycleway through junction. Widen footways, tighten geometry and change signal stages to include pedestrian phase.

London Road
Width 13m Street 9m Carriageway
Pinch 11m Street 7.2m Carriageway
Provision Remove hatching and widen footway either side.

3
Provision Re-configure Buckland Lane entry. Toucan crossing north of junction. Transition from two way to with flow cycleway via crossing.

Width 18.5m Street 11m Carriageway

Width 12.5m Street 8.5m Carriageway

A4 Leafy lane
Width 12.5m Street 8.5m Carriageway
Pinch 8.5m Street
Provision Negotiate access through Welcome Gym car park change gate to removable bollards. Two way cycleway (stepped tracks) on south side. Continuous footway across side roads on south side. Table retail entrance junction and tighten geometry.

A3 Buckland Road
Provision On road cycling.

0 Buckland Road
Provision Table junction, continuous footway on north and east arm.

A2 Buckland Hill (West of Buckland Road)
Width 14m Street 8m Carriageway
Description Intermittent parking either side creates shuttling of traffic
Provision Move kerb line, two way cycleway (stepped tracks) on north side, retain parking and narrow central lane to 3m.

A1 Buckland Hill (East of Buckland Road)
Width 10m Street 6.5m Carriageway
Pinch 8.5m Street
Description Single Yellow line Mon - Sat 8 to 6.30
Provision Two way cycleway (stepped tracks) on north side of road. Convert to one way working. Absolute minimum required for short sections. Increase footway where street profile widens.



Project: Maidstone London Road A20 Assessment

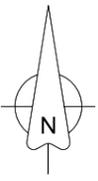
Title: Existing Street Profile Section A

Drawn: DL Checked: JF Date: 27/3/2019 Scale at A3: 1:3000

STATUS: FINAL

Drawing No: 11980-00-00-00 Revision: -

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7
Provision Alter layout to accommodate with flow cycle track provision across east and south arms.

4,5,6
Provision Install pedestrian crossings on all arms of junction, Run two way cycleway through junction. Widen footways, tighten geometry and change signal stages to include pedestrian phase.

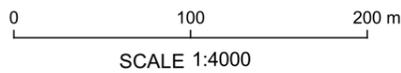
B1 London Road
Width 18.5m Street 14m Carriageway
Pinch 15.5m Street
Provision Remove central hatching and island freeing up space for with flow cycleway provision (stepped tracks) on either side. Continuous footway over entries.

B3 London Road
Width 20m Street 11m Carriageway
Provision Remove central hatching freeing up space for with flow cycleway provision (stepped tracks) on either side, utilise verge on east side to widen road and retain street profile. Install signal crossing at centre point of link. Install continuous footway over Allington Way and narrow side road entrance improving access to bus stop. Convert Beaver Road to a cycle street with cycle lanes and a single width carriageway.

B2 London Road
Width 18m Street 13m Carriageway
Provision Remove central hatching freeing up space for with flow cycleway provision (stepped tracks) on either side. Removal uncontrolled crossing islands and install signal crossing at centre point of link.

Width 23.5m Street 13.5m Carriageway

273



- KEY**
- ◆ Trip Generators
 - ▨ Trip Generators
 - Grass
 - Footway
 - Carriageway

Traffic Data

ID	Volume	Speed	%HGV
7	11,800		1.8

Volume
 Annual Daily Flow taken from DfT traffic surveys

Speed
 85th percentile mph



Project:
 Maidstone London Road A20 Assessment

Title:
 Existing Street Profile Section B

Drawn: DL Checked: JF Date: 27/3/2019 Scale at A3: 1:4000

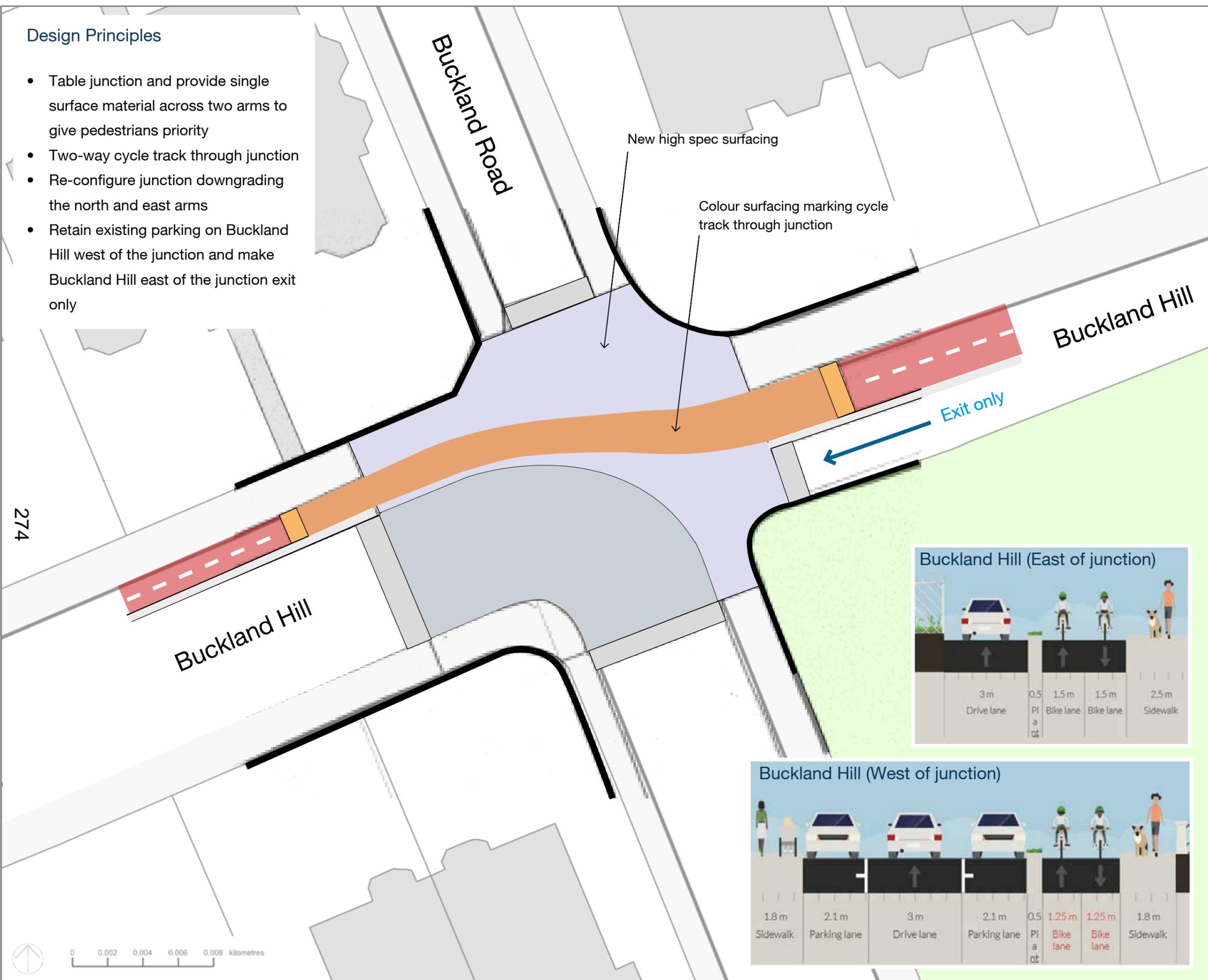
STATUS
FINAL

Drawing No: 11980-00-00-00 Revision: -

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Design Principles

- Table junction and provide single surface material across two arms to give pedestrians priority
- Two-way cycle track through junction
- Re-configure junction downgrading the north and east arms
- Retain existing parking on Buckland Hill west of the junction and make Buckland Hill east of the junction exit only



Key

-  2-way cycle track
-  Continuous footway



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PROJECT
London Road Assessment

TITLE
Buckland Hill/Buckland Road Junction Sketch Design

Drawn: DL, Checked: JF, Date: 04 April 2019, Scale at A3: 1:1000

STATUS
Sketch

DRAWING NUMBER: 11079-SD-GA-00-00-02, REVISION: -

Conclusions and Next Steps

Other similar Schemes

The layout and character of the London Road is very similar to the Lea Bridge Road (A104) in Walthamstow which has recently seen significant improvements for walking and cycling. Based on this similarity, both in terms of the existing conditions and the extent of the change being proposed it would be advisable to liaise with Waltham Forest Council to gain an understanding of the lessons learnt from delivery of this scheme.

Proposed Design

- Provision for cycling should be in line with Highways England guidance meaning this will require significant change to the existing road layout
- 275 • If provision in line with the minimum standards set out in this document is not possible, then further work will be required to identify and assess alternative options that provide an acceptable level of service to cyclists and pedestrians

Prioritisation

- Although the design being proposed is an end to end route it is recognised that there is potential to deliver sections as standalone schemes. Especially given the level of change being proposed
- If the scheme is delivered in phases, provision close to the town centre should be prioritised
- **Walking and cycling improvements at any of the junctions are recommended and could be delivered as individual point interventions**
- Cycling improvements could be decoupled from walking improvements if these can be delivered in a shorter time frame

Community Engagement

- **This should fit into all stages of the design process going forward and is a useful tool to better understand the appetite for change**
- **Testing the designs in the report will help ensure the solutions being advanced are appropriate as well as ensuring there's appetite for such change**

Making the Case

Schemes that involve significant change to the existing street can be difficult as they challenge the status quo. The political, economic and policy element is often pivotal; therefore, ensuring any schemes are underpinned by strong and robust arguments that join up with the local political and community context is key.

- **Fitting the scheme into the corporate objectives of both Maidstone and KCC**
- **Showing the health benefits of this scheme**
- **Demonstrating the potential for increased cycling and walking trips and putting a value on this model shift**

Glossary of Terms

(taken from London Cycling Design Standards)

Advisory cycle lane

A dashed white line marking an area of the carriageway designated for the use of cyclists. Motor vehicles may need to cross the markings but generally should not enter the lane unless it is unavoidable.

ASL – Advanced stop line

Stop line for cyclists at traffic signals ahead of the stop line for general traffic, with a waiting area marked with a large cycle symbol and extending across some or all of the traffic lanes.

Bus lane

Lane designated for bus use during the signed hours of operation. Signs also advertise whether other vehicles, such as cycles, are permitted in the lane during those times.

Bus stop bypass

A bus stop layout in which through-movement for cycles is away from the carriageway and from the bus stop cage. Can be achieved with shared use or partially separated footway around the bus stop but usually features a dedicated cycle track passing behind the bus shelter.

Carriageway

That part of a road or highway constructed for the use of vehicular traffic (including cycles).

Chicane

A horizontal deflection in the carriageway used as a speed-calming measure.

Continuous footway

Technique used at priority junctions and other vehicular accesses to assert visual priority for pedestrians over turning vehicles by continuing the footway material across the access or the mouth of the junction. A ‘continuous cycleway’ can be added in a similar way if a cycle lane or track is present.

Contraflow or Cycle contraflow

A facility allowing cyclists to travel in the opposite direction to one-way motor traffic. Requires a Traffic Order and can be implemented using lane markings, which may or may not have some other form of physical protection, or by using signing only.

Courtesy crossing

Location designed to invite pedestrians (or cyclists) to cross and to encourage vehicles on the carriageway to give way – although there is no legal obligation to do so. Often used as part of a design approach aimed at reducing vehicle speeds.

Cycle bypass

Form of physical separation for cycles enabling them to avoid a controlled feature for other road users – e.g. traffic signals or a pinch-point requiring ‘give way’ to oncoming traffic.

Cycle street

A street where the carriageway is dominated by cyclists and, by virtue of the width and design of the street, all motor traffic moves at the speed of the slowest cyclist.

Cycle track

A cycle facility physically separated by kerbs, verges and/or level changes from areas used by motorists and pedestrians. It may be next to the road or completely away from the carriageway and may either be at footway level, carriageway level or in-between.

Decluttering

Rationalisation of street furniture, signs and signals aimed at minimising the amount of such objects in the street environment, thereby reducing visual and physical clutter.

Dropped kerb

Feature to facilitate access, usually between the footway and the carriageway. Must be flush when provided for pedestrians, wheelchair users or cyclists.

‘Dutch-style’ roundabout

A type of roundabout where cyclists are physically separated from other road users with orbital cycle tracks. It is one of many types of roundabout seen in the Netherlands.

Entry treatment or Raised entry treatment

Raised carriageway surfacing at a side road junction, taking the form of a hump with ramps on either side and usually provided at footway level. The purpose is principally to slow vehicle movements at the junction.

Filtered permeability

An area-based network planning approach to improving conditions for cycling by removing through motorised traffic in zoned areas. Cyclists can pass freely through motorised traffic restrictions between zones and so are favoured in terms of journey time and convenience.

Footway build-out

Area of footway that extends out further than the previous kerb edge and narrows the carriageway.

Greenways

Various shared use route types largely or entirely off-highway – generally designed for people of all abilities to use on foot, cycle or horseback, for leisure, local connection or commuting.

Homezone

A group of streets and spaces designed primarily to meet the needs of non-motorised users and where the speed and dominance of motorised traffic is reduced. A 10mph limit normally applies.

Horizontal traffic calming

Forms of traffic calming that work by changing the width available for driving. Typically these take the form of static elements such as build-outs or traffic islands, but they may also utilise car parking or temporary features.

Junction table or Raised table

Raised carriageway surface (often to footway level) at a junction, used as a speed control measure and a way of supporting pedestrian movement and

pedestrian priority.

Light segregation

The use of intermittently placed objects to separate and protect a cycle facility (usually a marked cycle lane) from motorised traffic.

Mandatory cycle lane

A section of the carriageway marked by a solid white line that is designated for the exclusive use of cyclists during the advertised hours of operation.

Parallel priority crossings or ‘parallel crossing’

A cycle crossing next to a zebra crossing where users of the main carriageway have to give way to both pedestrians and cyclists crossing that carriageway.

Pedestrian crossings

One of various crossing types for pedestrians that do not allow cycle access. Includes signal-controlled types (Pelican, Puffin and Ped-X crossings) and priority crossings (Zebra crossings).

Pedestrian Zone

Area closed to vehicles, including cycles – often marked with exceptions for loading. Cycles may also be specifically exempted, or they may be included by designating a ‘Pedestrian and Cycle Zone’.

Pinch point

Locations where the carriageway narrows, often as a result of traffic calming measures or addition of refuge islands. Unless well designed, they can add to collision risk and discomfort for cyclists by forcing them into close proximity with motorised traffic.

Point closure

Method of closing a street to through-traffic, ideally in the form of a modal filter (i.e. allowing access for cyclists).

Priority junction

A junction where the priority is shown by ‘give-way’ road markings – i.e. the minor arm gives way to the major arm.

Quietway

A branded cycle route type established by the London Mayor's Vision for Cycling (2013). Quietways are strategic routes using less heavily trafficked local streets and off-carriageway facilities.

Raised delineator

A raised strip, between 12 and 20mm high, that separates areas used by cycle and pedestrians when they are at the same level. It is defined in TSRGD (diagram 1049.1) and therefore has legal status as a road marking.

Refuge islands

Islands in the carriageway to support either pedestrian crossing or vehicle right turns (which may include cycle-only turning pockets). Their placement and design should avoid creating hazardous pinch-points for cyclists.

Segregated cycle lane/track

Cycle facility separated by a continuous or near-continuous physical upstand along links (usually verges or kerbed segregating islands).

Shared use area, footway or path

A footway, footpath or part of any public space shared between pedestrians and cyclists but where motorised vehicles are not permitted. It is identified by the shared use sign – a blue circle with white pedestrian and cycle symbols. In these spaces, pedestrians have priority.

Shared space

A design approach that seeks to change the way streets operate by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles, primarily through lower speeds and encouraging drivers to behave more accommodatingly towards pedestrians and cyclists.

Shared surface (level surface)

A street or space either with no distinction between footway and carriageway or no kerb upstand between the two.

Speed cushions

Small speed humps installed across the road with gaps at distances that, ideally, allow certain users such as buses and large emergency service vehicles to pass easily, but force most other motorised vehicles to slow down to negotiate the humps.

Speed humps

Raised areas, typically placed horizontally across the carriageway, designed to reduce traffic speeds. The ramps either side of the hump should have a sinusoidal profile so as to minimise discomfort to cyclists.

Tactile paving

Textured paving that helps people with sight impairments to read the street environment around them by feeling the change in surface underfoot and/ or seeing the change in material.

Two-stage turn

A manoeuvre allowing cyclists to make an opposed turn at a junction in two stages, without having to move across lanes of moving traffic. Between two traffic signal stages, the cyclist waits in the junction, away from the traffic flow.

Uncontrolled crossing

A pedestrian and/or cycle crossing where vehicles do not legally have to give way but may do so out of courtesy. They are used where vehicle flows and speeds give safe opportunities for crossing the street without the need for a controlled facility.

Vertical traffic calming

Forms of traffic calming that rely on a change of level in the carriageway for slowing effect – typically speed humps or speed cushions.

Visibility splay

The physical space at an access or junction through which a road user exiting from the minor arm needs good, clear visibility in order to see potential conflicts or dangers in advance of the distance they need in order to brake and come to a stop.